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Foreword

Men of culture are often found to devote themselves in acquiring knowledge of various subjects which could prove efficacious to them in their needs; so we may not confuse to accept all readers in the same line of thought. The best scrutinizers of knowledge in their cultural extension should possess all skill and dexterity to get their most covetable end having had a care for Eternity and uninterrupted Blissful unalloyed Knowledge. This incarnate of the acme of knowledge-seekers will be the best reader of this book when they can have the privilege of comparing the merits of different views of pure theists. Mental speculationists have diverse objects of investigation and their diversity of seeking Knowledge would simply disturb the peaceful mentality having been tempted by the duping features of external manifestations, quite suitable and dove-tailing the present purposes of enjoyment by their imperfect senses.

The writer has got the prime object of furnishing a comparative study in which the position of a reader has the highest place. This is his only ambition, of healing the depraved mentality of the so-called culturists of True Knowledge. But the readers have different motives of utilizing the product of their enterprise of perusing the book. One class of readers are found to criticise the merits and demerits of the writer in order to establish their superiority, with a view to puff up their vanity. Another class is observed to muse over the subject by spending their time for the gratification of their senses. The third section of readers mean to profit by reading the book in order to regulate their life for a better purpose. The under-estimation of a desirable element for some utilisation through temporal gratification of senses, would not equipoise the third position of the reader who will surely mark the distinctive situation by comparing other things and agree with the author in spending his valuable time for true amelioration.

The body of the book will appear before readers as a historical account of the Journey of life of a Hero. But the Hero is not an ordinary mundane hero for a hallucinative ambition with a spiritual tinge. The account will no doubt show that the targetted Object of the manifestive spiritual world is Eternal and identical with the Hero of the speaker. Hasty conclusions will be pouring forth to oppose this by welcoming anthropomorphic and apotheotic thoughts. The delineations will prove that the Object pointed to is beyond the comprehension of crippled senses. And the Absolute Eternity made up of Pure Knowledge and Incessant Bliss is never to be had within the compass of our senses. All objects of the phenomena which are comprehended by senses have temporal situation and deformed entity void of different 'qualities' that are always submissive to senses.

Sree Krishna-Chaitanya's inculcations of the Personality of Godhead cannot be restricted to or accused as Idolatry. Idols are constructed of mundane materials and are subject to the inspection of senses. The Eternal Absolute does not exactly submit to these senses as He does not put Himself as a shareholder of phenomenal things. Whichever comes under senses has equal value with one of Nature's products and forms to be a subject of the jurisdiction of senses. The Eternal Absolute is inconceivable by limited senses. The partially eclipsed views of the Absolute are shaky, non-absolute, liable to transformation and under the clutch of the span of Time. The physical limitations are all accommodated in Space, Time and particular entities. The naming of the Transcendental Absolute through the lips of a mundane agent will surely seek after a size, a colour, etc., and must undergo the ocular examination. The Transcendental Absolute should in no case submit to our dermal perceptions, neither to our nasal or lingual activities as well.

The Transcendental Sound has got a distinctive denomination from mundane sounds which often tend to submit to the test of other senses. As the Transcendental Sound has not been originated in mundane phenomena, He will not be diffident in showing His true phase whose manifestive realisations are identical with the Name Himself. In that case the essence of such Sound would not permit the different entities of the same Object; as we find in phenomenal

objects tracings of numerical base instead of the integral unit. The differential values are integrated in the Transcendence. So there is indication of One Object by the dinning of the ethereal vibrations in different positions. These sounds converge in One Point Who is known as the Absolute. This Absolute is on the Eternal plane of All-Knowledge and Incessant Bliss and can have manifestive Absolute phases with Him. If the various sounds are put into this chaotic plane, there is no reconciliation of a synthetic method. This unharmonising tendency will surely bring a contending and unpleasant atmosphere which we experience everyday.

The uneclipsed phase of the Integral Sound will not in any case bring rupture, but harmonise the contending phase due to the intervention of foreign intrusion. The demarcating lines of comprehending the same thing through the chambers of senses would lead to mundane enjoyment; whereas the ignorance of enjoying things through limited scope would put the enjoyer within the barriers. When the Observer is One, He sees everything and exercises all His Senses for His Own gratification. But the servitors who are fractional entities cannot have any harmonious situation unless all of them have got one aim of being predominated over by the Absolute. The question of relativity does not become a barrier, as we notice such deformities in these phenomena which are subject to Individuality, Space and Time. This situation, solving the difficulties of mundane relativity and Absolute, has been finally settled by the Transcendental unspotted manifestive phase, instead of wrongly inculcating a hallucinative theory of Absolute by negating the conception of diversities.

The numerical situations of the different entities here have got a relative representation which is certainly condemnable for its undesirability. The glaring desirable features of relativity as delineated in the Transcendence should not be anthropomorphised by our poverty-stricken knowledge and narrow views of phenomenal disorders. In the Absolute Region we find descriptions of mutual Manifestive phases, the Master there being One with millions of servitors of four different classes. We further notice the Absolute as the Eternally Blissful Son of the Entity of Unalloyed Knowledge. The Absolute Friend is the Cynosure of all friendly eyes, as the Single Object of friendship.

He is the Consort of depending consorts and is the Predominating Singular Object of unalloyed love of predominated objects. Whereas, in the mundane plane we find many predominating agents together with predominated sentient. People need not puzzle themselves with the ascription of a motherly idea in the Supreme Absolute, as the seeming features of parents here have got a dignified position which is nothing but a perverted conception of the Real manifestive Absolute. Moreover we find that the parents get the opportunity of serving their only coveted child from His very Birth in different capacities. So the Eternal position of the Master is retained intact from the very Advent of the Child. If we are to accept services from the Lord, Whom we have to render our service, we are simply misled. The Divine Absolute should not be classed as our servitor, as our eternal position is to render our all-time and whole-hearted services to Him alone. A deviation from this will be tampering the very principle of transcendental devotion. The author has wisely delineated these crucial points in the Instructive Life of the Supreme Lord.

The enjoying temperament of this temporal world will find a good jerk in the line of thought of approaching the Transcendence. Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, the greatest world-teacher, has exhibited to his taught the transcendental loving principle of unalloyed souls towards the Absolute All-love where phenomenal dirt could not possibly contaminate the pleasant situation of Manifestive Relativity. The unalloyed devotional exhibition in the Pastimes of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya and His followings are -the best and greatest Boon that could be had in the quest of the Absolute. Readers might have noticed one thing in the vital principle of Transcendence of the Desertion of the enjoying mood and the affinity for temporal deformed objects. This abnegation at the very outset will create a puzzling sensation among the youngsters who have embarked on the journey of life to aim after sensuous enjoyment in temporal phenomena. So they may hastily discard the principle of showing diffidence for their much coveted dream of enjoyment in this world. Sree Krishna-Chaitanya has defined the proper use of the Relief that is offered by the non-meddling with mundane affairs in an enjoying mood. He has not asked anybody to adopt the indolent processes of non-co-operating with the phenomenal objects. He has rather instructed to practice accepting mundane things when we can trace the

connections of the essence of such things with Sree Krishna, the Manifested Fountain-head of the Absolute. His disclosure has set right the topsy-turvy, hodge-podge situation of this apparently chaotic world. He has further cautioned the renouncers not to summarily reject the association of relative things for fear of their proving to be detrimental to alienating the peaceful soul from the mundane troubles by associating themselves with the purposes of the manifested Absolute.

The busy people of this world have decided that the gratification of senses should be the essential aim of all our enterprises here as well as in the next world. So they have deemed it fit to adopt the principle of an ethical religion supplying their wants and to fulfill whatever we are in need of. These triple results are the covetable solutions of the enjoying calibre of sentient entities. This sort of mentality is found in the enjoyers. But there is an opposite section who believes that unless such desiring agencies are stopped, no eternal good can be expected. So they have formulated a different goal for their purpose. These men consider that salvation is required from phenomena by practising a non-co-operative mood from all and even the necessities of life, which tantamount to suicidal commission. By following the high-sounding words of annihilation in the Absolute by dismissing the three respective positions of observer, observation and observed, they covet to be finally rescued from phenomenal troubles.

The Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya has neither encouraged the enjoying elevationists nor the renouncing salvationists. He has prescribed the pure theistic thought of spiritual devotion to the Personality of All-love by the loving function of the unalloyed souls instead of plunging into the ocean of miseries which offer extreme troubles to elevationists and to persons who, having bitter worldly experience, desire to terminate their animation by the process of annihilation. The Supreme Lord has Thereby settled the question of transmigration. The Semites have, however, adopted a principle, by rejecting the theory of metempsychosis, to dispense with the long extending life of a migratory element. The love of the Absolute can never be attained by men who seek after their aggrandisement or after their liberation. Persons who entertain

the view of their actual freedom from such selfish propensities, can have the privilege of knowing what Prema is—which has no bartering system of ‘give and take’ policy. The unalloyed souls are meant to love the A11 love with the identification of their eternal loving element. The loving souls are not at all dissatisfied whether the Supreme Lover is inclined to grant their prayer, on the very understanding that their loving connection is inseparable. They at the same time prove themselves to be quite content as their only lover has deemed it fit to discard them and thereby enjoy by the services offered by them. The consideration of exchange has confined the elevationists and salvationists to their respective gains; whereas, no such gain is aimed at by devotees who have thoroughly comprehended their positions of non-traders. This unalloyed love can never be expected in any agents who have got ulterior motives of satisfying their pleasing and enjoying demeanor. Unalloyed service can only be found in Prema which has a special characteristic of pure sacrifice without any remuneration in return. No enjoying mood can have any place in that unalloyed function.

The transcendental love should never be compared with the lustful mundane position of an enjoyer. Prema reaches its acme in consorhood and the lower stages in filial love, friendship, services and in neutrality. So this Amorous transcendental love has no comparison with other loving affinities.

The cardinal point of this unique progression of love has got a steady infinite dimension of activity which can have no equal in our experience. The Absolute Prema is never to be confused with the shaky position of nuptial love of mundane mortal people which tends to have reciprocal interest. But as it has no bearing with deformed relativities, no claim can be asserted to combat with the challengers through arguments.

The historical account connected with the Pastimes of the Absolute need not be mixed with the mundane activities of transformable entities. But the elaboration of transcendental accounts must not be discouraged owing to the bitter experiences we have of our temporal life here. The incidental mentions of history bear a reference of earthly things liable to be perished in time. The

essence of history need not be kept at arm's length in consideration of worldly associations which necessitate the existence of components of matter or motion.

Descriptive accounts of history help us in considering the relation between the already acquired knowledge and the welcoming of new thoughts. But in the present case, where we are to deal with a case beyond Nature's phenomena, we should be cautious not to confuse with human frailties and mixing up with temporal defective impressions of mundane relatives. Historicity of things need not be summarily rejected if it renders help to comprehend the direction and nature of the transcendental views. So every branch of knowledge has efficacy to offer us first aid towards our advancement in the Region beyond Nature.

The transcendental sensuous Activities of the Absolute have got transcendental reference and avoid submitting to human senses which are but frail and inadequate. The descriptions of the Transcendental Pastimes of the Absolute need not be confused with metaphorical analogy, strictly confined to our present situation, of acquiring knowledge. Allegories are figments and are treated as innovations of older thoughts in a systematic way in order to place a certain view of things. If they are meant for the purpose of the Transcendent and not for our sensuous gratification, we can accept them for the safety of our transcendental health instead of eliminating even the purpose.

Mental speculations may drag us to some secular purpose which we should avoid for the sake of studying the Absolute Transcendent Who has no contending character to expel the variegated similar manifestations as we often perceive through our senses. So the author has described the Deeds which bear a resemblance to that of history and allegory provided they are not improperly carried to mundane restrictive merits.

History, fiction or poems have worldly values; but when they help us towards the topics of Transcendence we need not have an anthropomorphic disposition. If we bring down the Eternal Pastimes the Character of the Transcendence is proselytised more or less to our sensuous purpose—a solemn offense which we

should not do.

Our intellectual advancement has proved the three different ways of attaining to our different goals: (1) one track is known as fruitive track to propitiate deities to meet and fulfill our demands by physical and mental entities. The dearth of desired objects keeps us at a lower level and we want an amelioration and elevation from the lowest level to the highest summit. In that case we consider ourselves to be actors or perpetrators of our intended actions. When we are actuated by such exciting mood we entertain a definite result which can serve our purpose best. This activity of our physical and mental entities is strictly confined in temporal and inadequate phases. (2) The quest of a different track is insistently urged on our intellectual function when we want to desert the fructifying demeanour of the mind. Desertion from the active life shows us a different track of seeking the Absolute Intelligence by the process of intellectualism. We want to sever our pleasure-seeking aptitude in our passionate desires to destroy all sorts of selfishness accrued in Nature's temporary association. Renunciation from all temporal activities in this plane of deformities offers us a mentality of stupefaction which may be termed as abnegation. In the artificial process of dissociating ourselves from the temporarily meddlings with foreign things which are set apart from our entity, the actor merges himself in the Object pursued, dismissing his active functions. This conglomeration is effected by the synthetic process of grouping together limited things into an accumulative effect; but the accumulation of diametrically opposite elements would never alone yield an opposite element, save in the analogy of enhanced angularities as in the case of two right angles. The neutral position of unalloyed intellectualism would lead us to the result of the extended idea of limitation. Speculative method of synthetical activities terminates in undifferentenced situation of Knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge.

(3) But the advancement would prove that the track of transcendental devotion towards the Absolute is quite free from the summation of the fruitive activities as well as the desertion from having a selfish desire to get a lion's share as a co-sharer. The tracks of elevation and salvation have very little to do in leading to

the track of Devotion, as the devotional process has no object of encouraging the fruitive activities in extricating out the Variegated Transcendental Eternal situation. The very process of salvation indicates in time the two different predicaments of the situation which is a bar to the purpose of Eternity. The Devotional process is quite independent of the two systems of fruitseekers or enjoyers and abnegators or avoiders of self-destructive enjoyment. Readers will no doubt secure the true rationalistic view from the writings of this author. Pure devotional aptitude need not wait for any help from the two other tracks but is quite independent of them. Devotion can only be carried out when the unalloyed position of the soul is determined. Such function should have no component of two other foreign garments which have more or less enshrouded the unalloyed soul in the two planes of association and dissociation with temporal things. The devotional functions of the unalloyed soul need not be observed by placing patches of clouds which are adaptable for the limited plane, eclipsing the true aspects of the true eternal plane of devotion. The Absolute Knowledge should not bear any reference of deviation and whenever there is the different views we find that the different aspects deprive us of the exact entity of the thing by our polytheistic views of the one thing. The Absolute Truth is ever ready to welcome the different approaches of the atomic parts of the Unalloyed Absolute. But when those atomic parts are mixed up with foreign views they need not be dove-tailed with the Absolute like unalloyed entities associated with the Unalloyed Absolute. The distorted demeanour of the mind cannot approach the Unalloyed Absolute by the easy-going mandate of receiving all sorts of services that may be rendered to the One; but that One need not have a disfigured entity which is far off His original Beautiful and Sublime Existence. If the Object of our approaching be considered to be contaminated with evil associations inviting our nefarious aptitude of enjoyment, we cannot expect to include ourselves to submit to His Wishes.

First of all, the Object need not be tampered in any way by our whimsical mood and our determination of self need not accompany any anthropomorphic deformities which have no bearing in Him. The different relations we experience in society should be carefully watched in the case of associating ourselves with the Eternal Absolute. We need not carry the defects and

unpleasant pains along with us when we trace out our eternal relations with Him. The Absolute Knowledge need not undergo the variegated form of the enjoyable articles, sentient and insentient we meet here. But we are to approach Him with our serving mood for His Eternal Enjoyment. We must not be thinking of eliminating all foreign attributions in us unless we mean to please Him by considering ourselves to be exactly suiting to His purpose which may not be proving to create His annoyance as we experience on this painful plane here. A close reading of the accounts of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya will certainly lead us to the Manifestation of the Absolute in proper order.

If we have a sincere heart to associate ourselves with the Absolute, we must not be considering Him to be our Servitor but we should pose ourselves in the position of a servitor to suit one of His relationships. Our entities will then be different ingredients of the service-holders of the Absolute. But as we are in the habit of securing enjoyments as lords, we have got a quite different determination of self as to lord it over other existences besides our own. In order to set right this awkward taste, we should approach a true serving friend who can regulate our evil propensities which are the bars of the true functions of the unalloyed soul. We cannot make profit by the association of the people who are very busy to culture their wrong habits as enjoyers of this world instead of eliminating the undesirable inculcations of associating with temporal things. The company of non-devotees and the counsels of apathetic disposition towards the Absolute should by all means be avoided. If we fail to get rid of such intoxicants, we are liable to miss the devotional functions of the unalloyed soul, without making any progress towards the march for our eternal welfare.

The question of occupation has been decided by the Personality of the Supreme Lord in the all-time engagement of all individual souls proper for the Absolute. The occupation of the mind is found to meddle with temporal objects of phenomena; whereas the parts of the body have no other suitable position to fit themselves for limited and temporal purposes. All acts should tend to acquire virtue and happiness. All virtues and happinesses should lead to sacrifice instead of captivating the soul for mundane purposes only. All such dissociating mood with worldly sensuous attainment tends to the occupation of

the Absolute and this occupation should be no other function but go to show the interest of the Absolute. The very conception of the external structure and the internal existence, which is also considered as a subtle garment, must not forfeit the interest of the Principal who is known to own these two environments. The interest of the Principal, 'soul', should have no ephemeral acquisition like the consumption of the mind and the body. Altruism may prove to suffice for the higher aims of soul; but such deluding features should not bar the progress of the soul in any way. The body and the mind are shifting agents which, though at present incorporated with the soul, tend to the temporary aggrandisement of the incorporated changeable parts. So attention should be drawn to the interest of the soul proper whose functions should not at all be crippled by the seeming necessities of the mind and the body revolting against the Eternal Blissful Knowledge, viz., the Absolute.

Our all-time occupation need not be confined to the highest reference of mental culture in pure and simple altruism, where the reference of the Absolute along with the reference of our behaviour towards the lower creation is neglected. The inclusion of an indirect service to an Impersonal God or our charitable disposition to some extent towards lower animals by tutored sympathising mentality, is optional and not compulsory.

The Great Absolute should predominate over the crippled forms of infinitesimal absolutes who may appear at the outset as illustrations of non-absolute. If the synthetic process of all isolated entities does not go to One Undeviated Object of the Absolute, it would prove to be a chaotic emporium of unassimilating differences; so our mentalities require rectification to arrange their order in a particular line. One of our friendly co-sharers should come forward to explain before us the nature of the course that should be adopted for our methodic comprehension of the irregularities in one line. This unparalleled mercy of the One Friend and His associates is to regulate the disorderly conduct of the body and the mind. The rhetorical principle of the predominating and predominated functions in their bases of activities could give us the result of one of the four ingredients that follow when we are relieved of the worldly deformed conceptions in the pure spontaneity of a defined nature of eternal relationship that exists between the Absolute and the

significatory aspects of the internal parts of the Absolute.

Whenever the specification of the Predominator is prominent, we necessarily find the reciprocal predominated aspects, which may prove to be more than One, as distinguished from the case of the Predominator. The Predominating Agent has a singular significance over the multifarious predominated. This portion of the analysis of the Transcendental Integer has become the most conspicuous explanation offered to mankind by any of the guiding leaders to bring us towards the Transcendence. Earnest readers will no doubt find this unique explanation offered by the writer in the line of instructions received by him from the Transcendental Hero, Whose Career and accounts have been portrayed in this book.

The peculiar feature noticed in men apart from the lower creation is this that the former can exchange thoughts and have the superiority of utilising their experience through the recollections from history and acquired branches of knowledge. They can show their felicitous mood in listening to Scriptures also. So a comparative student can easily demarcate the line of the best and full apart from transitory experiences of this world. The question of Eternity, Full Knowledge and Bliss cannot be dealt by other agencies of life-save man; so man need not neglect the position of the Absolute in the Ever-existence, in Full Knowledge void of all sorts of ignorance and ills that flesh is heir to, and Beatific Constancy of the Fountain-head. The solution of human life should tend towards the approach of the Absolute Who is always courting us to offer His help towards the fulfillment of the inadequate specialty we have in us. And in order to gain an approach we should require the guidance of an individual in whom we can place our reliance, instead of being credulous with the strugglers of this world.

The Supreme Lord has left in this world a band of His followers who are always helpful to mankind instead of deluding the intellectuals to turn themselves idealists and evil-doers with an apparent phase of seekers of their welfare. The author will no doubt be gratified if any of the readers can see his way to scrutinise the Subject of the Transcendence in Whom we are all vitally

interested by sparing his valuable time to go through this book.

Before concluding this Foreword, I would like to introduce to the respected readers the aspiring attitude of enlightening his readers on the Transcendental Entity of Sree Krishna as well as His Phase of Instructor in Sree Krishna-Chaitanya in the following points, with references to the context.

(N.B.—All the references are to chapter and verse of the .tenth skandha of Srimad Bhagavatam).

Krishna is possessed of an unlimited intellect (84/22).

Krishna is inaccessible to sensuous knowledge (16/46) .

Krishna is Lord of the infinity of worlds (69/17).

Krishna wields the power of creating the unlimited (87/28).

Krishna carries the impress of limitless power (87/14).

Krishna is possessed of inconceivable potency (10/29).

Krishna is unborn (59/28, 74/21).

Krishna solves all heterogeneous views (74/24).

Krishna is vanquished by exclusive devotion (14/3).

Krishna is Inner Guide (1/7).

Krishna is the Withholder of the energy of the wicked (60/19) -

Krishna is the Giver of salvation to jivas that are free from vanity (86/48).

Krishna ordains the worldly course of conceited jivas (86/48).

Krishna is Primal God (Deva) (40/1).

Krishna is Primal Person (Purusha) (63/38).

Krishna is overwhelming flood of bliss (83/4).

Krishna possesses fulfilled desire (47/46).

Krishna is self-delighted (60/20).

Krishna is the opponent of the sensuous (60/35).

Krishna is sung by the best of hymns (86/23).

Krishna is the dispeller of the night of pseudo-religion (14/40).

Krishna is devoid of increase and decrease (48/26).

Krishna is efficient and material cause (10/29).

Krishna is the only Truth (14/23).

Krishna is Awarder of the fruit of work (49/29).

Krishna is not subject to the consequences of work (84/17).

Krishna is the Seer of cause and effect (38/12).

Krishna is the Person who is time (1/7).

Krishna is Time s Own Self (70/26).

Krishna is even the Time of time (56/27).

Krishna is Present in the heart of every animate entity, like fire inside wood (46/36).

Krishna is Grateful (48/26).

Krishna is the Augmentor (like the Full Moon) of the ocean of earth, gods, twice-born and animals (14/40).

Krishna is the Tormentor of cannibalistic persons (14/40).

Krishna is the Destroyer of the pride of the arrogant (60/19).

Krishna is the Root-Cause of the origin, etc., of the world (14/23).

Krishna is the Cause of the world (40/1).

Krishna is the Creator of the world (70/38).

Krishna appears as if possessed of a body like that of mundane entities, for the good of the world (14/55).

Krishna is the Guru (centre of gravity) of the world (80/44).

Krishna is the Refuge (ashraya) of jivas (individual souls) who are ,afraid of birth and death (49/12).

Krishna is devoid of birth (46/38).

Krishna is equally the Internal Guide, Cause and Director of jivas (87/30).

Krishna is the Destroyer of the miseries of persons who employ themselves in meditating upon Him (58/10).

Krishna is of the fourth dimension and self-manifest (66/38).

Krishna is Worthy of being gifted (74/24).

Krishna is the Punisher of the wicked (69/17).

Krishna is the God of gods (80/44).

Krishna is rarely cognisable by the gods (48/27).

Krishna is unconcerned about body, house, etc. (60/20)

Krishna is the Supreme Ruler of the greatest gods (73/8).

Krishna is the Exponent of Religion (69/40).

Krishna is the Eternal Son of Nanda (14/1).

Krishna is Visible to man with great difficulty (71/23).

Krishna's Presence mocks the world of man (70/40).

Krishna is the Object of palatable drink of the human eye (71/33).

Krishna is the Internal Guide of all (31/4).

Krishna is Worthy of the worship of all the worlds (69/15) .

Krishna accommodates all the worlds (59/30).

Krishna is the Manifestor of all light (63/34).

Krishna is unstinted in giving Himself away to one who recollects Him (80/11).

Krishna is the efficient Cause (87/50).

Krishna' although devoid of all mundane quality, assumes mundane qualities by His Inconceivable Power for the purposes of creation, etc. (46/40).

Krishna is not subject to change (64/29).

Krishna is not capable of discrimination by reason of being void of any extraneous covering (87/29).

Krishna is the Giver of Himself to those who covet nothing (86/33).

Krishna loves those who covet nothing (60/14).

Krishna does no work (60/20).

Krishna is Human, Hidden, Primal Person (Purusha) (44/13).

Krishna is Present in the hearts of jivas like the five elements (82/45).

Krishna is the Supreme Sorcerer (70/37).

Krishna is Supreme Godhead and the Internal Guide of all (56/27).

Krishna is the Crest-jewel of those whose praises are sung by the sacred lore (71/30).

Krishna is Primal Person and Ever-existing (14/23).

Krishna is the Highest among the Objects of worship (74/19).

Krishna is the Healer of the miseries of the submissive (73/16).

Krishna is the Destroyer of the sins of the submissive (31/7).

Krishna is the Destroyer of the distress of the submissive (73/8).

Krishna is the Residue after the Cataclysm (87/15).

Krishna is devoid of touch with mundane senses (87/28).

Krishna is the Soul and Friend of all animate entities (29/32).

Krishna is devoid of distinction appertaining to an alien (63/38,44).

Krishna is Inconceivable by His Nature (70/38).

Krishna is the Master of the Universe (70/37).

Krishna is the Nourisher of the Universe (85/5).
Krishna is the Sun that cheers the lotus of the kindred of the Vrishnis (14/40).
Krishna is the God worshipped by the Brahmanas (69/15).
Krishna is the Foremost of the Brahmanas (84/20).
Krishna is the Originator of Brahma (40/1).
Krishna is the Worshipped of Brahma (31/13).
Krishna loves His devotees (48/26).
Krishna wears Forms in accordance with the wishes of His devotee (59/25).
Krishna is eternally Present in Mathura (1/28).
Krishna is devoid of the sense of kinship and regards all in the same way (46/37).
Krishna is beyond all Measuring Potency (Maya) (63/26).
Krishna is subdued by the love of Judhithira (72/10).
Krishna is concealed by the screen of Maya from the sight of the-people (84/23).
Krishna does not follow the ways of the world (60/36).
Krishna is the Destroyer of the fear of the mundane sojourn of the submissive (85/19).
Krishna is the Womb of the Scriptures (16-44, 80/45, 84/20).
Krishna is Sree Guru's Own Self (80/33).
Krishna is devoid of hankering for wife, offspring, etc. (60/20).
Krishna is the Ordainer of the worldly sojourn and of the summum bonum (1/7).
Krishna is the Cause of all entities (85/14).
Krishna is the Friend of the good (69/17).
Krishna is devoid of discrimination as of kinship (63/38, 44).
Krishna is Existence (56/27).
Krishna possesses true desire (80/44).
Krishna is the True Entity (87/17).
Krishna is True of speech (48/26).
Krishna is True of resolve (37/12).
Krishna sees with an equal Eye (16/33).
Krishna is the Cause of all causes (14/56-57, 63/38, 87/16).
Krishna is the Originator of all (59/28).
Krishna is the Soul's own self of all jivas (individual souls) (14/55).

Krishna is Omniscient (16/48).
Krishna is All Seeing (38/18).
Krishna is the Embodiment of all gods (74/19, 86/54).
Krishna is the Seer of all (16/48).
Krishna is the Lord of all (37/23).
Krishna is the Stay (ashraya) of all entities (82|46).
Krishna is All-pervasive and Eternal (9/13).
Krishna is the Soul of all elements (86/31).
Krishna is the Knower of the minds of all elements (81/1).
Krishna is the soul's self of all elements (74/24).
Krishna is the Inner Soul of all elements (37/11).
Krishna is the Internal Guide of all elements (47/29).
Krishna is the Cause of the origin of all elements (64|29).
Krishna is the Limit of all good (84/21).
Krishna is Omnipotent (37/12).
Krishna is the Lord of Lakshmi, the Presiding Deity of all riches (47/46).
Krishna is the Internal Guide of all (63/38, 72/6).
Krishna is the Stay (Ashraya) of all (40/15).
Krishna is Witness and Seer of Self (86/31).
Krishna is the Refuge of the good (80/9).
Krishna is most difficult to serve (88/11).
Krishna is the Friend of one's heart (48/26).
Krishna is the Withholder of Creation (82/45).
Krishna is Withholder, Creator and Preserver (63/44).
Krishna is the Master of the functions of creation, etc. (16/49,37/12).
Krishna is devoid of distinction as of kinship (74/21).
Krishna is devoid of distinction as between kin and alien(72/6).
Krishna indwells the Universe created by Himself (48/19).
Krishna is satisfied by the taste of His Self-Delight (72/6).
Krishna is the Destroyer of the worldly sojourn of His devotees (60/43).
Krishna is the Wearer of body according to His Wish (1/7).

SREE KRISHNA-CHAITANYA MATH,
BRINDABAN, MUTTRA.

Volume I— Introductory

I. —Object And Method

The present work is an attempt to offer a theistic account in the English language of the career and teachings of Sree Chaitanya. The number of existing English books on the subject is very small. The life and precepts of Sree Chaitanya Mah aprabhu by Thakur Bhaktivinode,^[1]J.R.A.S., January, 1897, p. 130. The book can be had at the Gaudiya Math, Calcutta.1 the pioneer of the movement of pure devotion in our Age, although it gives a true account of His life, is a comparatively short work. Other English works on the subject are from the pens of self-sufficient misguided amateurs who have had no practical experience of the teaching they have professed to expound. This is opposed to the dictum of Sree Chaitanya that, “no one is fit to be a teacher of religion who does not practice the same in his own life”. None of these works, with the solitary exception of that by Thakur Bhaktivinode, deals properly with the spiritual side of the teachings of Sree Chaitanya. The available authoritative sources of information are quite exhaustive regarding the spiritual aspect and offer a narrative of His doings and teachings that is both consistent and free from contradictions. To these was added later another body of works of a different character by pedantic pseudo-Vaishnava and faithless foreign writers, that offer the concoctions of their own respective lines of thought. Insincere writers have adopted without apology the point of view and garbled. accounts of the pseudo-Vaishnava authors as the basis of their narratives.

The existing English works although they sometimes profess to be historical in reality offer a superficial, extremely crude and misleading view of the subject. They confine themselves almost exclusively to the esoteric issues. This at least is not the method of the source-books, but a departure from the bona fide position of the theme itself. The historical method proper should aim at presenting the religion as it is really found in the genuine original sources and in the spirit of its first propounders. But many of these writers, due to their empirical training, have failed to observe this essential canon of historical judgment. Moreover these writers generally happen to be very poorly equipped in respect of their knowledge of the vast body of Scriptures to which the teachings of Sree Chaitanya stand in the closest relationship; and, even if any of them happen to possess a general acquaintance with the texts of these Scriptures, they fail to take a scientific view of the subject due to lack of spiritual insight.

The prominent defects that mar the value of these works are the purely empiric point of view of their authors, their want of spiritual knowledge of the Scriptures and their lack of critical caution in the choice and use of authorities.

The empiric method is unsuitable for the treatment of a spiritual subject. The vision of the empiricist is confined to things of this world. The Vaishnava authors on whose narratives we have to base our account of Sree Chaitanya, were not empiricists. The subject of which they have left us the account, is the Absolute, as distinct from the empiric, Truth that comes down to them in the chain of disciplic succession from Godhead Himself. They acquired this esoteric vision, when they prove to be true, by the methods of loyal submission and sincere service at the feet of spiritual preceptors as enjoined by the Scriptures on all those who desire to obtain spiritual enlightenment. They are never tired of repeating that the Absolute Truth, inherent in a bona fide soul, who expresses himself in their books' is not derived from any experience of this world and is not intelligible to those whose vision is obscured by knowledge derived from the experience of this world.

The Absolute Truth is transcendental and, therefore, no human being can attain

to Him by his sensuous efforts, i.e., by the ascending process, as all phenomena that are exposed to the faulty, limited senses are, by this virtue, non-transcendental. The Absolute Truth is eternally existent but is not realizable by men so long as they are not relieved of the aptitude. of their defective vision. The Absolute Truth is to be received, undoubtedly in the spirit of honest inquiry, from those wise men who bear no reference to the world of their sensuous gratification.

Very few of the existing English works on Sree Chaitanya satisfy these essential conditions of theistic authorship that are so strongly insisted upon by these devotional writers without which such description carries no useful purpose. On the contrary, these later writers are apt to offer their own views, derived from their empiric association, regarding the subject-matter of the original works, in a manner that leaves on the mind of the reader the impression that they are more anxious to point out the crudities and errors of these old authors than exhibit their views in a scientific and impartial manner. This is certainly neither history nor religion but only an uncalled-for and useless distortion of both.

The object of writing this book is to place before the English-knowing readers a strictly accurate theistic account. of Sree Chaitanya, Who teaches the Absolute Truth that has been handed down through the Ages by an unbroken succession of unbiased spiritual preceptors. This narrative is broad-based on all the authoritative sources and seeks to fully present the esoteric side as explaining the esoteric in pursuance of the method of all really enlightened writers on spiritual subjects.

The superiority of Sree Chaitanya to all other teachers and prophets consists in this that He made fully known the Absolute Truth Who was only partially unveiled by others. This is the special significance of Sree Chaitanya's Deeds and Teachings. Other teachers of the religion before him had allowed more or less the worship of non-Godhead, having had reference and adulteration of their present deformities. Sree Chaitanya came into this world to make all people understand that in reference to their eternal existence they should have nothing to do with non-Godhead. Sree Chaitanya, Who speaks the language, is the Absolute Truth in His full manifestation. He has made people understand

the only true way of approaching Godhead Himself. This is the proof that He is Godhead Himself. He is identical with Sree Krishna, not His Self as Lord and Proprietor of all things, but in the attitude of the agony of separation from the Absolute, i.e., Himself.

Sree Krishna opposed all addiction to ephemeral thoughts and activities. This has been communicated to us through the channel of unbiased preceptors who have no other interest except delivering in tact the whole of the Truth received by them. The Absolute Truth is sure to be obscured if He is handled by elevationists and salvationists (karmins and jnanins), i.e., by those who believe in worldly activities and in freedom from misery by means of knowledge gradually gained through the senses. We do not want to learn about the Absolute Truth from these. It is only the pencils of ray emanating from the Sun when they happen to be received by the retina that enable one to see the Sun directly even from a long distance. But we must be very careful that nothing foreign interposes between the eye and the Sun, thus obstructing the passage of the ray and preventing it from reaching the eye. This is the epistemology of Absolute Knowledge offered by Sree Chaitanya. It is followed in the brochure of Thakur Bhaktivinode referred to above. My object is only to elaborate what is told briefly in that little book and elaborated in the Bhagawatam and Charit amrita.

The peculiarity of my position, therefore, consists in this that I shake off the views of the schools of mundane elevationists and salvationists, the professors of temporary enjoyments (bhukti) and permanent release from misery attendant upon such enjoyment losing in the process the idea of the individual self itself (mukti), for the reason that they do not lead to the Absolute Truth. We are absolutists. We believe that our only duty is to follow the Absolute Who has His Own eternal plane to stand. We hold that the most intelligent among the contemporaries of Sree Chaitanya, those who sincerely followed Him, really understood His teaching through serving love. This truth which they received from Sree Chaitanya Himself has been communicated to my Preceptor by a succession of sincere followers of the Absolute Truth reaching back to them. Each one of this succession of preceptors submitted to the conditions of sincere pupilage to his predecessors enabling the latter to impart to him the Truth by

the eradication of temporary, local errors and misconceptions that might crop up in unguided critics. Due to this careful transmission of the full Truth through unbiased preceptors to my unprejudiced Preceptor, I should rightly claim him to be a contemporary of Sree Gaursundar Himself. Other lines of teachers who deviate from my Preceptor are Absolutists only to an extent. Had they been fully absolutist they would have come under the banner of the line of Absolute Truth, which has no affinity of deviating from the Absolute proper. My Preceptor out of his unlimited mercy, which I craved, brought me to his path by himself coming to me and dissuading me from following other ways and means of language that would be intelligible to me in my then condition.

There is thus in my case a direct preceptorial connection extending right up to the living sources undisturbed by physical or mental obstruction. The line of the Absolutists has prevented us from going astray in any other direction but to embrace Absolutism and has given us this careful training. I am a regulated being and do not belong to the empiric school as I keep not any view of deserting this line to join the challengers. My preceptors have been free from mundane references being treaders of the path of the Absolute. We are discussing the Deeds of Sree Chaitanya in the light of our preceptors. But our preceptors did not tell us this thing in the present form and language. Linguistically it is our maiden effort. We do not know whether we shall succeed in this. We, however, claim to have received this narrative from the living sources. Only the strict followers of Sree Chaitanya can obtain the full view of the Absolute Truth. It cannot be had by the followers of any other teacher who has a different angle of vision. All other lines only offer a partial view. Sree Radha Govinda, the full Truth, is attainable only on this path. I should be a sincere follower of my preceptor and of the preceptors of my preceptor and have no intention of deviating from my preceptors. There is no chance of foreign element getting into my account. There is no hypocrisy. The only thing that is new is that I am trying to tell it through the medium of a different diction and language, which happen to be different from those of my preceptors.

In this connection it will not be out of place to refer to subtle and unconscious

prejudices that stand in the way of our giving a real hearing to a purely spiritual subject. The life and teachings of Sree Chaitanya are not the special concern of any narrow sect.

The knowledge of it is claimed to be indispensable for the whole animate and inert world in as much as Sree Chaitanya is the living embodiment of the highest and the most intimate distinctive forms of the service of the Supreme Lord to which every being has a claim by his constituent principle. The service of Godhead, however, has no affinity with anything of this transitory world as in the case of meddling with non-God conception. The readers of the transcendental Deeds (Leel a) of Sree Chaitanya may be divided into three classes, viz., (1) those who read for the satisfaction of idle curiosity, (2) those who read for gathering empiric knowledge to suit their taste and to mould the same accordingly, and (3) lastly, those readers who are really seekers of the Absolute Truth as distinct from the empirical, i.e., who sincerely avail themselves of the full opportunity of their reading.

We need not stop to consider the case of that class of readers—the dilettantes and mere literateurs—who read for the satisfaction of idle curiosity.

Those readers who will approach the subject in a real spirit of inquiry may take up one of two possible attitudes. Some of these may consider the subject as one that is capable of being understood in the light of worldly experience like any non-spiritual subject. Such persons will accept only those portions of this work which may appear to them to agree with their existing convictions. But as these convictions, in the case of empiricists, happen to be themselves based on the experience of this world, which is changeable, they are in their nature only relative, and not absolute, Truth. Those convictions are in fact unspiritual and, instead of helping, prevent us from understanding the Absolute. Those readers who, failing to grasp this real difference between the spiritual and the physical and mental, may try to understand the subject with the help of their empiric knowledge are bound to be dissatisfied as they proceed with this study and the net result of their labour in going through these pages may be even to confirm them more strongly in their empiric, i.e., unspiritual, attitude. The object of

study in such case will be entirely missed.

That class of sincere readers who, recognising the difference between the empiric and the spiritual Truth, are inclined to seek for the latter only in these pages and may be prepared for the purpose to disregard, at least for the time being, the clamorous opposition of their empiric convictions, and are thus in a position to give the narrative a patient and sympathetic hearing, will be thereby enabled to understand gradually the reason why the most sincerely religious people happen to cherish the subject of this work with such tender and absorbing devotion.

It is not possible to enter into the spirit of a subject unless a really patient hearing is given to it. But it is very difficult to submit with patience to listen to a subject that is declared to be situated completely beyond the scope of all experience and convictions of the hearer. The ordeal that faces us on the threshold of spiritual life is truly formidable. It is only such people who combine openness of mind with a sincere desire to know not the empiric, changeable, relative, but the Absolute, unchangeable, eternal Truth, that are enabled by the grace of Godhead to listen patiently to a spiritual narrative which appears to be almost needless from the point of view of the empiricist.

The transcendental career and teachings of Sree Chaitanya are bound to prove to be of the highest interest to all sincere seekers of spiritual enlightenment. The fact that Sree Chaitanya appears to be born in Bengal need not mislead those readers who belong to a different country into supposing that His teachings are meant for the people of Bengal or of India, of this or of a former Age. It is difficult for most to free their minds completely from national, ethnological or chronological prejudices in these days of militant nationalism and empiricism. But the real meaning of the career of Sree Chaitanya will be missed if He be regarded merely from any mundane point of view, viz., that of race or nationality; limited time or limited space; physical bearing; intellectual endowment, caste, creed or colour, etc. His teaching and activities belong to the plane of the Absolute which transcends all the petty unwholesome limitations of our worldly existence. Let the sympathetic reader lay aside these subtle and

unconscious prejudices and allow the eternal Truth to enter the mind thus opened out to Him, without hastily passing the final judgment by a mere cursory look at the title page. Whatever the quarter from which the Absolute Truth enters His appearance and, in this matter His choice is free, the Absolute Truth when He actually knocks at our door should be assured the unreserved welcome that is His due from those who really seek for Him.

The sincere reader need also be on his guard against specific misconceptions at the very outset, of an unfavourable kind. The Deeds and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya have been consciously or unconsciously misrepresented by most modern writers. We have already referred to this fact. Any idea, favourable or unfavourable, regarding Sree Chaitanya that the reader may have already formed from the writings of these authors or their partisans may be temporarily laid aside to allow of an impartial hearing being given to the present narrative. Dogmatism, superstition or self-sufficiency can never lead to spiritual progress. Our readers are much more likely to gain what they require if they do not reserve any contrary thought which is likely to receive these tidings coldly or present them from taking Up a sympathetic and inquiring attitude. The advice is to stop temporarily any conception that they may have already formed and even to dismantle an awkward construction that may lie across the path of their following the course of the narrative with seriousness of purpose.

The message of the transcendental realm that has come down to this phenomenal world through the medium of sound is known as the Veda (i.e., knowledge), or as the Sruti (i.e., that which is heard), as the ear alone of all the organs of sense is fit to receive the distant message which is transmissible only in the form of sound. The Absolute Truth, for the simple reason that He happens to be located beyond the reach of our physical senses, cannot be directly perceived by us. All the other senses, viz., those of touch, sight, smell, taste require, as the condition of perceiving any object, actual contact with the same. But the ear possesses this special peculiarity that it can perceive an object in subtle form without being in gross material contact with it. As for example it is possible to hear about London from Calcutta by means of the ear. It is not possible to learn anything about London from Calcutta, in the same natural

way, by means of any other sense. The Scriptures, i.e., writings, are but the visualized -revealed transcendental sounds. Therefore it is not so extraordinary as it seems at first sight that of all our present organs the ear alone should be privileged to receive the message of the Absolute. The transcendental sound is, however, different from ordinary sound inasmuch as it is identical with the object denoted by it, while the object denoted by the latter is different as object from the sound which is a symbol to signify the object without itself being the object.

The identity of the transcendental sound with the object denoted by such sound is due to the fact that everything on the transcendental plane happens to be an entity of incomprehensible infinite dimensions. This is not submitted to the present limited understanding of man which is strictly limited to entities of three dimensions only. The transcendental Truth possesses unity and is infinite by His Nature. All this is contrary to our limited reason and so accustomed we are to the rationale of limited experience that it appears to us to be therefore irrational. Unless this really irrational opposition of our finite reason is temporarily stopped it will effectively bar all access to the real infinite. But once the voice of Godhead is allowed really to enter our attentive ear He will purify our perverted reason and render it fit to appreciate that which in its present degraded state it is unfit to understand. Let us, therefore, assume for the present that unwholesome heterogeneity is not possible in the Absolute Who is altogether unitary in His character.

The rational necessity of revelation for our knowledge of the Absolute should be perfectly clear. The alternative to this are the multifarious spurious theories regarding the Absolute that have been put forward from time to time by the human mind. These man-made theories are, and can be, neither conclusive in themselves nor in agreement with one another. They are liable to constant modification with the progress of empiric knowledge. These wrong theories can never lead us to the Absolute Truth Who admits no such self-contradiction as is inevitable with empiricists. The word of Godhead as revealed in the Veda, i.e., by means of the recorded transcendental sound, has been, and will ever remain the only rationally possible source of all human knowledge regarding the substantive nature of the unchallengeable Reality.

There is thus nothing irrational ab initio in holding that the Veda is the Word of

Godhead Himself. The Veda exists from eternity. The Veda, according to His own version was originally revealed in this world to Sree Brahma the first jiva to appear in the realm of physical Nature, and by him made available to other jivas, that have since made their appearance in this world in course of time through the channel of disciplic spiritual succession.

The Veda contains the Absolute Truth Whose service is the eternal and universal function of the proper nature of all entities. Not being made by any one the Veda is free from all taint of narrowness, error or partiality. The path to which He points is the only one that should be trod by every soul if he wants to walk in the way of Truth. It is necessary to put off all prejudices against the authority of the revealed Scriptures arising out of misapprehension of the nature of the subject. The admission of the supreme authority of the Veda does not involve the utter annihilation of thinking. On the contrary it is the Absolute Truth Who enables us to find the real value of empiric thought and its relation to ourselves. Nor does the acceptance of the Veda involve the rejection of the Scriptures of other countries. The revealed portions of all the Scriptures are one and the same. They are the Word of Godhead differing only in the degree of manifestation. This oneness of all revelation will become clearer in course of this narrative.

The Veda is self-existent and eternal. It was not made by anybody. It has the quality of attracting to itself the devoted homage of all sincere souls. Men of this world love a thing by reason of its worldly benefits for themselves. There is nothing in the shape of worldly value to explain the acceptance of the Veda by the most sincere seekers of the Truth. It is as if one is irresistibly attracted towards a chance passer-by and welcomes him into one's house by a spontaneous instinct. No extraneous circumstance, no previously found ties, would explain this spontaneous liking. It must be entirely due to some innate excellence in the object of such attachment. The Veda has ever been loved in this impartial and detached attitude. Theories that are made can mislead inasmuch as they attempt to substitute the convictions of their authors in place of those of others. It is the substitution of one untruth in place of another, due to the vanity or spite of clever or aggressive thinkers. There is no room for impartiality in such case. The Absolute Truth alone is really impartial. His

impartiality is the cause of the acceptance of His service by sincere souls.

The Absolute Truth Who finds implicit expression in the Vedas and the Upanishads, has been put into a systematic and more explicit form in the Brahmasutra of Sree Vyasadeva. In this remarkable work the subject has been treated under the four heads of (1) relationship of everything with Godhead, (2) solution of apparent heterogeneity that is found in Nature, (3) the means of spiritual realisation, and (4) the object of spiritual function. The Brahmasutra establishes the existence of personal Godhead, and devotion as the means of realising transcendental love for Godhead as the final object of such activity.

The Authority of the Brahmasutra, as part and parcel of the revealed Scriptures, is admitted by all transcendentalists. The chain of disciplic succession in the case of Sree Vyasadeva is as follows. Sree Vyasadeva received the Word from Sree Narada who received it from Sree Brahma, the first god representing the bound creation, to whom it was communicated by Sree Narayana Himself, i.e., Personality of Godhead. He exists in Sree Vaikuntha, the realm that is free from all limitation.

The Brahmasutra gives us the Truth in a highly condensed form. It is the textbook of all theistic philosophy. The conclusions embodied in it and their significance have been elaborated in a number of commentaries written by different authors.

Sree Vyasadeva is also the author of the Srimad Bhagawata which gives us the comprehensive history of the transcendental activities of Godhead Himself and of His different Avatars. The deeds of Sree Krishna Who is declared by the Veda to be Godhead Himself, as He is, constitute the central theme of this great work. The Srimad Bhagawata thus forms, as it were, the natural commentary, in the concrete or explicit form, of the Brahmasutra, from the pen of their common author.

The Deeds of Sree Chaitanya, the Subject of the present work, are the living Embodiment of the teaching of Srimad Bhagawata. The Deeds and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya stand alone as history of the service of the Supreme Lord in

the form of the deepest and perfectly unreserved intimacy.

The privilege of this form of service, the hidden truth of all Scriptures, was never before given to the fallen jiva. In the words of Sree Rupa Goswami Prabhu, the authority on the esoteric significance of the Deeds of Sree Chaitanya, "God Himself with the beautiful golden complexion out of mercy appeared in this world in this most degenerate Age to confer the grace of devotion to Himself, of the superior order that had not been given to this world before. Even the Geet a which teaches the service of Godhead with single-minded devotion and in the spirit of complete self-surrender, does not tell us much about the actual, concrete form of the highest service. The Srimad Bhagawatam describes all different kinds of service in the concrete form and establishes the supreme excellence of that which was practised by the transcendental milk-maids of Braja. Sree Chaitanya is the living Embodiment of this highest and most intimate form of the service of the Divinity.

The Brindabana pastimes of Sree Krishna, which have been given the place of honour in the greatest devotional work of the whole world, are of all forms of Divine service the one that is also liable to be most grossly misunderstood. The subject will be treated in greater detail in its proper place in the body of this work. It will suffice for our purpose here to state that Sree Chaitanya made clearly manifest by His Deeds and Teachings what this form of service really means. His Deeds are in fact the Brahmasutra, Geet a and the Srimad Bhagawatam displayed to our view in the living form. He is the living Vedanta. Other Avatars and prophets have taught the reverential worship of the Supreme Lord. Sree Chaitanya proved by His Deeds that the highest form of service is to be found in the Srimad Bhagawatam, that its inner meaning had not been properly understood up to His time by anybody and that it offers what all the Scriptures have been endeavouring from eternity unsuccessfully to express. Sree Chaitanya's own career is the concrete living expression of this highest form of the service of the Lord.

The Deeds and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya offer everything that is contained in the whole body of the Scriptures of this country or of any country. They give

us the complete view of the Absolute, which is not to be found in any Scripture. And because it is the full view of the Absolute Truth that we get that the Deeds and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya possess the quality of solving all doubts and difficulties. It has the power of delivering from the thralldom of this limited existence the elevationists who base their hope for mankind on worldly activities and also the empiric philosopher who is caught in the cobweb of his own ephemeral speculations. It throws open the gates of the limitless world to all sorts and conditions of people by simply presenting the complete view of the Truth which reconciles all apparent contradictions and composes all the seeming differences and discords that so trouble the material world and, in their place, it establishes the reign of universal spiritual Harmony.

No apology is needed from the historian of the Deeds of Sree Chaitanya for anything in His transcendental career. His Deeds and Teachings, as we find them recorded in the immortal works of His associates and followers, are not the concoctions of the human imagination. Anyone who reads these sublime works with an open mind, is bound to be convinced of the Absolute reality of all those Activities. The task of the historian of Sree Chaitanya is rather not to miss the least detail of His Divine career. This may not appeal to the taste of those historians whose vision is incapable of passing the line of secular interests. But they nevertheless constitute the most momentous facts of theistic history and are, in fact, the goal to which all history leads and in which it should find its supreme fulfillment and real explanation.

The pseudo-Vedantists are specially liable to under-estimate the significance of the concrete activities of personal Godhead constituting His fullest manifestation. According to them the Vedanta is a mere theory of the Absolute and is, like any product of mental speculation, an abstract subject; although such view is clearly opposed to that of Sree Vyasadeva himself who would otherwise have not been at so much pains to describe minutely every detail of the Activities of Godhead Himself and of all His Avatars and assign to the Braja Pastimes of Krishna-Chandra the place of honour in his comprehensive history of the Divinity. This is the subtle danger that threatens all who put their trust in empiric wisdom. The Deeds of Sree Chaitanya are the practical refutation of all

casuistry and empiric speculations regarding the Absolute that are to be found in all parts of the world.

The writer has ventured upon a task that is by its nature super-human not from any pride of empiric knowledge. This task of propagating the eternal religion of all animate beings has been handed down to him in the regular line of spiritual discipleship. It was the wish of Thakur Bhaktivinode to spread the knowledge of the eternal religion taught and practised by Sree Chaitanya to all countries outside Bengal through the medium of the English language. The writer would be failing in his duty towards his spiritual preceptor and towards the growing community of the pure devotees who are desirous that the wish of Thakur Bhaktivinode, the same as that of Sree Chaitanya Himself, should be carried out, if he did not make a sincere effort of putting into the English language information that he has received from his predecessors. The writer feels no misgiving in thus offering to the world at large this message of the Absolute inasmuch as in doing this he is only performing a duty that has devolved on his unworthy shoulders in the regular chain of disciplic succession. He makes his prostrated obeisances at the feet of the preceptor who opened his sealed eyes by the spike of the collyrium of spiritual knowledge and all the devotees of the Supreme Lord that the word of God may through their mercy find expression in these pages.

The Absolute Truth cannot be discovered by the ascending effort of the human mind. Such effort, as a matter of fact, leads to quite the opposite direction. The Absolute Truth has been appropriately compared to the disc of the Sun. It is not possible to find out the Sun during night with the help of the most powerful lamp that can be devised by the ingenuity of man. The Sun can be seen only by means of rays that come from itself. The Sun is visible when it is above the horizon and there is nothing to obstruct our vision directed towards it. The Sun is seen easily enough when these conditions are fulfilled. The Absolute Truth is like the glorious disc of the Sun that is always above the horizon. But we bound jivas cannot see it as we are led by our empiric knowledge to direct our sealed eyes to the opposite direction and on the mists and clouds of worldliness that further obstruct our view. It is transcendental Truth that is offered in these pages and not any speculations of the writer. This transcendental Truth Whom

he has received from his preceptor and Whom he is trying to impart to others is not something that can be challenged by the limited reason of man. His predecessors have been enabled to receive Him by submitting to Him, i.e., by listening to and accepting Him in the sense of practising and preaching the same. This constitutes the sole justification of the present undertaking. The writer is desirous of serving the Absolute Truth by telling Him to others as by doing so he can serve himself and all animate beings in the only really useful way.

This eternal function of the proper selves of all animate beings that has been taught by Sree Chaitanya and all the revealed Scriptures is at once profound and easy. It is easy because it possesses the quality of satisfying the wants of foolish, senseless and unlettered persons. It is also profound inasmuch as it is capable of benefiting the most erudite scholars, i.e. those who are masters of the art of controversy and most deeply versed in the scriptures. This combination of apparently opposite qualities is not to be found anywhere else in this world. In fact any one who is free from bias can be heir of this religion; on this simple condition it lies open to all mankind. The idealist no less than the practical man of action is equally enabled by its means to successfully cross this great ocean of limited, physical existence. But unthinking worldly minded people have always been misled by its perverse forms as it has been often misrepresented by the malice, worldly interest, or ignorance of its pseudo-preachers. The only way that is open to bound jivas for disentangling themselves from the fetters of ignorance and thereby regaining their natural condition of the spontaneous, spiritual service of the Lord, is that offered by the methods of listening to the transcendental deeds of the Godhead from the lips of His devotees and making the same known to others by obeying the Word of God in their actual conduct and preaching it to others. It is only by constantly listening to the Word of God from those who exclusively serve the Absolute and practicing the same with body, mind and speech that the fallen jivas are enabled gradually to get rid of their materialistic hallucinations which stand in their way of realising their own proper nature and its true relationship with God and therefore of serving Him in the proper manner.

The materials for the present work have been drawn from— (1) the Sikshastakam of Sree Chaitanya which gives the summary of His teachings in His own words; (2 and 3) the Karchas (memoirs) of Sree Murari Gupta and of Sree Swarup Damodar (the latter as embodied in his works by Sree Raghunath Das Goswamin, Sree Swarup Damodar's closest associate); (4) Prema Vivarta of Sree Jagadananda; (5) Sree-Krishna-Chaitanya-Chandrodaya-Nataka of Kavi Karnapur; (6) Sree-Chaitanya-Charitahakavya of Sree Chaitanya Das, the elder brother of Kavi Karnapur; (7) the works of Sree Prabodhananda Saraswati; (8) the Bhajanamrita of Sree Narahari Sarkar Thakur; (9) the numerous works left by five of the famous six Goswamins; (10) Sree Brindbandas Thakur's Sree-Chaitanya-Bhagawat; (11) Sree Lochand as's Chaitanya-Mangal; (12) Sree Krishnadas Kaviraj's Sree-Chaitanya-Charitamrita and lastly (13) the works of those later writers who have strictly followed the above authors. Most of these works are in Sanskrit, some of them in Bengali.

Sree Chaitanya has not left any books written by Himself. A few shlokas composed by Him are quoted in the works of His associates, the chief of them being the Sikshastakam which gives in eight stanzas a summary of his teachings.

Sree Murari Gupta was the constant companion of Sree Chaitanya's younger days. His memoirs are a careful record of the activities of Sree Chaitanya at Nabadwip. Sree Swarup Damodar attended on the person of Sree Chaitanya night and day throughout the period of His long residence at Puri. His memoirs which have not come down to us in their separate form are the chief authority as regards Sree Chaitanya's latter career and relied upon by all the contemporary writers. Sree Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswamin in his detailed account of this part of Sree Chaitanya's career made use of the information which he obtained directly from Sree Raghunathdas Goswamin who was the spiritual ward of Sree Swarup Damodar to whose charge he was committed by the express command of Sree Chaitanya Himself. Pandit Jagadananda was the loved playmate of Sree Chaitanya's boyhood and His constant companion to the end. Kavi Karnapur was the son of Sree Sivananda Sen, one of the closest associates of Sree Chaitanya. Sree Chaitanyadas was the elder brother of Kavi

Karnapura. Sree Prabodhananda Saraswati was the contemporary of Sree Chaitanya. He was a native of Southern India and the younger brother of Sree Venkata Bhatta at whose house at Sree Rangam Sree Chaitanya resided for the period of four months during His travels in the South. Sree Prabodhananda Saraswati was the uncle and preceptor of Sree Gopal Bhatta, one of the six Goswamins. Sree Narahari Sarkar Thakur was one of Sree Chaitanya's principal associates.

Of the six Goswamins Sree Rupa and his elder brother Sree Sanatana were instructed by Sree Chaitanya Himself in regard to the subject-matter of their respective works. Sree Raghunath Das Goswamin got his information from Sree Swarup Damodar and he himself associated with Sree Chaitanya. Sree Gopal Bhatta's connection with Sree Chaitanya has already been mentioned. Sree Jiva was the nephew of Sree Rupa and Sanatana and was the disciple of the former.

Sree Brindabandas Thakur was the recipient of the favour of Sree Nityananda, the associated facsimile, so to say, of Sree Chaitanya. His mother Sree Narayani was the niece of Sribash Pandit, the foremost of those Vaishnava householders who were the direct followers of Sree Chaitanya. Sree Lochandas got the materials of his work partly from Narahari Sarkar Thakur, one of Sree Chaitanya's close associates and by his devotional impressions. Sree Krishnadas Goswamin got his information as has already been mentioned from his preceptor Sree Raghunathdas, one of the six Goswamins .

Most of the works of the authors named above are still extant and they are the authorities for all subsequent writers. The chief of these later authors whose works have been consulted in the compilation of the present account are, (1) Sree Narottamdas Thakur who was the disciple of Sree Lokanath Goswamin, one of the closest associates of Sree Chaitanya, (2) Sree Viswanath Chakravarty belonging to the line of disciples of Sree Narottamdas Thakur, (3) Sree Baladev Vidyabhusan the first Gaudiya commentator of the Brahmasutra, (4) Sree Narahari Chakravarty in the line of disciplic descent from Sree Viswanath Thakur, (5) Sree Bhaktivinode Thakur, the sincere guardian of the true Vaishnavas of the present day, and (6) my Sree Gurudeva, His Divine Grace Paramahansa Paribrajakacharya Sree Sreemat Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaj whose mercy is my only hope of attaining the service of

Godhead.

It will be seen from the above that there is no lack of materials of the most reliable character available to the historian of the Career and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya. It is, therefore, rather strange that the personality of Sree Chaitanya has been misunderstood and misrepresented by a certain class of writers. The neglect of the original sources was one cause of this. A constructive motive was supplied by the animosity of sectarians and the greed of worldly interests of pseudo-followers.

It was the life-work of Thakur Bhaktivinode to re-discover the true history of Sree Chaitanya and make the same available to the present generation. The magnitude of this service to his country, to humanity and to all animate beings time alone will show. The eternal religion taught and practiced by Sree Chaitanya have been made intelligible to the modern reader by the labours of Thakur Bhaktivinode. It is bound to re-act most powerfully on all existing religious convictions of the world and make possible the establishment of universal spiritual harmony of which the whole world stands so much in need. Most of the works of Thakur Bhaktivinode were, however, written in Bengali and Sanskrit. The present work is a slight attempt to present in the English language an outline of the Life and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya made known by Thakur Bhaktivinode, the pioneer of the movement of pure devotion in the present Age, which aims at reestablishing in practice the eternal religion of all animate beings revealed in the Scriptures and taught and practiced by Sree Chaitanya. The activities of my most revered Preceptor are well known to the world. His Divine Grace is commissioned by Godhead to spread the Teaching of Sree Chaitanya to every village of the world and re-establish the spiritual society. This was foretold by Thakur Bhaktivinode.

II. —The Real Nature Of Sree Krishna

The historical aspect of Sree Krishna need not be considered as irrelevant or mundane. The Absolute is always no other than Himself. Antiquarian speculations regarding the historicity of Sree Krishna have thus, inconceivably to us, an intimate bearing on the question of the real Nature of the Absolute. The scheme of ancient History of India that is being worked out by the researches of learned scholars has not yet been conclusively settled in regard to the lay affairs of that remote period which may have witnessed the Great War that is reported to have been fought out on the plains of Kurukshetra between the Kurus and the Pandavas backed by their respective allies. But the time is not far distant when it will be practicable to avoid prejudices and misunderstandings that at present prevent our approaching that great event in the proper spirit. The Puranas are steadily winning the confidence of the most hostile critics and the actual occurrence of the Great War is coming to be recognised, on the authority of the Puranas, as having taken place at a period which is not very far from 3000 B.C. The narration of the Mahabharata may now be seriously accepted as providing a tentative basis for the historical career of Sree Krishna. The Harivamsa, which forms the supplement of the Great Epic, is not opposed to the Mahabharata either in the spirit or in the so-called assumptions regarding particulars of the career of Sree Krishna that do not appear in the Great Epic.

The difficulty in regard to the Bhagawatam has also become susceptible of historical handling. If that great Purana was actually composed in the ninth century A.D., as seems not very improbable it should still be historically possible to accept its testimony regarding even the events of the Boyhood of Krishna. But from the lay point of view, this question is not of absorbing interest in as much as the politically important activities in the career of Sree Krishna belong to a later period. But from the point of view of religious history, the story of the marvelous Boyhood of Krishna is all-important and demands our most careful consideration.

The Mahabharata deals exclusively with the Doings of Krishna as King of Dwaraka and Ruler of the Yadavas. But the mighty Deeds of Krishna recorded

in the Mahabharata form no part of the worship of Sree Sree Radha-Govinda, which is the subject matter of the present work. Bhandarkar, in his anxiety to redeem the worship of Krishna from the charge of immorality, might prefer, the worship of the wedded Husband of Rukmini to that of Sree Sree Radha-Krishna. But the Bhagawatam makes the Pastimes of Brindabana the heart and kernel of the whole narrative of its deeds of Krishna as the Divinity, and it is this which supplies all the materials for the prevalent worship of Sree Sree Radha-Govinda. The political Krishna occupies but a secondary position, if even that, in the sphere of worship.

The narrative of the Bhagawatam so far as it covers the same ground as the Mahabharata does not differ materially from the story told by the Epic. But the interpretation and point of view of the Bhagawatam is throughout explicitly different from that of the Mahabharata even in its treatment of those events that are common to the two works. The later date of the appearance of the Bhagawatam, together with the new perspective adopted and the prominence given in it to the Boyhood of Krishna, has given rise to the doubts regarding the authenticity of its story of the Boyhood of Krishna, which is, however, also found in several other Puranas of an admittedly more ancient date.

Sectarian manipulation of history is assumed to be responsible for difference of version in the treatment of even historical events that are connected with the origin and growth of creeds. Theologians are supposed to be often ready to be unmindful of any version that may appear to them to be opposed to the tenets of the creed that they happen to profess. The Bhagawatam, judged by this canon, has appeared to certain scholars as being less reliable, in the considered historical sense, than the Great Epic. This view is also supposed to cut at the root of the reality of the religion itself. The issue regarding religion may be put thus: Did the Pastimes of Krishna at Brindabana manifest themselves on the mundane plane at any period in the ordinary historical sense?

The answer should be, even from the historical point of view, partly, in the affirmative and negative. The Bhagawatam is regarded by the Absolutists as being both a work of the medieval period as well as the very Body of the

eternally existing Truth Himself. The argument, viz., that as it happens to belong to the medieval period it cannot also at the same time be eternal that is without any origin, is inapplicable to the Bhagawatam . The case is exactly the same with the Brindabana Pastimes.. They are also regarded to be eternally true. They are at the same time claimed to be historically true. But they are not claimed to be merely historical events. They are, therefore, claimed to be as being both old and new, or neither. They are not regarded as limitable by the mundane categories.

It, therefore, becomes necessary to widen the scope of-the historical method itself in order to treat such a subject with any principle of consistency. The adherence to the scheme of gradual evolution of the creed has to be got rid of. The test of contemporary evidence as proof of authenticity should be found to be even more misleading for this particular purpose than it always is ordinarily.

What is the reality of the degree of validity of contemporary evidence in the ascertainment of the Truth? I record my opinion regarding a certain phenomenon actually occurring before my very eyes. The statement is made up of the narration of the occurrence and my individual opinion regarding its nature and other particulars that I may suppose have a bearing on it. The narrative portion is separated from opinion by the critics, and is accepted in that unexplained form as historically true. If Krishna actually passed His Divine Boyhood in Brindabana and performed at that place all the miracles before the very eyes of all the people, the older narrative of the Mahabharata, it is argued, should have also been cognizant of the same. If those miracles had been the most important of all the Activities of Krishna, Who is the Hero of the Epic, they could not have been altogether omitted by the writer of the Great Epic as they must have been actual and well-known occurrences. Such argument, although legitimate within its due limits in the case of mundane events, does not apply without a good deal of modification to the Pastimes of the Divinity. It is an option of the servants of Krishna, which they are not loth to exercise, to divulge His Activities, or keep Them concealed from the knowledge even of contemporaries. Those activities possess the special quality of being recognised as true in the real and not merely historical sense, as soon as, and whenever, they are so divulged to the unerring consciousness of the pure individual soul.

On the other hand, the reality is impossible of being ever “discovered” by the empiric historical method.

The Absolute chooses to present His deluding face to the sense-perception of man. His deluding energy is all-powerful and is able to prevent the search and discovery of the Truth, for Whose service, however, every individual soul has an imperative necessity. The tentative categories of the mundane Logicians are no other than fetters of the deluding Energy that tend to produce the strange belief that the transitory and limited are necessarily also true. It is this undoubted “fact” that vitiates the current short-sighted “historical” method at its source. The reality of the Ocean is neither proved nor disproved by the admission or denial of the ignorant dweller of the Taklamakan Desert. Such admission or such denial is equally abortive and wide of the mark if the observer has no knowledge of his subject. The issue itself as regards the Truth does not exist for the pedant of the waterless desert of the narrow and closely barriered Hinterland of Empiricism.

What value for instance are we to attach to such “historical” finding as this’ viz., that the teaching of Sree Chaitanya was the cause of the political downfall of Orissa? Sree Chaitanya teaches that the Absolute is served by all conditions, beings and events, either consciously or unconsciously as regards the agents themselves. The decline as well as the rise of empires and worlds serves equally in their tiny ways the uncompassable Absolute. As soon as their relation of service to the Absolute is grasped by the agents, the real consciousness of the Truth is produced in the humble agent. So long as the Absolute continues to be pedantically regarded as a part of Physical Nature, as cause or effect, there is no consciousness at all even of the issue itself of the real Truth. Sree Chaitanya and His Activities belong to the plane of the Absolute. The empiric historian, with his geographical and chronological apparatus of observation, can have really no proper idea of the grotesque anomaly that he unconsciously perpetrates by his pedantic effort to gauze the Absolute by the standard supplied to her victim by His deluding Energy in the form of the mundane categories that can only limit and define, whereas the function that is required to be performed is to get rid of the necessity of having to do either.

If Srimad Bhagawatam , which professes to treat of the Absolute, is considered to be an object of this phenomenal world, how can it possibly impart to a person who chooses to entertain such illogical thought, any knowledge of its contents? The recipient of the consciousness of the Absolute as well as the communicant of such consciousness must alike belong to the plane of the Absolute consciousness. The empiric consciousness is not in the plane of the Absolute consciousness at all. It can only bungle and commit a deliberate blunder by attempting to limit and define the immeasurable and undefinable under the plea of a necessity that need not be supposed to exist at all. It is possible, if the limitations of the mental equipment are fully remembered and allowed for, for a person desirous of treating the subject on the plane of the Absolute to write the cautious narrative of the Activities of Godhead in the limited vocabulary, without falling wholly into the deliberate blunders of dogmatic empiricism. The revealed Scriptures belong to the class of such authentic records regarding the Absolute. They need not be produced at the time of appearance of the events on the mundane plane to be historically acceptable as conveying the direct or first hand testimony of those occurrences. They are quite independent of the conditions which the mind of the empiric historian finds it impossible to shake off and which make it impossible for him to conceive of the possibility of spiritual occurrences.

Therefore, empiric speculations regarding the so-called “historicity” of a spiritual event instead of establishing its genuineness, only serve to display the utter insufficiency of the empirical historical method itself for the purpose of the treatment of the history of the Absolute.

For example, the complaint of the empiric scholar, that it is not possible to set forth the nature of the development of spiritual life in India for lack of definite chronology which renders a scientific classification of the original works treating of Indian religion impossible, however plausible in itself it may appear to be at first sight, is, in the light of the foregoing discussion, at once found to be after all only the result of a wholly deluded attitude towards the Absolute Himself. As if the development of spiritual life is capable of being measured by the process of so-called mundane evolution based on the chronological sequence of mundane occurrences!

Our contention is not that the Pastimes of Sree Krishna are historical events but that they are a revelation of the Truth in the form of historical events. The Pastimes of Sree Krishna are not, therefore, less true than any historical events whatsoever. They are much more. All the historical events of this world will be enabled to disclose the real elements of the Truth that they represent only when they would be set forth in their proper relationship to the only eternal Verity, viz., the Pastimes of Krishna. It is the historical events and the canons of historical judgment that require to be brought into tune with the Truth, Who is no other than Krishna. But the empiric historian does the exact opposite of this. He assumes the truth of historical events and his canons of historical judgment as the standard to which the Pastimes of Krishna are to conform for the realisation of any element of the Truth that they may contain !

The whole difficulty is ultimately due to the muddled way of thinking favoured by the empiricists that supposes itself to be self-sufficient for the purpose of finding the Truth. It is empiricism that requires to be made properly conscious of its limitations and to be forced into a serious consideration of the nature of the Truth Whom it professes in and out of season to be so willing to serve. Once the nature of the Truth is taken into our serious consideration, the inconclusiveness of the cult of historicity should be perfectly plain to every impartial thinker. Further anxious consideration of the subject should enable the empiric method to be limited to its proper scope and by such limited employment to be enabled to serve the quest of the Unlimited.

As soon as the mind is directed to the question of the Nature of the Truth, it is enabled by Truth Himself to understand the otherwise inexplicable postulations of the spiritual Scriptures that it is necessary to obey in order to attain to the plane of the real quest of the Truth. Every circumstance even of this world will then be found to be a help in the realisation of the Truth, and nothing will be found to be a hindrance. The only hindrance, as a matter of fact, is the empiric attitude itself. By the empiric attitude one is led to launch out on the quest of the Absolute Truth with the resources of admittedly utter ignorance. This foolhardiness must be made to cease. The method of submissive inquiry enjoined by the Scriptures should be substituted after being properly learnt from those

who have themselves attained to the right knowledge of the same by the proper method of submission. It is only after one has actually obtained the vision of the Truth, Whose face is so completely hid from the sight of the empiric thinker, that one can, under the guidance of the Truth Himself, set out on the quest of the Truth with any chance of finding Him and proclaiming Him to others.

So, although the method that has been employed throughout this narrative may appear to be inconsistent with the demands of the blind empiric judgment, the reader is requested for the very much more weighty reasons set forth above to lend his listening ear to an attempt to apply the methods of the revealed Scriptures for the purpose of describing the real Nature of Krishna and His Pastimes, in pursuance of the mercy of the authorized Teachers, on the ground that the method is the only one that claims to be applicable to the subject of the Absolute.

As the working knowledge of the Nature of Sree Krishna is the starting point of the search of the Truth, it is my purpose in this chapter to present the reader with a summary of the traditional account of the real Nature of Sree Krishna, which is revealed by the Scriptures of all Ages and countries in more or less explicit forms.

The outline of the history of Sree Krishna as told in the Bhagavatam, which may be accepted as the only authentic account for our purposes, is as follows At the close of the cycle known as Dwapara Krishna manifested His Appearance in Bharatabarsha. He was born at Mathura. He was the Son of Vasudeva. His mother was Devaki, the sister of King Kamsa of the race of the Bhojas. Apprehending harm to himself from the Issue of Vasudeva and Devaki, Kamsa, that unworthy scion of the Bhoja, had cast the immaculate couple into the royal prison which was most closely guarded. As they passed their days inside the prison of Kamsa six sons were born in succession to Vasudeva and Devaki. All of them were killed in their infancy by the cruel and fearful Kamsa. Sree Balarama was born as their seventh issue. He was transferred to the keeping of Rohini in Braja as foster-mother, the report being circulated that there had been

miscarriage at childbirth. Godhead Himself was the eighth issue of Vasudeva and Devaki. He was conveyed by Vasudeva to the home of Nanda in Braja, whose wife Yasoda had just then given birth to a daughter. Sree Krishna was left to the care of Nanda and Yasoda in Braja and their daughter was brought to Kamsa's prison and exhibited as the eighth issue of Devaki.

Meanwhile Sree Krishna was growing up in Braja in the company of His brother, Rama. Putana, an adept in slaughtering infants, was deputed by Kamsa to kill Krishna under the pretense of giving Him suck by the profession of motherly affection. Putana was killed by the halo of the power of the Infant Krishna. The casuistical demon Trinavarta was slain. The cart for conveyance of their baggages under which Krishna had been put to bed by His parents was smashed by the kicks of the Divine Infant. He showed his mother, by opening His mouth, that the whole world was accommodated therein. He made her see that nescience served to foster love for the power of the Truth. The Infant displayed much juvenile ignorance that was promotive of love for Himself, the True Cognition. Noting the waywardness of her child the matronly milk-maid, embodying the most exquisite degree of serving zeal, bethought of binding Krishna by means of hempen cords; but in vain. But the Incompassable at last submitted to be bound by the exclusive love of the affectionate Mistress of Nanda's home. Krishna broke the twin Arjuna trees in course of His childish sports, releasing the sons of a god who had been reduced to that pitiable condition. Even the gods are liable to lapse into the senseless condition of trees by addiction to evil deeds; and even trees are enabled to regain the spiritual condition by the influence of accidental association with the pure-hearted.

Krishna goes into the forest with His chums for pasturing the calves. There He slays the demon Batsasur who represents the offenses of boyhood. It is now that religious hypocrisy in the form of Bakasur brought up by Kamsa, is also killed by Krishna of pure understanding. Aghasur also is slain. He is the embodiment of the principle of cruelty. Thereupon Krishna dined out in the open on the banks of the Yamuna in the company of His chums. The four-faced Brahma stole the calves and the cowboys. The orderer of the phenomenal world was thereupon deluded by the power of Krishna. By this episode the complete

supremacy of the immaculate Sweetness of Sree Krishna over every other principle, was demonstrated. Krishna, the Beloved of the realm of the perfect cognition, is not subject to any regulative restrictions. This also was established. The opulence of Krishna suffers no curtailment even by the total destruction of all spiritual and non-spiritual realms. No one is able to set bounds to the incompassable ocean of the Power of Krishna. The evil-minded Dhenukasura, the ass of blunt judgment, was destroyed by Baladeva, the principle of the pure individual soul. The serpent Kaliya, the self of crookedness and malice, polluted the waters of the Yamuna, the mellow liquid of the spiritual principle. This wicked demon was thereupon slain by Hari. When the wild forest-fire, the evil of internal faction within the community, burst forth in all its destructive fury, Sree Krishna in Person swallowed it up. Thus the Lord is ever solicitous of the well-being of Braja. Then Rama killed the demon Pralamba, the thief in disguise who was sent by Kamsa for stealing the children.

And when the sky began to be surcharged with the love-laden clouds heralding the advent of the showery season, the milk-maids of Braja, who are loved by Krishna and are by their nature of a loving disposition, felt intoxicated by singing the Praises of Krishna. They were deeply stirred by the strains of Krishna's flute. They now worshipped Yogamaya who effects the union of the individual soul with Krishna, with the desire of gaining Krishna as their Lover. Those who are possessed of a strong desire to serve Krishna find that there is no adjustment regarding themselves or their relation with others that is necessary for the purpose, of which they need feel ashamed. They are no longer disposed to conceal their minds. Krishna stole away the clothes of those milk-maids at their bath to disclose the perfectly nude state which is the immaculate sporting ground of Divine love. Sree Krishna feeling hungry begged for food that had been prepared for offering at the sacrificial ceremony by the ritualistic Brahmanas. But they did not give it to Him in the pride of their superior status. Those sacrificial Brahmanas were addicted to a variety of empirical interpretations of the Scriptures inspired by the desire of attainment of worldly prosperity or by love for barren speculation which ends in the negation of all specific forms of activity. By dint of their traditional attachment to the

Scriptures and the by-gone ancestors they are apt to degenerate into the mere mechanical transmitters of the rules and taboos that are found in the Scriptures. By reason of this vain attitude they are disabled to understand that the attainment of love for Godhead is the only purpose of all those rules and regulations. How can people with such mentality be induced to serve Krishna. But the loyal wives of those sacrificial Brahmanas, despite the opposition of their husbands, repaired to Sree Krishna in the forest and surrendered themselves to the Feet of the Supreme Soul. This demonstrates the truth that neither intellectual nor hereditary equipments are the cause of love for Krishna. It also lays down the right principle of conduct of conditioned souls as consisting in regarding everything with an equal eye. The varna and ashrama institutions of man are intended for the regulation of the society of this world. If the social order is preserved it affords scope for association with pure-hearted persons and thereby offers opportunities for discussions regarding the supreme desideratum. These tend to spiritual progress. It is the possibility of attainment of love of Krishna by their means that constitutes the value of the institutions of varna and ashrama (the system of divinely ordained division of social functions and grades). There can, therefore, be no disloyalty to the purpose of the social arrangement if one gives up the observance of the social rules for the sake of Krishna Himself. As a matter of fact, on the actual attainment of the goal itself, the further pursuit of the means of its attainment becomes unnecessary for all persons who are really desirous of obtaining the goal. It is also no infringement of the purpose of the social code to allow such a person full scope for serving Krishna. In enforcing social obligations it is, therefore, necessary to consider the actual condition of individuals to whom they are to apply. Otherwise the very object of social organization itself will be wholly frustrated.

Hari then forbade the people to perform the sacrifice to Indra. The people were wont to sacrifice to Indra to please him in order that he might send them rain which was necessary for the sustenance of themselves and their flocks. This represents the principle of utilitarian work on the basis of mutual co-operation for the safety and well-being of society. Indra being denied his offerings, in anger tried to punish the denizens of Braja by sending down torrential rain which flooded the fields and homesteads of the people. Hari Himself protected

the residents of Gokula from this peril. No harm can come to the servants of Krishna if for the purpose of serving Him even their ordinary domestic and social duties have to be given up altogether which may result in the destruction of the world. No one can kill whom Krishna Himself protects. Even the cosmic law is not binding on them. The devotees of Krishna are free from all observance of all law except that of spiritual love for the Supreme Lord. Through the realm of faith there flows the perennial stream of the holy Yamuna. The transcendental river is the liquid essence of the pure cognitive state. Nanda was in danger of being drowned in the waters of that river of joy, but was mercifully rescued by his Son's blissful Activity. Thereafter Sree Krishna showed the cow-herds His Own Divine Majesty in the realm of the Absolute. The Divine Majesty is always latent in the Personality of Krishna. The Supreme Lord Who is the Beloved of the eternally free souls and their following then performed the Pastime of the Dance in the circle of His beloved. This Pastime manifests the principle of working of Divine love. Lord Hari, out of His mercy, danced in the Rasa circle formed by the milk-maids. He promoted the - growth of their highest love by separation, by His subsequent disappearance.

The stellar system may supply a poor analogy of the Rasa Pastime. Just as the Suns surrounded by their respective circling groups of satellites dance round the Polar Star in the form of a circle, in the same manner, all individual souls eternally enact their harmonious dance in their orbits round Sree Krishna as the centre of the system, sustained therein by the force of Sree Krishna's overpowering attraction for all spiritual entities. In this vast round of the Rasa dance, Sree Krishna is the only Male and all individual souls are females. In the realm of the Absolute Sree Krishna is the sole Master and Enjoyer. All the rest belong to the category of servants and objects of enjoyment that minister to His sole pleasure. The Rasa Pastime is capable of being analogically described in the vocabulary at our command only in terms of the sexual relationship. The reason of this is that there is a real correspondence between the two—the sexual relationship of this world being the unwholesome reflection of the spiritual process in the mirror of this material world. The analogy is, however, bound to prove misleading if due allowance is not made for the radical difference between the substantive nature and location of the two processes.

The principle of mundane amour resting on that of physical sex can never be divested of its innate grossness and unwholesomeness. The grossness of worldly enjoyment as well as the sensuousness and frailties of both the object and subject of the sexual passion, are responsible for the imperfections of mundane amour. The Rasa Pastime is absolutely free from any touch of unwholesomeness, all the conditions being favourable for the promotion of the most perfect bliss by universal association in the rites of the most exquisite love. No apprehension of lewdness or sexuality must, therefore, be allowed to stand in the way of the exhaustive consideration of this highest and all-important spiritual subject.

The circular amorous dance or the Rasa Pastime expresses the manifestation of Divine love in its perfectly unobscured form. The highest realisation of this process consists in this, that in it Srimati Radhika, the highest object of all reverence of all souls being that supreme blissful Power of Krishna who expresses His specifically luscious quality, appears in person in the circle of the dancers, in all Her most exquisite charm encompassed by the bhavas, her suite of the most confidential female friends. At the close of the Pastime of the circular dance there follows naturally sporting in the liquid current of the Yamuna, the cognitive essence itself dissolving into liquid bliss on the full manifestation of love.

Nanda who is the personality of spiritual bliss, is swallowed up by the boa-constrictor of the joy of the liberation of merging in the Divine Essence. Krishna, the Protector of His devotee, thereupon rescues him from his peril. The stubborn demon Sankhachura, who sets fame over every other principle, is then slain in an attempt to create disturbance in Braja. Keshi, the demon of the vanity of political ambition, is next slain by Krishna, the Foe of Kamsa, when the Lord finally made up His mind to return to Mathura.

Akrura, the contriver of all occurrences, then conducted Hari to Mathura. On His arrival there, the Lord killed the sturdy wrestlers and then also slew Kamsa himself with his younger brother. on the departure from this world of atheism

in the person of Kamsa, Sree Krishna bestowed the charge of the earth on Kamsa's progenitor, Ugrasena, who embodies the principle of independence. The twin widows of Kamsa thereupon repaired to their parent, the King of Magadha, the embodiment of elevationism, and submitted to him their sorrows of the state of widowhood. On receiving this tidings, the King of Magadha set out at the head of his armies and fought seventeen mighty battles about the city of Mathura, but was every time defeated by Hari. When Jarasandha at last beleaguered Mathura for the eighteenth time Krishna retired to His own Capital of Dwarakapuri. The real significance of this episode consists in this, that the potency of the principle of elevationism is constituted of the eighteen categories of the ten personal lustrations from birth to death, the four-fold classification according to aptitude and the four-fold division into stages of the individual life (varnashrama). When the seat of knowledge is finally captured by these eighteen categories by fostering renunciation of the world, there is manifested the disappearance of Godhead on the consequent emergence of the longing for pseudo-liberation.

While Krishna abode in Mathura, He placed Himself under the charge of the teacher of religion, and after completing His study of all the Shastras, restored the life of His preceptor's dead son. There is no necessity in the case of Krishna, Who is naturally perfect, to endeavour for the acquisition of knowledge. The episode indicates that the intellect of man makes progress in erudition during its stage of residence at Mathura which is the Academy of all learning.

Those who covet the fruits of their activities also cherish attachment to Krishna. Their attachment to the Lord is charged with impurity. The attachment by degrees grows into the well purified unadulterated liking for Krishna. This salutary truth is manifested in the case of Kubja's love for Krishna during His sojourn in Mathura. Uddhava went to Gokula to be acquainted fully with the loving state of Braja which is superior to all forms of devotion.

The Srutis affirm that the Pandavas represent the branch of righteousness, while the Kauravas are the offshoots of unrighteous conduct. For this reason, Sree Krishna is verily the Friend and Preserver of the family of the Pandavas. In

order to establish the well being of righteousness and for the deliverance of sinners, the Lord deputed Akrura to Hastina as His messenger.

Jarasandha, the champion of unwholesome fruitive activity, beleaguered the beautiful city of Mathura, the abode of the knowledge of the undifferentiated Greatness and Nourishing Quality of the Divinity (Brahman). Here the point that is established is that fruitive activity itself is of two kinds. One variety is directed to the supreme desideratum itself. By such activities there is growth of knowledge and by their conjunction liking for Godhead is developed. This conjunction of activity, knowledge and the principle of Divine service, is also variously designated as the process of karma, jnana or bhakti. Those who possess real insight, call it the method of Harmony. But there is a different variety of activity which is directed to a selfish purpose. This form is known as karma-kanda, to distinguish it from the process of what is termed karma-yoga. This selfish variety of fruitive activity often gives rise to apprehension regarding the existence and attainment of Godhead and promotes their union with atheism by wedding them with the latter. It is this unwholesome variety of worldly activity that in the person of Jarasandha invaded the city of Mathura.

Thereupon, Sree Krishna, of His own accord, conducted His friends, viz., the community of His devotees, to the city of Dwaraka. This is the process of the service of Godhead under the regulative principles of the Divine Dispensation. The Yavana king belonged to a society that was not regulated by the Divinely ordained principle of class and stage (varnashrama). Being thus addicted to ignorant utilitarian activity and relying on the resources of such activity and being thereby opposed also to the path of liberation by empiric knowledge, the Yavana king scornfully kicked King Muchukunda representing aptitude for the path of liberation. The Yavana king was thereupon destroyed by the superior power of King Muchukunda. Hari then repaired to Dwaraka, the seat of the Knowledge of the Divinity in all His Majesty. There the Lord wedded Rukmini Devi, Embodiment of the Supreme Majesty of Godhead. Pradyumna, God of love, was no sooner born from the womb of Rukmini, then he was stolen away by Sambara, embodiment of the deluding Energy. The body of the God of love had formerly been burnt up by Mahadeva, representing barren asceticism. At

that period Rati Devi, consort of Kama, God of love, had sought refuge in the demoniac propensity for the lust of the flesh. Kamadeva of great prowess, being now instructed by his consort Ratidevi, killed Sambara representing the pleasures of the flesh and made his way to Dwaraka. By way of restoration of the gem, Hari now wedded the auspicious Satyabhama, who is part and parcel of Sree Radhika, the fullness of the quality of extreme loving sensitiveness. Rukmini, with seven other ladies, were the reflections of the Power of the most delicious and the very highest Divine love, appearing in the conditions of Splendour and Majesty. They became the chief Queens of the Royal Home of Krishna at Dwaraka. At Dwaraka Sree Krishna's offspring and relations multiplied apace. This points to an essential difference that distinguishes reverential worship rendered to the Majesty of Godhead from that of loving devotion. The former naturally tends to expand by the process of division. The latter is indivisible. It is not possible to deal with this matter in greater detail at this place. But the subject requires to be most carefully treated in a separate treatise.

A certain demon proclaiming himself to be Vasudeva preached the doctrine of undifferentiated Monism, at Kashi, the abode of Hara. The Lord of Roma, Who is Godhead Himself, after slaying that demon, burnt Kashidham, the seat of that corrupt opinion. The Lord seated on the back of Garuda slew the demon Bhauma who was filled with the notion that the things of this material universe are Godhead. This is idolatry. The worship of the Holy Divine Archa is not to be confounded with the worship of idols. The latter consists of the two coordinated varieties of pseudo-worship of Nature in its positive and negative aspects. Godhead rescued the victims of idolatry by destroying the faith in the undifferentiated Brahman, which is the subtle and more dangerous one of the two forms of idolatry and by accepting the worship of their quondam victims. By killing Jarasandha by the agency of Bheema, the Lord rescued many a king from the bondage of elevationism (worship of pure worldly utility). He accepted unrestricted worship at the sacrifice of Yudhisthira and cut off the head of Shishupala who was a personal enemy of Himself. At the battle of

Kurukshetra, Krishna afforded relief to the Earth groaning under her burden and, having re-established the pure religion, saved spiritual society.

On His arrival at Dwaraka, the sage Narada was filled with great wonder on beholding the Lord appearing at one and the same time in the homes of all His different Consorts. The fact that Godhead is fully present everywhere and in every soul, is much more wonderful than that He is One and pervades the whole universe by His Divine Essence. The demon Dantavakra, embodiment of barbarism, was slain. The Lord bestowed on Arjuna, His brother by the religion-bond, the hand of His Own sister Subhadra in marriage. The Lord saved the city of Dwaraka by destroying the efforts of Salwa backed by the knowledge of the deceptive physical sciences. The beautiful products of material sciences are nothing in comparison with the Doings of the Lord. King Nriga was undergoing the punishment of unrighteous conduct in the form of a reptile. He was delivered from the condition of a reptile by the mercy of the Lord.

Hari ate the raw rice given Him by the Brahmana Sudama, out of love. The Lord is not so pleased with the offering of even sweatmeats that are made by the pashandas (unbelievers). The monkey Dibida representing un-Godly carnival, was killed by Baladeva embodying the essence of the pure soul full of the love of Krishna. Baladeva performed the Pastime of love in the company of milkmaids who were the different substantive aspects of the pure soul, in a great forest in which there was a city made of the cognitive principle of the pure soul.

These Divine Pastimes are enacted in the hearts of the devotees. They disappear with the termination of the earthly sojourn of the devotees, just as the show ceases on the actor leaving the stage. The Will of Krishna, in the form of Time, having made the Yadavas, pure spiritual states, desist from their Pastimes, overwhelmed the Divine Abode of Dwaraka by the waves of the ocean of oblivion. The self-same Will of Krishna, who is the Source of ceaseless joy, made the devotees give up their bodies, worn out by decay, and by fomenting mutual discord, at Prabhas, representing the Knowledge of the Divinity. The aptitude towards Krishna that dwells in the hearts of the devotees attains to its pristine glory by its conjunction with the pure soul on his severance from the physical body. It continues its full manifestation in Goloka which is the highest

portion of the realm of Vaikuntha.

These Activities of Sree Krishna never cease in Goloka, which is the innermost Sphere of the realm of the Absolute and the Abode of the Supreme Lord in the manifest unobstructed enjoyment of His own pure Nature. They are available to the conditioned soul in terms of the categories of time, space, and agent, in proportion to the realisation of his proper spiritual nature. This realisation may remain confined to the detached relationship of the individual soul to the Lord or expand into the form of a social function. It is this latter form that made its appearance in the pure consciousness of Narada and Vyasa in the cycle of the Dvapara Age. The spiritual consciousness is, therefore, susceptible of manifesting its appearance in terms of the activities of individuals and also of those of the community of pure souls. With the growth of the social instinct the second form of manifestation makes its appearance in due course.

Regarded from the point of view of the associated spiritual consciousness Hari is realised as fully manifest in Mathura, more fully in Dwaraka, and most fully of all in Braja. The degree of purity of its blissfulness, is the measure of the Plenitude of the Divine Manifestation. Judged by this standard, the joyous activities of Braja form the highest platform of the spiritual realisation of the individual soul. In this most blissful experience Krishna is ultimately realisable as the Sweetheart of the spiritual milkmaids, the very highest point in the process being the Blissful Activities of Krishna as the Beloved Consort of Sree Radhika.

Those who have been enabled to taste the sweetness of these spiritual realisations, are fully established in the eternal function of the pure soul. It is not possible to elaborate the quality of the liquid sweetness of the process by means of general terms. It is for this reason that the poetic sages have expounded the Truth of the Activities of Krishna by their detailed concrete descriptions. The Supreme bliss is obtainable only by the most solicitous service of Krishna. It is not possible to attain real and abiding satisfaction by the contemplation of Godhead as the Regulator and Companion of the individual soul, or by the realisation of the Greatness of the undifferentiated Divinity by the process of empiric Knowledge, or by worshipping Godhead by the method

of the Sacrifice (yajna) as the Giver of the fruits of utilitarian activities.

III. —The Highest Worship Of Sree Krishna

The method of the worship of Krishna at Braja is the highest of all forms of worship. The worships that are practiced at Mathura and Dwaraka, respectively, owe their value in augmenting the exquisiteness of the Pastimes of Braja. It is our purpose, therefore, to consider the worship of Braja in some detail at this place. The discussion of the worship of Braja should not be withheld from the cognizance of the conditioned souls, as by means of this alone they can be really benefited. It is only when the conditioned soul is in the position to realise the nature of the mode of worship at Braja that he is freed from the fear of death, by obtaining the life eternal.

The subject of the worship of Braja may be conveniently considered by the related methods of synthetic or positive and analytic or negative treatment. Synthetically regarded the worship resolves itself into a system of relationships divisible in their turn into five distinct grades. These grades are called respectively the tranquilized state, condition of a servant, that of a friend, that of parents, and finally that of consorts, in the order of increasing excellence from the point of view of the detached observer.

In Braja certain denizens always regard themselves as the servants of the Prince of Braja. Others consider themselves as His fortunate friends. Sridama, Subala, etc., possess the pure friendly disposition. Yasoda, Rohini, Nanda are actuated by undiluted parental affection. The consorts, with Sree Radhika, at their head, regard themselves exclusively as the promoters of Krishna's amorous love in the dancing circle. Nowhere else except in Brindabana can there exist these dispositions of pure exclusive relationships with Krishna. It is for this reason that pure souls feel an instinctive attraction for the charming Brindabana In Brindabana the Scriptures agree in declaring the amorous

disposition to be the highest of all. By the principle that Godhead happens to be the sole Enjoyer of every entity, the individual soul is proved to be eternally ministrant to the pleasure of Sree Krishna. In Braja, however, there exist no dividing limitations as between Krishna and the serving individual souls like those that separate the master from the servant in this world. On the contrary, there always prevails indivisible supreme bliss in the visible form of these all-loving relationships. The consideration of loving separation also finds a place there for the sole purpose of augmenting still further the happiness of loving union. This blissful disposition, which belongs only to Braja, is realised in its gradual development by the careful preliminary service of relationships that obtain outside Braja in Mathura and Dwaraka.

The conditioned soul is eligible for service of Godhead only under the strictest regulations. At a subsequent stage, on the appearance of attachment for Krishna, the disposition of Braja gradually manifests itself. At this latter stage Krishna is served internally with loving devotion, but outward regard is displayed towards the regulative social institutions. This duplicity of disposition and practice is known as Parakiya (relationship as to a paramour); because the condition of the devotee resembles that of the wedded wife who may have unfortunately contracted a passion, which is not to be indulged, for a person other than her lawful husband. In these circumstances, the really loyal wife is under the painful necessity, from an innate sense of duty, of showing all outward regard that is due to her husband and of observing scrupulously the domestic and social regulations, although she can no longer feel for them any real internal attachment.

The apparently unintelligible and insincere attachment to society of the highest class of devotees cannot avoid being misunderstood by those comparatively advanced pupils who are in a position to appreciate the beneficent nature of the Scriptural regulations for the promotion of the spiritual well-being of society. But the highest class of devotees do not modify their method out of deference to adverse criticisms even of such bona fide objectors. Those novices who are not well advanced on the spiritual path are still less able to understand the ways of loving devotion which actuate the best

devotees.

There is a regular gradation in the growing manifestation of the pure spontaneous attachment for Krishna. The growth of such attachment is capable of being divided into three distinct stages in order of increasing excellence, viz., (1) the love of conditioned souls adulterated by endeavour to follow the Scriptural regulations, (2) love for Krishna on the Absolute plane but wanting in the quality of intimacy, and finally (3) perfect love for Krishna free from all extraneous dross. The limit of pure love for Krishna in Sree Radhika, the Counter-Whole of Sree Krishna Himself, is termed mahabhava (the loving condition major). Different from the specific nature of mahabhava, but closely approximating the same, there is found the eightfold assemblage of the bhavas inhering in the pure individual souls. They are the eight Sakhis (the Charami) of Sree Radhika. The bhavas of worshippers adjoining those of the sakhis, are the manjaris (spray). The worshipper should in the first instance seek the protection of the manjari whose bhava corresponds to the worshiper's own nature. He is, thereafter, to offer his submission to the sakhi who is served by the manjari. If he obtains the mercy of the sakhi he will be enabled thereby to attain to the refuge of the feet of Sree Radhika. In the circle of the great Rasa-dance the worshippers, manjari, sakhi and Srimati Radhika, occupy positions that are very much analogous to those of the satellite, planet, the sun and the polar star respectively in the mundane stellar system. In the process of augmentation of bhava, the promotion of the enjoyment of Krishna becomes available for jeevas who have attained to the quality of mahabhava.

There are eighteen obstacles in the way of this exquisite consummation of bhava which belongs to Braja. These are apt to pollute pure love and give rise to offense. It is imperatively necessary to consider the nature of these obstacles by way of the negative treatment of Braja-bhava, which should supplement and help to prevent any grave misconception of the positive exposition.

The first obstacle is one's encounter with the pseudo-Guru. The bad Guru is no other than the demoness Putana who offers the suck of her poisoned breast for killing new-born Krishna in the purified cognition of the soul. Worshippers

who have already obtained admission to the path of loving devotion should ponder on the appearance of Putana in Braja and be thereby enabled to remove the initial obstacle, viz., the bad spiritual guide. The Guru is either the inner or outwardly manifested spiritual Guide. The soul in the state of perfect concentration in the absolute samadhi, is the Guru of the soul. In other words a person who places himself under the guidance of the reasoning faculty and learns from it the method of worship, thereby gives the direction of himself to the pseudo-Guru.

The dallings of the empiric assertive rational faculty with the eternal religion by the offer of her support for its furtherance, are comparable to the artifices of Putana. Worshippers on the path of loving spiritual devotion owe it to themselves to discard all assertive help of reasoning in the attempt to realise the nature of the summum bonum, and seek instead the exclusive guidance of spiritual concentration. The human being from whom one learns about the substantive nature of worship of Godhead is the outwardly manifested Guru. The bona fide Guru is the person who after realising the true nature of the endeavour of loving devotion, instructs the submissive disciple (sishya) regarding the summum bonum, taking into due consideration the specific requirement of the latter. One who presumes to instruct others without himself realising the nature of the course of loving devotion, or who, although himself cognizant of the nature of the path of devotion, instructs the disciple regarding the same without due consideration of the aptitude of the latter, is the pseudo-Guru. It is necessary by all means to renounce the guidance of such a Guru.

The second obstacle on the path of loving devotion, in the order of appearance, is wrong speculative controversy. In Braja, i.e., on the path of spontaneous love, it is difficult for the proper spiritual state to appear until the demon Trinavarta, embodiment of disloyal controversy, has been killed outright. All philosophical speculation, all skeptical arguments of the pseudo Buddhists and empiric rationalists, are obstructive of the growth of the disposition of Braja, in the manner of the demon Trinavarta.

The third obstacle is represented by the laden cart. The injunctions of

the Scriptures are apt to be followed in their literal sense without due regard to their meaning. This carrying of the lumber of Scriptural learning tends to smother the infant Krishna and requires to be smashed with His help at the very outset, if the object of the novice be to realise the state of natural love for Krishna. The mechanical pedant has no access to Braja. The victims of the pseudo-Guru are liable to fall into this plight by being prematurely initiated into the process of the state of a female confidante engaged in service as of the manjari. Such victims do not realise their misfortune by reason of their mechanical aptitude which is exploited by, the pseudo-Guru to their utter ruin. Those who follow the advice of such a Guru in their worship, quickly fall away from the path of devotion. The amorous mood in such cases can never attain to the depth of the truly spiritual process. But this is never realisable by the parties themselves.

The fourth obstacle “on the path” is termed juvenile offense. Persons who are indifferent to the spiritual guide are thereby rendered subject to the inconsistencies and frailties that beset naughty children. This enemy of the infant Krishna is known as Batsasura. The novice must beware of the guiles of this malicious demon and try to get rid of him at an early stage.

The fifth obstacle makes its appearance on the path of the theists (Vaishnavas) in the form of the demon Baka. He is an exceedingly cunning fellow embodying the principle of religious hypocrisy. It is this obstacle which is meant by the offense against the Holy Name. Those who, falling into the clutches of the pseudo-Guru by neglect of the proper exercise of their judgment, deceive themselves by consenting to adopt the higher grade of worship to which they are not entitled, fall under the category of the third class of offenders described above. But those who, even after becoming aware of their unfitness, persist in practicing the higher method of worship, hoping thereby to gain honour and wealth for themselves, commit the offense of religious hypocrisy. Until this defect is discarded, there can be no appearance of the principle of spontaneous liking for Krishna. These hypocrites only deceive the world by the display of the external insignia of sectarianism and pseudo-renunciation. Those persons who choose to show their regard for these

arrogant persons in consideration of the external marks exhibited by them, failing to attain the favour of Krishna, only prove to be thorns in the sides of the people of this world. But It should also be borne in mind in this connection that one should be careful not to allow his caution in regard to the abuse of external signs to betray him into maligning a person wearing the respective external marks of the theistic communities, whose conduct may also embody the inner significance of those symbols. It is, therefore, the constant duty of the Vaishnavas, by being neutral as regards external marks, to seek for indications of inner love for Godhead and to associate with and serve the sadhus whom they may be fortunate enough to recognize by this test.

The sixth obstacle has the forms of cruelty and violence. This is the demon Aghasura. It is possible for love to suffer gradual decay by the absence of kindness for all animate beings. This must be so inasmuch as kindness can never be a different principle from love for Krishna. There is no substantive difference between love for Krishna and kindness to individual souls.

The seventh obstacle assumes the form of infatuation in the shape of an apparently zealous study of the Vedas (scholasticism). Excessive and exclusive attention to the propositions of the diverse polemical schools and their conclusions and modes of argument, tend to lessen the poignancy and clearness of the vision of the truths obtained in the exclusive mood. Even Brahma himself doubted the truth of the real Nature of Krishna by reason of such infatuation.

The eighth obstacle is offered by the demon Dhenukasura in the form of the ass, who tries to prevent the palm fruits, which he is himself unable to taste, from being enjoyed by others. The principles of Vaishnavism require for their due appreciation the most penetrating judgment. Persons possessed of a blunted understanding are exposed to this grave plight. The Vaishnava religion is indivisible. There is no scope in it for sectarian narrowness. It is the blunt-headed fool who is liable to misconceive the true nature of the Vaishnava community by supposing it to be a sect distinct from other sects of this world. As a matter of fact thick-headed persons are themselves unable to understand the teaching of the spiritual works that have been penned by the former

Acharyas of the community and they are also apt to actively prevent others from having access to those works. This is specially the case with those devotees possessed of a stunted judgment who, being mechanically addicted to the regulations have no inclination to strive for the attainment of the real status. But the Vaishnava religion holds within itself the prospect of infinite progressive advance. Those muddy-headed persons, who choose to remain confined within the literal meaning of the narrow limits of the Scriptural regulations, being thereby led to neglect the unconventional path of spontaneous love for Godhead, soon become indistinguishable from persons who are wedded to the cult of fruitive mundane activities. It is' therefore' never possible to make any progress in the Vaishnava religion till Dhenukasura in the form of the ass has been killed.

The ninth obstacle is offered by the conduct of those weak-minded persons who take to the unconventional method of service for the purpose of gratifying their senses which it is not possible to do under the method of regulated service. This is the conduct of the demon Brishabhasura. These persons will be killed by the burning quality of Krishna's personality. The example of such offensive conduct is by no means rare among those hypocrites who make a parade of their religiosity.

The tenth obstacle is offered by the cunning serpent Kaliya, representing implacable brutality and treachery, who is apt to pour his deadly poison into the melted souls of the Vaishnavas represented by the liquid current of the Yamuna. The danger threatened by this fatal poison can be got rid of by the Grace of Krishna.

The eleventh obstacle has the form of intra-communal discord. It is comparable to the wild forest-fire. The disposition bred by narrow sectarianism rendering its victim unable to recognize as Vaishnava one who does not assume the external marks of the theistic community, multiplies the obstacles on the path of attainment of the bona fide Guru and the actual companionship of the true devotees. It is, therefore, obligatory on all persons to destroy the forest-fire by all means.

The twelfth obstacle on the path of loving devotion is offered by the demon Pralambasura who is prone to commit theft against one's own self. The danger is represented specifically by the theory of the Brahman of the Mayavadins who advocate merging in the Brahman as the summum bonum and declare the self realised condition to be one, that is absolutely devoid of any distinguishable feature. The system is characterized by the defect of utter absence of the principle of bliss either for the individual soul or for the Brahman who is imagined to be perfectly unconcerned about anything. Persistent reflection on those lines gives rise to doubt regarding the very existence of the Brahman and produces conviction in the non-existence of the individual soul and the elaborate concoction of a new science to account for the glaring discrepancies of the Acharyas and proving the utter futility of all human thought and activity. This mode of thinking sometimes finds its way among the Vaishnavas and creates a good deal of trouble in the form of an advocacy of self-destruction.

The thirteenth obstacle takes the form of the worship of Indra and other lesser devatas in the hope of gaining worldly advantages. This prevents the growth of love for Godhead and requires to be avoided with great care.

The offenses of theft of another's property and telling of Lies are the fourteenth obstacle. These are represented by the demon Byowrasura. They stand in the way of one's attaining to perfect love for Krishna and give a good deal of trouble to the novice.

The fifteenth obstacle arises from addiction to intoxicants. In Braja the bliss, that is experienced by the individual soul on his being freed from the troubles of mind and body, is termed Nanda. There are found persons who betake to the use of intoxicants supposing such habit to be promotive of the above form of bliss. This quickly causes the serious drawback of self-forgetfulness. This predicament is represented by Nanda's sojourn to the abode of Varuna. This grave offense must be avoided by all means. Those persons who have attained the mode of loving devotion of Braja must, on no account, use

any form of intoxicant.

The sixteenth obstacle has the form of a proneness to acquisition of fame and honour, and desire for sensuous enjoyment, under the plea of devotion. This is the demon Shanhachuda. Those persons who covet fame as the goal of their activities, commit thereby the offense of arrogance. It is necessary for Vaishnavas to be very careful about this matter.

The next obstacle is offered by the growing sense of blissfulness that tends to increase by the cultivation of the habit of worship till it assumes the form of self suppression approximating the state of merging with the Object of worship. This mood for merging with the Divinity is a species of serpent that swallows up Nanda. The novice should endeavour to be a bona fide servant of Godhead by carefully avoiding this fatal temptation.

The eighteenth obstacle is the demon Keshi who has the form of the horse. As the quality of devotion of the novice undergoes swift development, the sense of one's own superiority makes its appearance. If the novice gives a free scope to the speculation regarding his own excellence, it is apt to lead him into the dire offense of disrespect for the Divinity, causing his fall. It is, therefore, necessary that such wicked sentiment may never arise in the heart of the Vaishnava. Even after devotion has been fully developed the quality of sincere humility should never be absent from the conduct of the Vaishnava. As the contrary of this tends to happen, it becomes necessary for Krishna to kill the demon Keshi.

Those who are in the intellectual condition are required to free themselves from those offenses which are to be found in the sphere of Mathura. Those who have a taste for fruitive activity must be on their guard against the offenses that are noticeable at Dwaraka. The devotees should dive completely into love for Sree Krishna by avoiding all those obstacles as they are apt to breed trouble in Braja.

The eternal Truth has been made manifest to this world by, Sree Vyasadeva in his narrative of the Pastimes of Braja. But the real nature of the Truth cannot be realised by means of knowledge born of the senses. The knowledge is spontaneously experienced by the pure essence of the individual soul in his exclusive state (samadhi). There are, however, pseudo-exclusive states which must not be confounded with the spiritual condition proper in which there is no presence of any mundane element. In this state the Truth becomes self-manifest by the operation of the spiritual Potency of Divinity. This phenomenal world is the distorted unwholesome reflection of the transcendental Realm. It is for this reason that there is a correspondence between the phenomena of this world and the events of the spiritual plane. The substantive reality, in the forms of the Name, Form, Quality, Pastimes and the distinctive personality of His Paraphernalia make their appearance to the soul in his exclusive state (samadhi).

It is necessary to keep all doubting speculations at their proper distance, if the clear vision is to be maintained in tact. The least intrusion of such disturbing element blurs and obliterates the spiritual perception. On the gradual subsidence of mundane predilections, the transcendental Truth makes His Appearance by corresponding stages, finally attaining His full concrete manifestation in the Pastimes of Sree Krishna in Sree Brindabana. If the elimination of sensuous speculation is not attended to with scrupulous care, the progress is towards abstraction and absence of distinctive features in such realisation.

If it be our good fortune to attain to the sight of Brindabana, which is full of every object of beauty, we would be in a position, with the fullest assurance of the truth of our realisation, to describe, by means of the admittedly imperfect instrument of mundane vocabulary that we happen to possess for the purpose, the most wonderful and blissful Form of Sree Krishna in Sree Brindabana. Such description should not be supposed to be derived from our experience of this world. It is the outcome of direct perception of the Substantial Reality of Whom the rational phenomena of this world are the distorted unwholesome shadow. No realisation of the substance can be reached

by the logical manipulation of confused speculation regarding His shadow whose only function is to mislead to perfection.

The Beauty of Sree Krishna, described by those who have been fortunate enough to realise the vision, is narrated below for the information of the reader; but the meaning of the description cannot be grasped except in the perfect exclusive state which, is wholly free from any speculative activity born of the mind.

The Figure of Godhead, fulfilling all requirements of the spiritual principle, is like that of man. His Beauty seems to be represented by the reflected correspondence of the inexpressibly cooling, soft, yellowish, blue that is noticeable in the gem known as "Indranilamani" of this world, or is like unto the impression of the first appearance of the rain-bearing clouds at the close of the season of protracted draught. A certain combination of the triple potency representing respectively the principles of existence, consciousness and bliss, appears to be disposed in an indivisibly oblique manner about the Beauty of Divinity. His Twin Eyes, focusing all the supremely jubilant brightness of the realm of perfect living consciousness, set forth the Beauty of His incomparable Figure. In the material world those Eyes may be found reflected in the beauty of the fresh-blown lotus. On the Head of Godhead's Own Divine Form, there is observed a certain distinctive feature similar to which there is to be found nothing at all in all our previous experience. All that can be said is that the tail of the peacock is probably the reflection in this world of this inexpressible peculiarity. A certain garland of flowers that have the easy perfection of the soul, sets forth the beauty of the incomparable Neck of Sree Krishna. The beauty of the natural flowers of the forest seems to be a reflection of this particular feature. The Waist of Sree Krishna is encompassed by knowledge that is manifested by the spiritual cognitive principle representing the energy of the soul. It seems that the flash of lightning, skirting the fringe of a massive assemblage of fresh, rain-bearing clouds reflects the beauty of the girdle round the Waist of Sree Krishna. The kaustubha and other precious gems and ornaments appertaining to the soul disseminate the beauty of the Person of Sree Krishna. The spiritual agency by whose means the ravishing call, that has

power to draw the soul, manifests itself, is observed in the figure of a flute. The flutes and other instruments of this world that serve to carry the musical notes of every variety may be the reflection of the Divine Flute. The inconceivable Figure of Sree Krishna is observed to be placed under the Kadamba tree, embodying spiritual horripilation, on the grassy woodlands sloping to the water's edge of the Yamuna of the liquid spiritual essence. It is by means of these spiritual symbols that the beloved Son of Nanda, Sree Krishna, Lord of the spiritual Realm, makes His Appearance to the view of the Vaishnavas in their exclusive state (samadhi)

But persons who are unfortunately blinded by empiric knowledge are unable to find the Form and distinctive concrete aspects of the spiritual existence even when the realm of the Absolute is actually brought before their eyes in the exclusive state.

Sree Krishnachandra, in this manner, is realised, in the exclusive state, as maddening the realm of pure souls by the strains of His Flute and attracting the minds of the milkmaids (gopees). How may those who are infatuated by the vanities of high lineage, etc., attain to Krishna? Persons who are free from all worldly vanities are alone eligible for being attracted by Krishna. Those who understand the nature of spiritual existence, know that sadhus fall into two clearly defined groups, viz., (1) those who have attained to the state of the gopees, and (2) those who follow in the footsteps of such self-realised souls. The former are called siddhas and the latter sadhakas.

The graduated process of spiritual endeavour of those persons who have realised the state of gopees, is as follows. In the course of their sojourn in this world, the music of Krishna's Flute enters the ear of a few exceptionally fortunate persons. The sweetness of the music exercising its attraction on such persons makes them fit for the highest spiritual status. This quickly dissipates their male disposition which prompts people of this world to seek for their own sensuous enjoyment. On the complete disappearance of the male disposition there is aroused another temperament characterized by a spontaneous preference for following the guidance of those who are possessed

of the mellow quality of spiritual consorhood. In this position the femininity of the soul in the form of capacity for ministering to the enjoyment of Godhead, manifests itself. The expectation of consorhood becomes so strong that the soul under its influence develops all the external symptoms of the state of madness.

The first experience arises in the form of hearing about the specific Figure (Rupa) of Krishna. This process falls into two parts. The first of these is of the nature of spontaneous realisation of Krishna's attraction in the sphere of one's ordinary cognitive activity. This event is called the hearing of the music of Krishna's Flute. This is followed by the hankering for listening to the narrative regarding Krishna from those who have had an actual sight. This form of listening to the Scriptural narratives of Krishna from the lips of sadhus, also comes under this head.

The realisation of Krishna that is attainable by such hearing and study, forms the division of spiritual endeavour which is called "listening to the Quality of Krishna": The next is seeing the delineation of Krishna as in a picture. This is effected by the realisation of the Purpose and Supreme Skill of Krishna in the design of this material world. He who has been enabled to realise that the material world is the distorted perverted reflection of the realm of the Absolute, is said to have had a sight of Krishna as in a picture. In other words, the preliminary stages of the state of devotion to Vishnu, or Vaishnavata, accrues in the three different ways of spontaneous realisation of its desirability, realisation of the nature of Divine worship by the study of the Scriptures, and actual personal experience of the Nature of Godhead from a consideration of the wonderful organization of the material Universe

Unadulterated faith in Krishna as the source of the loving devotion of Braja is the preliminary stage in the gradual appearance of the process of spiritual love. The appearance of this form of unalloyed faith is followed by attainment of close association with the sadhus, who are denizens of spiritual Braja. Such association is the cause of the attainment of Krishna. Those persons who have the rare fortune of gaining the companionship of sadhus in course of

their further progress on the path of spiritual endeavour, which is comparable to the stealthy approach of the sweetheart to the secret place of meeting with her lover, may perchance realise, at some rare moment, their auspicious meeting with the Supreme Object of their love on the water's edge of the Yamuna, the stream of the liquid essence of the pure soul.

By meeting with Krishna, the transcendental bliss of Divine communion (parananda) ensues which at once causes all worldly felicity previously experienced to appear as infinitesimally trivial in comparison. The supreme bliss grows apace in the heart, as the days pass, towards the most dearly loved ever-new Form of the Soul of all souls. The root of spiritual love is that attachment of the individual soul who is constituted of the principles of pure cognition and bliss, towards the concentrated Divine Form of All-existence, All-cognition and All-bliss, which is perfect in itself and natural for the soul.

This attachment (rati) under the favouring impulse of the principle of mellowness (rasa) undergoes development by taking on the form of rasa.

Rasa is of twelve kinds. The five rasas of santa (equanimity), dasya (service), sakhya (friendship), batsalya (parental affection) and madhura (consortherhood), are the five primary varieties. These five are of the nature of substantive relationship. Beera (heroic), karuna (tender), raudra (keen), hasya (laughter), bhayanaka (terrible), bibhatsa (abnormal) and adbhuta (wonderful), are the seven secondary rasas. These arise spontaneously from the establishment of relationship. Prior to the establishment of actual relationship there is no possibility of external manifestation of attachment. These specific visible manifestations are all secondary rasas.

Even after attachment (rati) has assumed the form of rasa (liquid mellowness), it does not attain to its full resplendence except in combination with the four samagris (ingredients), viz., (a) bibhaba (particular state), (b) anubhaba (perception), (c) sattvika (natural indication of emotion), and (d) byabhichari (transitory feeling). (a) Bibhaba is of two kinds, viz., (1) alambana

(cause); and (2) uddipana (aggravating agent). Alambana is again of two kinds, viz., (1) Krishna, and (2) devotee of Krishna. The good qualities and distinctive natures of Krishna and His devotees constitute the division of uddipana (i.e., excitant of attachment or rati). (b) Anubhava is of three kinds, viz., (1) alankara, (2) udbhasvara, and (3) vachika.. Alankara, such as hava, bhava, etc., in all twenty in number, has been classified into the three divisions of (1) angaja (of the body), (2) ayatna ja (spontaneous), and (3) swabhabaja (of the individual nature of a person). Sighing, dancing, rolling on the ground and such other activities are called udbhasvara.. Alapa, bilapa, etc., are the twelve vachika anubhavas. Stupefaction, sweating, etc., are the eight sattvika bikaras. Nirveda, etc., are the thirty-three byabhichari bhavas. The rasa and all its ingredients (samagri) have a constant bearing on the development of rati till it reaches the stage of mahabhava..

The attachment (rati) for Krishna is sthayibhava (the permanent state) or the rasa (mellow liquid principle) of bhakti (devotion). In conditioned souls the principle manifests itself as bhakti or service. In the free state it appears as the principle of love in the realm of the Absolute (Vaikuntha). Attachment for Krishna develops up to the stage of mahabhava. The process of development by the methods of identification with primary and secondary rasas and by the help of ingredients enriching the variety of its manifestations, constitutes the eternal treasure of the soul in her state of perfect spiritual freedom. It is this which is also the object of endeavour of the conditioned souls. If it be urged that there is no necessity for any attempt to attain that which is eternally inherent in the soul, the answer is that the resuscitation of the eternal principle in the conditioned state is the process of the spiritual endeavours of the conditioned neophyte.

It has been realised in their natural exclusive state by great souls such as Sree Vyasadeva, etc., and also by our Gurus that attachment (rati) for Krishna is the most wholesome principle of the realised essence of the jeeva-soul. The nature of the substantive reality is in a slight measure manifested in its reflected image. It is for this reason that the principle of attraction between male and female in this world has proved to be the most charming of all mundane

entities. But the attachment between male and female of this world is utterly insignificant and condemnable in comparison with the principle of the transcendental reality. This is indicated by the passage in the narrative of the circular dance in the Bhagavatam, "He who listens to or recites to others, with due reverence and faith, these Pastimes of Vishnu with the damsels of Braja, attains to the state of transcendental devotion for Godhead resulting in the simultaneous and speedy disappearance from his heart of the malady of mundane lust". It is, as if, the mirage of the desert is replaced by the shining water of the magnificent lake offering the sorely-needed cooling drink to the thirsty traveler led astray by the deceptive image of the life-giving liquid. I have described the limit of the love and activity of the eternally self-realised souls towards the eternally realised Personality of Sree Krishna. The limit of attachment is mahabhava, the limit of activity is maha-rasa. This is also the limit of vocabulary sprung from the material principle. That which lies beyond should be seen by means of the exclusive state (samadhi).

It is the only thing needful to be imbued with serving love for Sree Krishna, of the perfectly pure kind. It is the nature of genuine serving spiritual love to be absolutely free from all worldly dross. A person, in whom this pure impulse manifests itself, is thereby rendered perfectly pure in every detail of his conduct. Such a person is naturally disinclined to ungodly conduct, all his affinities having undergone a complete change of objective from the mundane to the Absolute. But it is necessary to bear in mind that before concluding any conduct to be blamable, the status of the person displaying such conduct should be considered. This is the most material point. No conduct is universally good or bad. If the attempt be made to arrive at a uniform body of rules of conduct which are to be binding on all, such a procedure is sure to end in futile speculations and to frustrate all real endeavour for ethical improvement. This is the great disservice that has been done to man by speculative ethics. It has only served to blunt the edge of natural goodness of judgment by entangling it in the meshes of specious theories that are bound to be wholly wide of the mark. It is, therefore, the first and foremost duty of every individual who is sincerely anxious of not being deceived by the shadow, to avoid all barren speculative discussions, on principle.

There is also another pitfall which is avoided by a person who is really inspired by love for the substantive Truth and the desire for serving Him for the sake of promoting His pleasure. Such a person never engages in sectarian hair-splitting. He is found to maintain a discreet attitude towards sectarian disputes and in respect of external symbols which differ in different communities. These issues, as a matter of fact, derive all their value from the purpose which they are instituted to serve. Their external face need, therefore, be neither undervalued nor overestimated. The conduct of the devotee who is actuated by natural love for the service of the Absolute, in these matters, should not, therefore, be misunderstood. Such a person is neither opposed to, nor is he a supporter of these external features as such.

Those who are servants of Hari know very well that no work is worth doing which does not please Hari; neither is knowledge, by which attachment to Hari is not engendered, of any value. Persons who are possessed of this truly rational insight always engage themselves in activities that are promotive of spiritual progress and desist from every form of activity which has anything else than Hari as its objective. This consideration regulates the minutest detail of the activities of the servants of Hari. They are not deflected from this course by the breadth of an hair in life or in death, so constant is the loyalty of their judgment and so utterly incapable of being overclouded by any extraneous consideration. They are always possessed of unerring judgment, are full of the natural humility of the pure soul and are constantly engaged in doing good to all entities that exist.

They know truly that the soul is the only pure essence, that mind is a product of the principle of inertia and that the gross physical body is a thing of the earth. They are also well aware that the jiva (the individual soul) is the eternal servant of Godhead whose spiritual function is of the nature of spontaneous liking for the service of Krishna; that he is endowed with the aptitude for his natural function of loving service even while he may be resident in this material world. Possessing the true knowledge of all this, persons, who are endowed with the spiritual disposition that is found on the plane of Braja,

realising in their souls absolute freedom from all stultifying influences of this phenomenal world, are constantly engaged in the service of Krishna, the concentrated Personal Embodiment of All-existence, All-cognition and All-bliss. This worship is performed spontaneously in the exclusive state proper by the soul disengaged from all mundane affinities.

It is when the impulse of love cannot be compassed by the pure spiritual essence of the soul on account of its triumphant growth that it overflows its natural bounds into the subtle mental body in which it manifests itself in a mixed form. This gives rise to the mental worship consisting of the processes of manana (resolution of service), smarana (recollection), dhyana (meditation), dharana (retention, assimilation)' the thought of bhutasuddhi (purification of the material cases), etc. This mental worship need not be avoided on the ground that it is of a mixed nature. This is inevitable till the dissolution of the material cases themselves. But the process that extends to the mind and body from the soul should be distinguished from the apparently similar process reached by mundane sensuous speculation by its ascending effort. This latter is idolatry proper and is categorically different from the mixed spiritual process.

These mental activities, derived from the soul, on undergoing still further expansion, overflow into the gross physical body. Coming down to the tip of the tongue it expresses itself as utterance of the chant of the Name, Quality, etc., of Godhead. Attaining the proximity of the ear it brings about the hearing of the same. To the eye it imparts the impulse of the vision of the Beauty and Figure of Godhead. The pure spiritual moods of the soul overflow into the bodily expressions of horripilation, shedding of tears, shivering, dancing, prostrations by way of obeisance, rolling on the bare ground, acts of loving embrace, journey to the holy tirthas connected with the Doings of Godhead, etc. This overflowing of the spiritual principle into material activity, is inconceivable in its nature and is the manifestation of the causeless mercy of the Divinity intended to bring about the turning of the direction of mundane activity Godward. The institution of honouring of mahaprasadam has been ordained by the Scriptures to bring about the change of the activity of indulging in the pleasures of the table in the direction of the service of Godhead. This

argument holds also in the case of other spiritual injunctions. This is the true significance of every ritual.

It is not to be supposed that persons who have realised the true nature of the spiritual function, neglect the due performance of worldly activities that are inspired by the mundane purpose. What the perfectly enlightened soul does is this: she maintains internally the attitude of unconditional feminine submissiveness towards Sree Krishna, while displaying the face of a heroic masculinity in her external conduct towards persons and duties of this world. Externally the pure devotee is found to be the most heroic among ambitious workers, a male prepared to exercise all the prerogatives of his superior sex among females, profoundly experienced in dealing with society, a good teacher of boys, the greatest of those who possess the knowledge of our material needs, but is withal skilled in turning them to the account of the summum bonum, the peace-maker in war and the purifier of the hearts of sinners. All this is found to co-exist with an opposite disposition, which is the outcome of excessive increase of the impulse of spiritual love, which leads the devotee to be averse to seeking popularity and to prefer the intimate service of his Beloved in the seclusion of retirement from this world.

The points that are emphatically brought out by the considerations penned above, are that it is not possible to serve Sree Krishna except under the direction, or, what is strictly identical with the same, by association in the service, of pure devotees who alone are in a position to distinguish the chaff from the grain. As soon as the least point of real contact with the pure devotees is established by the causeless grace of the latter, the fortunate recipient of such priceless favour is thereby endowed with the faculty that can distinguish the essential from the non-essential. The pure devotee is always accustomed to overlook all external defects and accept only the inner significance of every occurrence. This, of course, does not mean that one should continue to commit offenses in the expectation of such indulgence. The deliberate offender cannot obtain the real mercy of the pure devotee by reason of such offense. It is obligatory to follow the conduct of the perfectly blameless servants of Sree Krishna if one is to realise the nature of their unbounded mercy. If the hand of

the observer is placed over his eye it is bound to prevent his receiving the light of the glorious luminary, who is never chary of pouring out, unasked and in unstinted profusion and without the least reservation, his light and warmth towards everything.

Critics who are so unfortunate as to be disposed to stop their ear-holes against the expostulations of self-realised souls and persist in looking at the transcendental, perfectly purifying Pastimes of Sree Krishna through the spectacles of their own malicious sensuous dispositions, are no wiser than the person who does not spare to criticize the Sun and to blame that luminary for withholding his light from one who is determined to keep his hand tightly placed over his eyes. It is necessary to learn how to behave towards the Truth if one is to make His acquaintance at all. Malicious misrepresentations and willful misunderstandings cannot enable so-called critics to be enlightened about the nature of the Truth nor to enlighten others regarding Him. I desire no other boon than that of being sincerely disposed to make my complete submission to the pure devotees of Sree Krishna for the sole reward of their approval. I am confident of attaining to the sight of the Truth by following the method which precludes all other desires than that of the causeless and exclusive service of all the servants of the Absolute Truth. May the pure devotees pardon the innumerable lapses of my aspiring attempt to follow in their holy footsteps in all humility.

IV. —Comparative Study Of Religion

Empiric History is a narrative of events occurring in time and is, therefore, necessarily limited by ascertained chronology. The ascertainment of the chronological order of events has suggested and supplied the materials for a science of growth or evolution deduced from the chronological sequence of actual occurrences. Attempts have been made to apply the method of

chronological evolutionary treatment, in the face of oblivious difficulties, to the subject of religion by a growing number of learned scholars resulting in an apparently surprising degree of unanimity as regards the conclusions reached. It is necessary at the outset of theistic history to attempt a valuation of the speculations with reference to the worship of Sree Sree Radha-Krishna to bring them into line with the Absolute Truth. The wide gap that separates the worship of Sree Sree Radha-Krishna from the conclusions of empiric religion requires to be explained in a systematic manner in the light of transcendental history which is not limited by any limited chronology to a limited world.

Sree Sree Radha-Krishna is the eternally coupled Divine Pair, Sree Radha being the predominated, and Sree Krishna the predominating aspect, indissolubly joined together, of the complete, active, Absolute Personality. Radha-Krishna or the Absolute is thus a composite of two persons of whom One predominates over the other. Neither of them is a Person of any exclusive or limited sense. The Personality of the Divinity in either aspect is Absolute and, therefore, also, All-inclusive. The impersonal view gives a partial and, therefore, misleading aspect of the Absolute. Hastiness of judgment due to inherent defect of understanding is responsible for mistaking the impersonal view as being superior to that of Divine Personality. The Personality of the Absolute should not also, on the other hand, be gratuitously confounded with the personality of our defective empiric speculations, in which the truth is obscured by the predominance of limiting, delusive, material reservations. Radha is not the female of our perceptual or conceptual experience derived from the observations of the phenomenal world by means of defective senses. The Absolute can be neither male nor female of our experience for the simple reason that such male or female can be but one of a number of mutually exclusive entities and cannot, therefore, accommodate the rest of them. It is the intention to avoid this difficulty arising from the defective nature of our sense-experience that has led the empiric philosophers to hit upon the barren and logically untenable notion of impersonality to indicate the nature of the Absolute. This has only landed them in far worse difficulties.

The whole issue hinges on a right understanding of the nature of the Absolute.

If God were really a zero we could be saved the trouble of attempting to describe His nature. If God is not zero, He should logically be both everything and no particular thing, at one and the same time. Everything is in Radha-Krishna; but Radha-Krishna is not identical with anything except Themselves. In other words Radha-Krishna has a specific individual existence of Their own, simultaneously with Their external all-pervasive existence. The external entities in their individual aspect, are not constituent parts of Radha-Krishna as the Absolute cannot be made up of a number of particulars nor even of the aggregates of individual entities. As a matter of fact individual entities as well as their aggregations are manifestations of Sree Krishna in and by the plenary Divine Power Sree Radhika. The manifestations are neither outside, nor identical with their Source.

The question how Sree Radhika can accommodate the material universe or other persons partially similar to Herself occurs naturally enough to the speculative mind whose activities are confined within the limits of three dimensions. But it would be sheer dogmatism and perfectly illogical to try to squeeze the Absolute within the narrow mental scope for the reason that the mind is incapable of conceiving existences of more than three dimensions or of less than one.

There cannot be such a thing as a comparative estimate of different creeds without postulation of a standard of value. It is, of course, possible to find out the values of the different creeds in terms of one of them. Let us suppose that this is done with every one of the creeds by turn with conscientious impartiality and sound judgment. Will it take us nearer the Absolute? Certainly not. The Absolute could be approached only by means of the Absolute. If none of these creeds be of the nature of the Absolute, the permutation and combination of any number of relative entities can never yield any knowledge of the Absolute. The method that should be applied is that of assigning local values to the fractional parts by relating them to the Integer. Those who adopt the moral principle as the standard by which to judge the local value of a creed, seek to arrange the creeds in an order of moral superiority. As an instance, we may take the methods of Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar, Barth and their followers. They try to

evaluate the worship of Sree Sree Radha-Krishna by the moral standard. They consider the worship of Rama and Sita as superior being more moral than the worship of Sree Sree Radha-Krishna. Such estimations assume the absolute validity of the ill-defined moral standard of empiric thinkers. Those extremely well informed writers could not have been wholly unaware of this radical philosophical weakness of their standard of value in arriving at any really dependable conclusion in regard to the relative worth of the different creeds.

Idolatry is the proper logical denial of the worship of the Absolute. Idolatry is the result of despair to find out the real truth. When the empiricist finds it impossible to discover the Absolute by means of his abortive speculations, but is anxious to provide a working hypothesis for good conduct, he dresses up his known erroneous idea to do duty as the spurious substitute of the inconceivable Absolute.

The moral principle cannot be clearly defined by those very persons who do not scruple to proclaim it as the only safe test for the valuation of religions. Such a method amounts really to nothing higher than a perverse advocacy of a particular whim. The conclusions thus reached are also never claimed to be unchangeable or absolute. The tentative and inconclusive nature of the performance is held to be part and parcel of the law emanating from the conscious will of a Person possessing the supreme power and governing the cosmic evolution. This establishes the validity of the principle by shifting the responsibility by way of self-contradiction to the shoulders of the Absolute Himself. The irrational acquiescence of despairing individuals provides its other sanction. As a matter of fact the method which is the fabrication of a particular fallible human mind is confidently offered for the convinced tentative (?) acceptance of all human minds on grounds indicated above. Morality is nothing but an empiric fiction leading to no definite goal. It makes its votary move perpetually in a vicious circle impelled by the desire to discover rational support for the conduct of the average man after performance, on grounds of expediency. Expediency is not, however, the acceptance of but the refusal to accept, any definable principle of general conduct.

But the aspirations of the physical body and mind refuse to be satisfied even by being allowed a free scope which cannot be realised in practice. The moral philosopher ignores this ugly circumstance and makes a show of sticking heroically to the worship of his idol which cannot save him from constant and irremediable transgressions against itself! If this is not appreciated by the victim, he is charged with the unpardonable crime of pessimism on-the, ground that it is our moral (?) duty to try to make the best of a bad job. But are we sure that the job is really bad and that it has not been made so by our bungling and hypocritical method of approaching it?

The worship of Sree Sree Radha-Krishna is condemned by certain empiric moralists because it seems to them to idolize promiscuous sexuality. But is promiscuous sexuality really undesirable? Is it undesirable for the reason that it is likely to prevent the realisation of the maximum sensual and other pleasures derivable from regulated sexual act? Who is to be the judge? If the attainment of the maximum pleasure by the individual be the desirable object, has promiscuity been really proved to be incompatible with such object? The ethical repugnance to promiscuity after all amounts to nothing more serious than this that it is not in conformity with the status quo, and not that it may not be made the status quo with proper and reasonable safeguards.

The empiric moral idea is no higher than the above. Lest my monopoly of enjoyment of a particular male or female, whom I choose to like for the time being, be jeopardized I become an advocate of monogamy (with or without divorce?) and worshipper of Rama-Sita. If sexuality is bad, how can even monogamy be good? If promiscuity is bad in itself, how can monogamy be good in itself? By what test is goodness or badness itself to be determined? It has never been possible for aspirations of the flesh endowed with a pseudo-conscious form by the mind to satisfy the genuine demands of our reason.

All speculations of the mind are inconclusive and erroneous. The moral notion is, indeed, only one of those inexplicable entities that demand to be explained. Those who erroneously think that the worship of Sree Sree Radha-Krishna is immoral forget that no mental speculation has any access to the Absolute Who

is the Object of worship in this case.

What consolation does a mentalist expect by worshipping Rama-Sita? Is he, thereby, likely to be encouraged in cultivating his monogamous nuptial relations with assiduity? Can such a conclusion be regarded as logically tenable. If God happens to be monogamous, am I likely to become so, by contemplating His conduct? Can also the very notion of monogamy or marriage apply to the Absolute? We may not want to be promiscuous for absence of unlimited sexual and other powers. It is only a counsel of possible discomfort. Why should we suppose that God's power is limited by any adverse condition, The attempt to judge the Absolute by a limiting standard set up by ourselves for our regulation is opposed to the notion of the Absolute. The Absolute is located beyond the scope of our mental activity. The phenomenal world exposed to the view of our senses is only an abrupt and unintelligible section of the whole Truth. We stand powerless in the presence of the Infinity of Smallness and the Infinity of Greatness that spread at either end beyond this limited span of the visible world and refuse to show themselves to us. This is the tantalizing condition of the existence of three dimensions into which we find ourselves securely imprisoned. If any merciful being tries to communicate the tidings of the Absolute to us, he is bound to fail completely unless he is also capable of imparting to us the necessary receptive faculty. This is the position of the Agnostics to a certain extent, as they are conscious of their limitations and are accordingly unprepared to commit themselves to any opinions, favourable or unfavourable, regarding the Absolute. It is a more consistent attitude than the self-sufficiency of Barth or Bhandarkar.

The Skeptics disbelieve the possibility of the Absolute taking the initiative and communicating Himself to us in a way that is beyond the comprehension of our present limited faculties. The Skeptics, therefore, want to sit still in sheer despair. The Atheists, indeed, speak only the language of delirium when they positively deny the existence of the Absolute. They do not deny the fact of relative existence or relative knowledge. How can they, therefore, consistently

refuse to admit the logical necessity of absolute existence and absolute knowledge? Error can have, rationally speaking, no absolute existence and even its seeming existence can only be a reflection of an absolute existence erroneously apprehended by, our defective cognitive faculty. Atheism represents at its very best only the crude cogitations of the undeveloped intellect regarding the Inconceivable.

As a matter of fact the worship of Sree Sree Radha-Krishna or of Rama-Sita, if they are regarded as historical entities located on the-mundane plane, is rightly liable to the charge of anthropomorphism. By the mere assertion that a form of such anthropomorphic worship is moral, its absolute nature is only still further ignored. Those who choose unnecessarily to get engrossed in the manipulation of relative speculation regarding the Absolute and declare it as the only method of approach to the Absolute, owe a cautious hearing to any one who does not muddle the real nature of the issue.

Almost the first thing that requires to be settled clearly and at the outset of any so-called historical inquiry regarding religion, is whether the object of our quest is, indeed, the Absolute. Those who are not prepared to admit that religion should be identical with the quest of the Absolute, have an undoubted right of criticizing the conclusions of those who accept the religion of the Absolute. This is what the empiric thinkers have been indefatigable in doing all along. But is it irrelevant to opine that empiric criticism is bound to be altogether wide of the mark in such a case for the reason that the attempt to judge of the Absolute, or of what is even claimed as the Absolute, is, by the fact of this very reservation, removed wholly outside its self-admitted jurisdiction ?

The Absolutists rest their case on the fact that the Absolute can and does communicate Himself by imparting to us the capacity of receiving Him. They go further and assert that we are already eternally endowed by the Absolute with such faculty, but are free to wilfully neglect to make the proper use of the same. That the Absolute is, nevertheless, trying continuously to persuade us to be willing to know Him by making the proper use of those faculties. These are the fundamentals of every religion.

The Absolute is always speaking to us regarding Himself and we are always deliberately shutting our ears to His Voice. The Absolute has been eternally appearing to us in the Form of the Spiritual Scriptures as the testament of His utterances. He is also sending down His agents in the human form to speak to us with the human voice to make the same perceptible even to, our sealed ears. All this is super-rational. The agents of the Absolute appear among us in order to make the meaning of the spiritual Scriptures perceptible to our dormant understanding. The Scriptures require to be interpreted to us by those who know.

Those who are not prepared on principle to listen to the voice of the Absolute, need not decide that it is not the voice of the Absolute, before giving it their impartial and full hearing. Of course there is every risk of wasting our time on scoundrels personating as agents of the Absolute by dint of their sheer impudence. It should not, however, take much time or trouble for an honest enquirer to find these out. It is always possible to find the right teacher of the Absolute, provided one really wants to find him. The agent of the Absolute must also be eternally existent in the available form to all who want to find him at all.

Very few of us really want to find the teacher of the Absolute even if we know that it is easy to find him. Most of us have no interest for the Absolute. This is partly due to our traditional wrong conception regarding the nature of the Absolute. It is our purpose in this chapter to try to invite the attention of the reader to certain widely prevalent misconceptions regarding the nature of the Absolute, by an examination of the extent of their deviation from the absolute standard.

The creeds that prevail in the world are divided naturally into two exclusive groups according as they happen to follow the method of empiric search of the Absolute or that of revelation. The empiric creeds may be broadly grouped into four divisions, viz., (1) Theism, (2) Agnosticism and Skepticism, (3) Pantheism, and (4) Undifferentiated Monism. The revealed religions show the following order of evolution, viz., (1) worship of Godhead realised as a

male Person (Vasudeva), (2) as Couple (Lakshmi-Narayana, Rama-Sita), (3) as served by many married consorts (Dwarakesha Krishna), and (4) as served spontaneously by many consorts who follow no conventional matrimonial regulation in the coupled form of Sree Sree Radha-Krishna.

The instinct of the service of the Absolute is innate in human nature. It is, however, ordinarily overlaid with the negative dominating impulse of self-gratification. According as the one or the other impulse proves stronger, a man makes his choice as between the two broad divisions of religion. A person who has full confidence in his own powers in attaining the Truth, follows the empiric method. One who is convinced of the utter inadequacy of the human intellect to find the Truth, is inclined to follow the method of revelation.

The empiricist worships (?) the mixed product resulting from his actual sensuous experience. The word experience, as used in connection with empiricism, should be understood as referring exclusively to knowledge of the external world derived through the process of sense-perception. Sense-perception is the material or limiting condition of all mental process. The mind is the meeting-ground of the principle of animation with the inanimate material principle supplied by the senses. Mental activities. The reaction of the animate principle on the inanimate. It is a composite of two apparent incompatibles. No mental activity is possible unless both principles are present. The principle of animation is mixed up with or overlaid by that of inanimation, in the mental function.

It follows that empiric worship is bound to be either acceptance or rejection of the material principle, in one or more of its aspects. In this case the mind is the accepting or rejecting agent. The mind cannot function except by way of acceptance or rejection of materials supplied by the senses. But the mind cannot cease to function. It must either accept or reject and must also continue to do so alternately. It cannot accept or reject for good. That would tantamount to its own destruction.

Atheism represents the temporary rejecting function of alternatives by the

mind. The mind refuses to accept as true or desirable, because the two are really identical in this case, any stationary condition, for the reason that it is afraid that it would be suicidal. Atheism wants to live on the state of ever-changing activity. It is the proper negation of the Absolute conceived as Inaction. It is justified in disbelieving the Absolute by the evidence of its actual sense-experience. But it should by parity of reason be equally prepared to extend the bounds of its experience by any and every method. This, however, it is not always prepared to do. For instance, it refuses to accept the method of submission to the Truth for His realisation as enjoined by the revealed Scriptures. Atheism is thus proved to be an exclusive partisan of the method of empiric self-sufficiency in spite of its profession of freedom from all bias to creed and dogma. Its sterility is due to this hypocritical reservation. Its exclusive attachment to self gratification is the cause of its disinclination to seek for the Truth and its consequent failure to find Him.

Agnosticism and Skepticism deny the existence of possibility of the Knowledge of the Absolute. Both do so on the strength of their limited experience and without due consideration of the method proposed by the Scriptures. Both have an attitude of disbelief towards the method of revelation by their over-confidence in their own conclusions. This is really self-contradictory as neither professes to be able to know the Truth. The Skeptic is the greater sinner of the two, because he is not even prepared to admit the very existence of the Absolute. Both really depend on the method of narrow dogmatism in their own cases although appearing to condemn the attitude in the case of others. The explanation of this irrational attitude is to be sought, as in the case of atheists, in undue attachment to the prospects of this transitory world which is father to the thought that it would be heroic not to seek to fly from the state of ignorance and misery which is supposed by them to be unavoidable. The argument that is used by the theists is that ignorance and misery is due to the self-elected folly of the votaries of worldly vanities whose position is psychologically unsound and is also opposed to the moral principle. It is the Nihilistic attitude that becomes the worst of nuisances if it be allowed to pass itself off as a constructive ideal.

The pantheistic attitude is the most treacherous of all as it wears the mask of theism although in principle it is identical with atheism. The pantheists profess to see God in phenomenal Nature. This is the concrete denial of the Absolute. The theists do not counsel the worship of the limited and transitory. The pantheists affect to find no difference between this world and the spiritual realm. The pantheistic school appears in a variety of forms in this world. The most common group being that which bears the name of Smartas in India. The Smartas hold that the object of all worship enjoined by the Scriptures, is the improvement of our worldly felicity, present and prospective. The view finds its psychological support in the current literatures of the world which are busy in vindicating the ways of the world. What the atheist is really afraid of, is that he might be called upon to modify his worldly activities out of deference to any transcendental consideration which in his opinion cannot possess any present worldly value and may merely and falsely deprive him of a present felicity. This is met by the pantheist with the assurance that the transcendental would be of no use if it did not serve the plans of the worldling better than otherwise. The pantheist, however, cannot really adduce sufficient rational grounds for his contention except the testimony of experience of following the performance, in blind faith, of the ceremonials laid down in the Shastras. The pantheists are, therefore, more grossly worldly minded than even the professed atheists. They are often confounded with the genuine theists with whom they have nothing in common except their externals to a certain extent. The pantheists, themselves, however, oppose the bona fide theists tooth and nail in the matter of the proper interpretation of the Scriptures. It may be well to mention in this connection that the Scriptures do contain a large body of injunctions the performers of which are promised the reward of increased worldly felicity. There are also text books that are specially devoted to the vindication and glorification of the worldly point of view. The reason of this, according to theistic interpreters, is that the Scriptures want to produce faith in the transcendental even in those who value nothing but worldliness. These worldlings are, therefore, promised what they want wrongly, on condition that they should submit to certain regulations. These regulations have been so framed as to serve the purpose of moderating their passion for present worldly enjoyment by promoting the attitude of reflection towards the past and future.

Karma or worldly activity is the starting point of all pantheistic thought. It has been analyzed in all its bearings in special treatises of the Scriptures. Those treatises do not purposely go beyond the limit of the phenomenal world in those discourses, which are intended exclusively for the edification of those who are incapable of believing in anything higher than worldly activity. But any impartial examination of the subject is bound to lead to a clearer apprehension of the defects as well as the merits of the view that worldly activity can supply all our needs.

It is not my intention to suggest that whatever is contained in the section ,of the Scriptures dealing with rituals is necessarily true even from the worldly point of view. The Smartas, indeed, hold that the rituals if properly performed, are really efficacious. This may or may not be so. The Shastras contain numerous statements to the effect that the promise of worldly reward, is meant to induce persons with a childish judgment to be moderate in the matter of their sensuous enjoyment. This may mean that the spiritual object is alone true while every other prospect is fleeting and illusory. But the fleeting and illusory result itself is valued by worldlings above every other thing. Whether the proper performance of the rituals also actually yields the worldly results promised by the Scriptures, is not relevant for our present purpose and the matter may, therefore, be left open for those who want to speculate about it. This last is what the Smartas and their school have been indefatigable in doing all over the world. These empiricists have also produced a Science of Theology which is wide of the mark for the spiritual purpose, although it may be more intelligible to and at the same time be fully exposed to the attacks, of other sections of empiric thinkers.

The pantheists are worshippers of mundane objects possessing definite material form and quantity. For this reason they are condemned as idolaters by those who prefer more refined and intellectual forms of worship. It is, however, philosophically impossible to draw any, line between one form of empiric worship and another. All empiric schools ultimately depend on one's individual judgment for the ascertainment of Truth. It has been shown above that the stuff of all such judgment is sense-perception which is thus the common object of

worship in a gross or refined form of all empiric worshippers.

The pantheists are led by their particular predilection to appreciate the objects and relationships of this phenomenal world for their own sake in the light of their empiric judgment. They are not prepared to admit the possibility of the uselessness of such a quest not directed to a higher purpose. In other words, they confound matter with the soul on principle. This is inevitable inasmuch as and so long as they are not repelled from their conclusions by the actual experience of the essential triviality of all worldly pursuits for their own sake. This is a disposition which only experience can teach. The pantheists are those who are in the heyday of their career of worldliness with an increasing belief in its worth and prospects. The Scriptures lead these people gently by the hand by seeming to agree with their conclusions and trying to modify their cause by pleading the advantages of moderation even in the case of worldly activity for its own sake. This is naturally and honestly construed by those who are genuine believers in Pantheism as a confirmation of their view by the Scriptures. But once the value of spiritual support begins to be really cherished even those sections of the Scriptures that are apparently devoted to the elucidation of the pantheistic position, offer sufficient material for our serious consideration leading to increasing modification of the pantheistic view-point based thereon. The raw teachers of pantheism do incalculable harm by their narrow sectarian advocacy of the principle of worldly felicity on the authority of the Scriptures.

The unspiritual pantheistic view falls pat with the theory of Darwinian evolution and has accordingly captured the hearts of those modern scholars who are still under the spell of that theory. They are not, of course, prepared to admit their partiality for materialism, thanks to the way of escape that has been cleverly provided for them by the subtleties of the idealists who require careful attention from all students of the Absolute. The pantheism of Sree Sankaracharya is the typical case. He is the intellectual protagonist of the pantheistic view, basing his conclusions on apparently rational interpretation of the Scriptures. The view, which has really been in existence from a period long anterior to the time of Sankara, in its present current form professes to follow mainly the exposition of Sankara. But Sankara himself is not capable of being

properly understood by a materialist. The big literature of commentaries that has been brought into being by the pseudo-followers of Sankara presents not Sankara's view but that of the commentators themselves.

Sankara seems to justify the worship of Nature in order to be able to get beyond Nature to Nature's God Who, he declares, is unintelligible to the limited reason except as the incomprehensible reality identical with the cognitive principle. This analysis contains an encouragement to idolaters (pantheists) with a view to wean them ultimately from the worship of any form of mental concoction.

The real difficulty that is experienced in accepting fully the philosophy of Sree Sankaracharya is that it is not possible to agree with his proposal in favour of the worship of Nature without discarding the purely spiritual point of view which the theory ultimately professes to seek to establish. By material means it is never possible to attain to the spiritual vision. Sankara does not also say so. He was forced to recognize the forms of pantheistic worship in order to get a hearing at all from idolaters. In this sense only his seeming advocacy of the cause of pantheism can be regarded as consistent with the spiritual standpoint.

But Sankara has been exploited for a quite different purpose by the school of undifferentiated cognitive Monism. They want to make the ultimate Reality devoid of all activity. They also want to make it a Unity that is unintelligible and inexpressible. To this conclusion they try to arrive by following mainly the dialectic method of Sankara and secondarily by idealistic interpretation of the Scriptures. This is really empiricism pure and simple, the reference to the Scriptures being merely to fortify the conclusions of mental speculation. The objections to mental speculation as the method of quest of the Absolute, therefore, apply fully to this school. It is in fact in order to escape from this unanswerable charge that the believers in the undifferentiated Brahman are constrained to make their inconsistent appeal to the Scriptures.

Looked at from the point of view of material thought the activity or existence of the spiritual principle is only capable of being negatively suspected by it. There can be no actual touch between material thought and the transcendental

Absolute. This is admitted by Sankara who looks at the Absolute from His plane. But the words of Sankara are not comprehensible to those who do not possess the transcendental altitude of his vision. The seemingly negative conclusion of Sankara is accepted without its all-important reservations by the egoistic disposition of empiric thinkers who can follow Sankara only to a certain distance in the negative way. This is not their fault. It is inevitable. The spiritual issue can never be approached by mental speculation. It is the purpose of Sree Sankaracharya to demonstrate this to all open-minded persons by argument that is also intelligible to mentalists. But those who do not possess the requisite openness of judgment necessarily misunderstand the purpose of the great Acharya.

The above four groups with their variants into which the empiric creeds are divided have been eternally occupied in propagating views that are calculated to lead us away from the quest of the Absolute. Unless one is prepared to cease to be guided by the accumulated load of misconceptions that have been sedulously impressed upon him by every empiric institution of this world it is not possible to be able to be disposed to catch the real meaning of the genuine teacher of the Absolute. That which I am going to relate next is, therefore, categorically different from the subject-matter treated by the empiric creeds. The Absolute is claimed to be the Reality proper that is eternally located beyond the scope of all experience of the limited and transitory available through the physical senses. The very first question that has to be answered before actually beginning a narration of the Absolute, is whether it will be possible for ordinary people of this world to catch the true meaning of such a narrative. The answer is given by the Scriptures. They say that the ordinary human being, provided he at all believes in the Absolute and is prepared to give Him his unconditional hearing, can by listening to the exposition of the activities of the Absolute recorded in the Scripture from the lips of self-realised souls attain to the knowledge of the Absolute, by the grace of the latter. This method is different from that of empiric quest and leads to a definite and thoroughly dependable result.

The personal factor which is capable of being done away with in empiric epistemology, is the central and abiding feature of the method of the quest of the Absolute enjoined by the Scriptures. The Guru is the pivot of the whole process. The Scriptures regard the quest of the Absolute as identical with the quest of the spiritual preceptor. As soon as the spiritual preceptor is found the negative quest gives place to the positive knowledge.

Therefore the question is resolved into the quest of the spiritual teacher. He is to be sought also by the spiritual method. There must be no empiric reservation in the quest which must be an exclusive search for the Absolute. This is the definition of shraddha (faith). The necessity for it is not properly realised by everybody. Those who do not experience the necessity will not find the spiritual preceptor. Those who really feel it, will also find him. Till the spiritual preceptor is found it is idle to waste one's time on the study of the Scriptures. It is not possible to understand the narrative of the Absolute without the help of personal exposition by the preceptor. The preceptor and the disciple have to be brought into personal contact with one another if the latter is to benefit by the teaching. The personal relationship is that of absolute submission to the teacher on the part of the disciple. This must be so because the Predominating Absolute cannot be approached except by the method of absolute submission on the part of the predominated atomic particles. This absolute submission must not be fictitious. It must also be personal.

The following narratives of the Absolute are found in the Scriptures. Their real meaning cannot be realised except by following the Scriptural method stated above. This discourse should be regarded as helpful in arousing faith in the Absolute by its rationalistic presentation of some of the grounds of such faith. It has a negative and symbolic value. It loosens the hold of empiric prejudices and thereby enables the Truth to be mirrored in our hearts opened to receive Him.

After the soul has got tired of the death-like monotony of mental speculations regarding the Truth and has also had sufficient experience of the delusive nature of both empiric knowledge and its promised prospects, he is inclined by a sense of sheer helplessness and misery to turn to the method of absolute submission to the spiritual preceptor, and the Scriptures for relief. This negative attitude is turned into one of positive and earnest inquiry by accidental association with sadhus. It is for the reason of finding the sadhu that

a person who is utterly disgusted with worldly living and the method of mental speculation, renounces the world and sets out on pilgrimage to holy places in search of self-realised souls who are supposed to reside at such places. It is rarely, indeed, that the true devotee of God reveals himself to the fortunate seeker. The sadhu is himself a transcendental being. To really know the sadhu is to be endowed with the spiritual vision. It is only by the Grace of God that the transcendental nature of His devotee can be realised.

It is only after the sadhu has been found that spiritual pupilage can really begin by the process of unconditional submission to his guidance. Then the disciple has to pass through the period of novitiate. If he does this with a guileless heart he is rewarded with the sight of God Himself and with His transcendental and eternal service. This last is the summum bonum. There is, however, gradation in the transcendental service of Godhead. It is not possible for the soul liable to conditioned existence to have the full knowledge of the Absolute. The jiva-soul is delicately poised on the border-line that separates the limited from the spiritual. He has the potentiality of affinity for either. His affinity for the limited is due to freedom of initiative inherent in all animation conjoined to absence of perfect vision by reason of his tiny magnitude. Such affinity is, however, really opposed to his proper nature which is essentially spiritual. The affinity of the soul for the spiritual can, therefore, be maintained only by the help of souls who are not liable to affinity for the limited. These eternally free souls are the inseparable associated counterparts of the Supreme Soul or Godhead Himself. The sadhus have no mundane affinity. By the help of sadhus the conditioned soul is enabled to attain to the plane of the Absolute.

But the novice has to pass through definite grades of progressive revelation. The full view of the Divinity is the last to be attained. The service of Divinity attains its perfection only on attainment of the complete vision.

The first Appearance of Godhead to the view of the spiritual novice is as Vasudeva or the Transcendental supreme single Male Person. This dissipates his empiric error that the Truth is an abstract principle. The appearance of Vasudeva also frees the novice from the error that mistakes the Personality of the Absolute as having any mundane quality or reference.

Vasudeva is self-revealed in the unobstructive cognitive essence of the pure soul. He is the positive Reality as distinguished from the abstraction of the

mental speculationists from the fleeting impressions of deluding entities limited by material space and broken up by the operation of passing time. Vasudeva is located above and beyond this unwholesome mundane plane. The realisation of His Transcendental Personality is possible only to the spiritual cognitive principle, which is the essence of the soul, as distinguished from material or limiting principle. Vasudeva is the One Person without a second. He is a Person with a Transcendental figure resembling the actual form of a male human being but, inconceivably to us, free from all limited or unwholesome characteristics of the human form that is familiar to us. Vasudeva appears as the Sole Recipient of our service. He is realised as comprehending all existence including that of His servitors. He is Male but free from all mundane associations of sex. These opposite qualities are spontaneously reconciled in His Transcendental Personality.

This is the first positive spiritual experience of the progressing novice. The worshipper of Vasudeva is, therefore, a truly spiritual devotee. He is categorically different from the atheist, agnostic, skeptic, elevationist or salvationist who are all of them strictly confined to the mundane plane. The worship of Vasudeva is performed by the spiritual essence of the pure soul on the transcendental plane. Vasudeva can be worshipped only by the process that is absolutely free from all mundane reference. Therefore, the worship of Vasudeva is also a gift of Vasudeva Himself. Vasudeva is identical in essence with His worship and with His worshipper. All of them belong to the same plane of the soul which is located beyond the scope of our limited mental faculties. Vasudeva manifests Himself to the pure essence of the jiva-soul as soon as the latter is at all disposed to serve Him in the proper way. It is rarely that a conditioned soul can attain to the spiritual service of Vasudeva. The conditioned soul is ordinarily prepared to be content with negative speculation. Very few persons of this world realise the necessity of search for the Supreme Personality Who is revealed to us by all the Scriptures.

Everything concerning Vasudeva is purely spiritual. His name, servitors, paraphernalia, abode, form, activities are an inseparable part and parcel of Himself. No amount of description can enable the reader to realise the nature of Vasudeva so long as one is not freed from the fetters of his limited faculties of apprehension. Vasudeva can be realised only by the grace of His devotee if we

are really prepared to follow his instructions in every act of our life. The devotee of Vasudeva can alone properly instruct us regarding the nature of the receptive attitude that is the natural position of the pure soul in regard to the Absolute and which can be restored to the conditioned soul only by the grace of Vasudeva if its attainment is sincerely desired by him, by the grace of His devotee.

The sight of Vasudeva disposes of all the doubts and difficulties of atheists and agnostics and skeptics, as a matter of course. The sight of Vasudeva also destroys the idols of the pantheists and the nihilism of the pseudo-monists. The Truth is actually found to have the figure of a human being. This is not in any way derogatory to the Truth. Man is located in the middle position. There extend on either side of him, above and below, two infinite gradations of superior and inferior beings. Godhead would, therefore, be conceived by our limited understanding as occupying the highest position in the series. But would this assumption be also logical ? The prevailing notion in favour of making Godhead something altogether unlike man is no less fanatical than the opposite notion cherished by the anthropomorphists of making Him identical with man. It is not impossible to steer clear of this double fanaticism. The Scriptures declare that Godhead possesses a Form that is identical with Himself and that the Divine Form is ultimately like that of man. Godhead has an infinity of Forms but His Human Form is His Fullest, Highest and His Own Specific Personality.

So Vasudeva is not to be confounded with any object of Physical Nature nor with any product of mental speculation. He is located beyond Physical Nature and beyond the mental scope. Yet Vasudeva has the Form of a human being. He has an infinity of Forms who are secondary extensions of this original Divine Form. The Scriptures fully support the Biblical dictum that man is made after God's own image. It is needless to labour the point further at this place.

The sight of Vasudeva, therefore, shatters all idols and substitutes of Divine Personality by revealing the real Object of all worship. This is the beginning of positive theism. Vasudeva, by His Human Form, pervades the whole world. Hence He is Vishnu. But Vasudeva pervades the mundane world without being of it. As pervading Physical Nature Vasudeva bears the name of Vishnu. Those fortunate souls who realise this fact are called Vaishnavas or worshippers of

Vishnu. No one who is not a Vaishnava can be a theist. The Vaishnava is endowed with the experience of the transcendental plane and is thus in a position to understand how Godhead pervades all Physical Nature without possessing any mundane organs or forms. The enlightenment is imparted by Vasudeva Himself.

The soul of man can know Vasudeva by His grace. The corresponding attitude in the recipient of His Grace is that of the unconditionally submitting disposition. If a person is not prepared to submit unreservedly for being enlightened by grace he cannot attain to the sight of Vasudeva and is doomed by his own vain choice to grope endlessly in the dark, unwholesome labyrinths of Physical Nature. By such unspiritual activity the soul may attain all conceivable conditions on the higher and lower mundane planes, but he can never attain to the vision of Vasudeva. Vasudeva has strictly reserved the right of not being exposed to the view of the conditioned soul who is not prepared to render Him willing and unconditional service. Vasudeva manifests Himself to the unclouded cognition of the soul in his perfect state of causeless, spontaneous, submissive devotion to Himself. So the two processes are simultaneous without being in any way related to one another as cause and effect. This is inconceivable to the limited experience of men but need not be logically considered as impossible in the Divinity. It ensures the reconciliation of perfect freedom of initiative on the part of the individual soul with the necessity of unconditional dependence on the Divinity for all real well-being. The empiricist's contention that as all language is a product of the limiting energy in the form of mundane Nature the very terms used to denote a spiritual entity only prove the inevitable mundane origin of an idea, does not apply to the case of the revealed vocabulary. It is not the contention of the transcendentalist that the Reality is more than one. What the transcendentalist declares is that there is possibility of suppressed, blurred and misguided vision of the Reality. The Energy that causes this distortion necessarily creates the mundane world of the distorted vision as the complement of such vision. The whole affair is not also unrelated to the Reality. It is the deluding face of the Reality Who is undoubtedly One. There is thus a running correspondence between the mundane and the transcendental as far as there is no actual suppression of the latter. The vocabulary of this world is, therefore, applicable

also to the transcendental realm but only in the transcendental sense. The real difficulty is that the transcendental sense cannot be possessed by any one who is not favoured by the Grace of God. The actual number of such persons in the state of grace is very small in this world. The voice of this infinitesimal minority is liable to be ignored by those whose object is to proclaim views arrived at by their limited experiences. Once the necessity of the transcendental vision is properly aroused in any person he is not likely, to urge these empiric objections against the transcendental position.

The name 'Vasudeva' is identical with the Divinity. But this is true in the transcendental sense only. In the transcendental sense, however, it is really true. Nay more, Vasudeva is the only real Truth. He is the Absolute Truth Himself. The empiric limited, relative apprehension of the name Vasudeva is not Absolute Truth. It is the product of the distorted view of the Truth Who can be but Absolute. In this distorted sense the empiric realisation is not untrue. But it is not given to those who are themselves under the delusion to realise this actual state of affairs. The person who possesses the absolute vision can alone understand the real position of the empiricists. He does not ignore the empiric view nor denies its existence. He only says that it is real, but distorted, view of the Truth Who is one and the same in Himself .

It is of course not possible to push the empiricists up to the transcendental level by the force of controversy alone. Because all appeal to the empiricists on behalf of the Absolute is ultimately based on the realisation of the Absolute as the only Reality. So long as a person does not possess the actual experience of the Absolute he can but look through the false glasses that are alone available to him. The empiricist can have no real Sight of the Absolute as He is, till he is favoured by the Grace of God. At the most he can only admit the necessity of Divine Grace for obtaining the view of the Absolute, Real or Substantive Truth. It is only then that he can really understand the true meaning of the proposition regarding the Absolute, viz., that the Name Vasudeva is identical with Godhead Himself.

Therefore, those who may be disposed to accept in principle the worship of Vasudeva but are opposed to the phraseology and ritual that are actually employed in His worship, still continue to flounder in the empiric bog. Such blind assent will do them no real good. Their assent is assent in the empiric

sense which is no assent to the Absolute. But there is also such a thing as real assent to the Absolute. This assent is the attitude of the awakened soul. This assent is identical with the whole process of worship of Vasudeva, including its ritual and vocabulary.

The objection to detail under the cover of a general assent to principle, is a dangerous ruse that is often resorted to by self deluded mentalists for avoiding the clear confession of the Truth. The attitude is really at the far end the product of that radical insincerity of disposition which feels an abnormal perverse joy in opposing the Truth at all costs. The objection against the vocabulary and ritual should be perfectly untenable if it is made to rest, as it really is, on such thin casuistry. There does exist the legitimate objection against lifeless ritual and pseudo-exhibitions of irrational orthodox. But even condemnation of the hypocrite however justifiable in itself is liable to degenerate into the most subtle and dangerous form of insincerity if it does not proclaim a stronger inclination to the Truth Himself .

As a matter of fact the Truth is one and indivisible. But He is not therefore, really zero. When we think of Him we require to be on our guard against worldliness on the one hand and hypocrisy on the other. The one leads to worship of Physical Nature or Pantheism in all its forms and the other to Nihilism which is only the negation of Pantheism and can exist at all only in a relation of contradiction to it. Both Pantheism and Non-ism are accustomed to profess its identity with Monotheism. The followers of both creeds are worldlings of opposite schools who have no intention of acting up to their professions. Neither is it practicable for them to do otherwise. It is possible for them to be relieved of these anomalous conditions only by the actual realisation of self-consistency by the attainment of the real knowledge of the Truth which none of them possesses. The empiric ignorance of Truth is not one of degree. It is one of category. The empiricists can form no idea of the nature of the Truth as He really is. For such a person to set up as a critic of the Truth, is sheer folly and malice. To try to mask one's foolishness and malice under the garb of a kind of a hollow ethical prejudice, makes it doubly worse. The empiric critics of the worship of Vasudeva formulated in the Scriptures, should not ruthlessly sin against these universal canons of sound constructive criticism. It is for this very reason that the study of the Scriptures is forbidden to those

who do not possess the necessary preliminary knowledge that should effectively prevent the assumption of an attitude of profanity. There is nothing to be gained by any form of real opposition to the Truth. Even the empiricists should be able to see this although in their distorted manner.

The different creeds and Scriptures as interpreted by the empiric judgment, tend to the elaboration of a hybrid theology that is neither here nor there. Empiric theology is a sheer contradiction in terms. The Absolute comprehends everything but is Himself ever incomprehensible. The empiric judgment is not honestly prepared to admit that the Absolute is the only Substantive Existence. The moment that we admit this we realise the necessity of waiting on the pleasure of the Absolute in all our activities. Vasudeva is pleased to reveal Himself to this purified submissive state of the soul. The pure soul fully recognizes the causeless Grace of Vasudeva as the sole sufficing cause of the realisation of the Incomprehensible by our present otherwise limited faculties. The pure soul deduces all his conclusions regarding propriety of his conduct from this fundamental admission.

Once this position is really taken up by the soul he ceases to quarrel with the Scriptures even when he does not understand. He now knows that it is not possible nor necessary to understand the Truth in the empiric sense of the term. There is such a thing as real understanding which can be only a gift from the living Truth and identical with Him. The appearance of the Truth on His own initiative is both the cause and result of all real knowledge. These processes are one and indivisible. They only manifest themselves to the receptive consciousness of the submissive soul by their own free choice. The empiric attitude is that of revolt against this unconditional supremacy of the one living Truth. It stands in the way of unreserved faith in the Scriptures as the necessary preliminary condition of the right understanding of the Absolute. The attitude of submission to the Absolute is neither blind nor slavish nor a gross form of superstition. It is the awakening of the real rational function of which all mental activity is but disloyal, hideous caricature.

The spiritual guide who imparts the knowledge of the Absolute is then found to be part and parcel of the true rational existence. The rituals of the spiritual Scriptures are realised as the eternal function of the soul who is by his real nature free from all worldly taint and weaknesses.

The fool's paradise is the one that all persons possess by the inalienable right of mundane birth. It is superfluous to carry the same into the real paradise. It is necessary for the attainment of this latter purpose to desist from the building of Babel. It is necessary to desist from all speculation on the subject as it is obstructive of the advent of the Truth. The Truth is ever seeking entry into the heart that is really open to welcome Him. The closed heart alone is busy in the fool's paradise and with its own disloyal fancies. Till one really knows Him one need not proclaim that he does. This rule is admitted by all but is observed by very few persons when they try to talk about the real Truth. The Truth can never be mastered by our puppy brain. It is the puppy brain that should be allowed to be mastered by the Truth for its own benefit. But it is the Nature of Truth to accept only perfectly willing service. It is, therefore, only necessary to reject all untruth and to await the coming of the Truth. This can be done if we only choose to do it. When one wishes to render such unconditional homage to the Truth his wish is fulfilled by the Truth Himself. The cobwebs of a deceptive moral code cannot then any longer bind his eyes and stifle his heart's sincerity. Vasudeva then manifests Himself to the pure essence of the soul of His loyal devotee.

As soon as a person is really established in the worship of Vasudeva by His Grace he is endowed with the disposition that opens up to his vision the definite vista of the Divine Realm. He is conducted by the Light of Vasudeva into the Realm of the Absolute. He finds it inhabited by the servants of Vasudeva. Vasudeva now presents His fuller Aspect in the coupled Form of Lakshmi-Narayana, the Eternal Lord and His one eternal Consort ever linked to His side as His Counter-Whole. Lakshmi is found to be the medium of all well-being.

Personality is conjoined with sex in the experience derived through our limited senses. The principle of sex need not, therefore, be dismissed as necessarily inapplicable to the Absolute. Male and female run through all physical Nature binding together its jarring elements in a union of wonderful harmony. Why should the sex be regarded as less indispensable in the Realm of the Absolute? The principle of personality implies the co-existence of a specific free will and its possessor. Thus stated it would seem to exclude all reference to sex. The will is found to be the same in both male and female in this world. Sex does not

seem to modify the specific nature of the individual will. It is perfectly possible to conceive a female form being endowed with the will of a male or vice versa. The factor of the sex seems to lie on the surface. As Godhead and the individual soul are ordinarily identified as regards their essence with the cognitive principle itself it is imagined to be in keeping with such identification not to admit the presence of the sex principle in Godhead.

This is, however, merely the psychological explanation of the genesis of the view that ultimately favours the idea of impersonality. But impersonality cannot stand on its own legs; it necessarily implies the personal. God should include both. He should be both personal and impersonal. But He could not be positively real without being personal. The negative quality can be but a background but cannot itself be the picture. The impersonal idea is at best of the nature of an inferential surmise of the Reality from an unrecognisable distance. The closer view relieves us from the necessity of retaining the dogmas of impersonality and abstraction.

Why should not Godhead be a Person. Why should He not be Male or Female? Why should He be only sexless? As a Person why should He possess no Form corresponding to our physical body? And corresponding to these arise the questions "Why have I a sex. Is the sex a constituent of my present personality? Would my personality suffer by elimination of sex? What connection has the principle of sex with the physical body? Will my personality be modified by any change in the physical body? These and similar questions lie at the very basis of the individual life.

The rational attitude should be to recognise the fact of the sex and to admit the existence of a corresponding spiritual principle. But it is not possible for a person on the strength of mundane knowledge to form any idea of the nature of the spiritual principle. We are sometimes disposed to think that it is given to us to approach the Absolute by way of service in certain forms. The issue of sex gives the direct lie to any such supposition. It shows clearly that it is never possible to rise from the physio-mental plane to the spiritual. This of course holds also in the case of similar empirical assumption regarding any other principle of spiritual service.

But we can understand by the parity of reason that the principle must exist in an inconceivable form. We are supported by the Scriptures. Sreemad

Bhagavatam makes the subject its central topic, round which all other topics are made to turn. The principle is found to occupy a correspondingly important position in the life of man in this world. So there is nothing peculiar or objectionable about the position. The objection of purists is due to the ignorance of the full claim of the Absolute.

By means of argument alone we cannot go beyond the point that we have now reached. The sex is found to be admissible in the Absolute. But the nature of the Personality of the Divine Couple, Sree Sree Lakshmi-Narayana, is other wise unintelligible to the limited understanding. Its knowledge can only be received by grace and is, therefore, a matter of actual realisation on the path of spiritual endeavour.

We, therefore, reach the conclusion that the Divinity is a Transcendental Person. His Personality manifests Himself to us at first as that of a Male. This is the realisation of Divinity as Sree Vasudeva. But on closer acquaintance we find His fuller Form of the Eternal Couple, viz., Sree Sree Lakshmi-Narayana. Sree Narayana appears as the Lord, Sree Lakshmi as His Consort. Sree Narayana is the Wielder and Sree Lakshmi is the Executrix of the Divine Will. Sree Narayana manifests all His Activities through His Counter-Whole. This is the nature of relationship between the Divine Couple.

The Sanskrit word "Shakti" expresses the spiritual principle that corresponds to the female. The word may be rendered as "Energy" "Potency" or "Power". Sree Lakshmi is Divine Power. The personality of Power is feminine, that of the Possessor of Power is Masculine. Godhead is the Possessor of infinite Power. Power is not dissociable from her Possessor. In this sense Divine Power is identical with Godhead. But Godhead is more than His Power. He is the Source and Wielder of Power. In exercise of His Power Godhead is realised as Couple. Godhead is fully realised as co-existing with His eternal Consort. The nearest physical analogy is that of the Sun in the embrace of the assemblage of heat and light. Neither light nor heat is the Sun who is their otherwise unknowable Source. They are manifestations of the potency of the Sun. It is not possible to describe the relationship of Power with the Source of all Power in terms of any mental or physical experience. It is possible only to indicate it by way of an extremely imperfect analogy.

The Eternal Consort of Godhead co-exists with Godhead. She is the

predominated moiety of the Absolute. The predominating moiety is her Lord and Master, Godhead Himself. This is the fuller idea of the Divine Personality. In the soul of man there also exists will in the embrace of power but both of them in an infinitesimally small measure. This smallness of his magnitude is realised by the individual soul by the service of the Divine Couple. It is possible for the soul of the jiva to try to live on his own paltry resources. This leads to a wrong estimate of his place and function in the Absolute. The point of view that such a course produces is responsible for the misdirection of the soul's activities in the state of self-elected willful ignorance that is to be found in this world.

So there is progressive revelation of the nature of the Divinity on the path of pure spiritual service. The upward tendency is towards realisation of the nature of the full scope of all the concrete relationships imperfectly mirrored in the deluding correspondences of this world, by the soul of man. In this world it is given only to man to have a corresponding existence. The soul of man is thus truly the centre of the phenomenal cosmos. This is not the case with any other sentient being, either higher or lower, of this world. The beings of apparently more favoured mundane worlds live under conditions that are less favourable for the realisation of the Absolute. This is due to the fact that they find their position more enjoyable. For the opposite reason the beings of lower worlds or stages are also placed in a worse position than man with reference to the Absolute.

These infinite gradations of life also exist as their corresponding realities in the realm of the Absolute, enveloping the human personality by their serving activities and affording necessary guidance for the realisation of the most perfect service that is found also here on the plane that corresponds to that of humanity. Sree Sree Lakshmi-Narayana are Objects of worship of this spiritual human plane. They enable us to attain the realisation of the concrete relationship of human service in its diffident forms. The development of the serving principle leads gradually to the inner and more concrete planes of the worship of Rama-Sita, of Sree Krishna in Dwaraka, of Sree Krishna in Mathura and finally of Sree Krishna in Brindavana. The word "rasa" means that which produces the sensation of "taste" in its most comprehensive sense. That which imparts to human life the quality of being tasted by its possessor is the most

fundamental of all principles of value of life. The-range and quality of the realised taste-imparting principle is the cause of the desire for and bliss of existence. Man lives here in this world on the sweets and bitters of his mundane sojourn. If he is deprived of this faculty of taste life is rendered meaningless and contemptible.

The leavening principle points to the sexual relationship as one of its cardinal references. This is consciously realisable by most persons in their actual relationships in this world. But the sexual relationship, although capable of being reached by way of argument as forming directly or indirectly the basis of all sweetness and bitterness on the mundane plane, is itself apprehended as a dangerous, delicate and unintelligible subject. It is also the basis of the taste of grossness in its most unwholesome forms.

The worship of Godhead is realisable in terms of the quality of spiritual taste evoked and fostered by His service. The relationships of this world, supplied by their deluding correspondence, give a clue to the spiritual quality but they can never give any substantive idea of the reality which is free from all possibility of unwholesomeness. In fact it is the attitude of the individual soul that is the cause of all experience of unwholesomeness born of limited vision. As the scope of vision of the individual expands he realises an increasing freedom from the sense of unwholesomeness. But this does not apply to the mundane plane where the so called expansion of empiric knowledge (?) tends to multiply ignorance and the possibility of unlimited grossness.

The conclusion to which such considerations tend to lead may be stated in the following manner. Spiritual life is categorically different from the mundane. No activity on the mundane plane by its mere dimension or manipulation, can ever lead to the Absolute. The difference between the mundane and spiritual function, may be indicated by the corresponding difference of attitude towards the Absolute on the part of the individual soul. The mundane attitude is that of a desire to lord it over the Absolute. The spiritual attitude is that of service by the process of unconditional enlightening submission to the Absolute. In proportion as submission to the Absolute tends to be perfected by practice under the guidance of the Absolute, the scope of the spiritual vision of the individual expands and produces a corresponding progressive excellence of the tasting process. Judged by this standard the service of Sree Sree Radha-Govinda

is the perfection of bliss attainable by the individual soul.

Not that Sree Sree Radha-Govinda is essentially different from Lord Vasudeva. They are one and the same, being the Divinity Himself. But the worshipper of Lord Vasudeva does not possess the full scope of spiritual vision. He can, however, obtain the expanded vision only by the faithful service of Lord Vasudeva and by His grace.

The faithful servant of Lord Vasudeva will find in the Object of his worship Sree Sree Lakshmi-Narayana, Sree Sree RamaSita, Sree Sree Dwarakesha-Rukminisha-Krishna, Sree Sree Mathuresha-Krishna and finally Sree Sree Radha-Krishna in Brindabana.

V. —History Of Atheism

Faith in a Personal Godhead and inclination to serve Him are not the artificial products of material civilization. Many books have been written by empiric thinkers to prove the historical origin of a belief in God as a product and concomitant of material circumstances. Such attempts betray an attitude of self-contradiction in regard to the nature of the super-mundane. These writers, almost deliberately confound religion, which is the eternal spiritual function of all individual souls, with the apparently similar mental speculations on the same subject although it is more or less admitted by all persons as lying outside the range of our sensuous experience. Nevertheless these assume religion to be the equivalent of a bundle of ideas that have their temporary existence in their own imaginations, and proceed to analyze what they suppose to be the similar mental phenomena of past generations with the tacit object of finding further support for, and for the elaboration of their pre-conceived views. Religion is supposed to be only a special department of thought produced by the mind by working on a particular aspect of the materials presented to it by the senses. This mental religion is more or less the method as well as goal of investigation of empiric moralists, theologians and scientists. Empiric criticism of the Bible and all mental treatment of the subject of religion, are vitiated by the adoption

of this faulty method of begging the question at issue.

It is necessary to approach the subject with a mind free from prejudices that may have been engendered by such tentative and inconclusive speculations. Love for God and desire to serve Him are functions of the soul, and, as such, are located beyond the sphere of our physico-mental experience which is strictly confined to the sense-perceptions of material space and time. They are not of the nature of positive or negative ideas, however refined, that have their non-permanent existence in our sensuous mind, nor are they of the nature of physical activities in continuation of such ideas, that bear the names of "love" and "service" in the current speech of the world. These have a beginning and an end and by their nature are subject to perpetual modifications. But love of God and service of God which belong to the soul, are eternal and unchangeable. They are not erring mental notions but the reality in the form of the only function of our souls and belong to a plane of existence higher than the sensuous mind, to which no critic of the empiric school has any access. But our sensuous minds are, and have been always, enabled, by the grace of God, to believe, no doubt dimly and imperfectly, in the great difference that must always exist between the physio-mental and the spiritual, whenever we are in a position to turn to the subject, which is always knocking at our door, our unbiased attention, in other words, when we are sincerely desirous of knowing the Absolute. On the path of such enquiry, the first axiom to which our unreserved assent is invited is this, viz., that the service of the Absolute is the only function of our soul in her pure, natural state. The fact may also be stated thus in terms of her present temporary, deluded existence, viz., that the inclination to serve the Absolute is innate in the soul and is, spontaneously aroused and asserts its superiority to all other forms of activity as soon as the nature of the service is properly explained, the resistance of her physical and mental equipments notwithstanding provided she gives to the subject, which she is free to do, her unbiased attention. This natural inclination to serve God has been present in the souls of men in every position of their material civilization and independently of such civilization.

This inclination to serve God and the actual service of God which exist eternally, are screened from the view of deluded humanity by their preference for worldly activities through ignorance due to the desire for meddling with

objects that seem to promise and also yield transient sensuous pleasures. But whenever there has been a determined effort by atheists to suppress religion altogether it has reacted against such pressure and successfully reasserted itself in a clearer form than before, triumphantly silencing its opponents. It is possible to write the history of this eternal conflict, in its various forms, of atheism against religion. The history of theism which is eternal can, therefore, be said in this sense to begin with this world, i.e., as soon as the individual soul comes under the conditions of material space and time, due to her eternal tendency towards the service of Godhead against her counter-tendency to worldliness, roused to activity by atheistical opposition.

Atheism, the correlative of theism, is of this world and has always existed, and has often predominated, in it. In this world men are found to be naturally divided into two mutually hostile groups, viz., (1) those who seek what is permanently good for them, and (2) those who desire what appears to be pleasant, without considering the consequences of its acceptance. The number of those who belong to the first group has always been infinitesimally small in this world which is of the nature of a temporary abode, or rather, house of correction, of those souls who have lapsed from the state of grace by reason of their preferring the pursuit of selfish enjoyment to service of Godhead. Atheism has been on the whole, the prevailing creed of this world. It has, however, been always compelled to masquerade in the garb of religion. But whenever atheism has been openly professed by the greatest leaders of thought and has appeared to be on the point of scoring a final and decisive victory over its rival with their influential support, the latter has invariably re-asserted itself, has demolished all efforts of the former and has consolidated its position by the refutation of such arguments as had been urged, or had seemed likely to be urged in the future, against it by its opponents, to an extent that was within the grasp of the contemporaneous generations. Atheistic opposition has thus resulted in the gradual and further elucidation of the theistic position. But although the opponents of theism have been silenced from time to time they are not always really converted to the views of their victorious rival, with the exception of a very small number; although most of them are compelled to profess a temporary, hypocritical allegiance to the manifested Truth, from worldly considerations. These hypocritical followers, indeed, afterwards prove the worst

enemies of the re-established religion, and by their show of its acceptance prepare to betray the citadel to the enemy, till at last rottenness inside and outside the system necessitates a vigorous re-assertion of the Truth for the benefit of the few who really want to serve God.

It takes a considerable time after birth for a man to acquire a fair measure of experience of the material world. The term 'matter' is applied to those external objects and their qualities that are perceived by the senses. In proportion as the senses of the child are developed they are enabled to have a fuller 'knowledge' of the qualities of material objects, and to enjoy in an apparently more and more 'conscious' manner the pleasures yielded by such exercise of the senses. The more the qualities of material objects are 'enjoyed' the stronger the desire for such enjoyment becomes, till gradually the minds of men become so devotedly attached to this pleasurable exercise of the senses that they have no taste left for anything else. The pleasures of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell thus tend to colour and impart an overpowering charm to all activities of the mind and invite the deluded soul to be naturalized to the condition. The soul once enslaved to the mental outlook cannot be roused to grasp the unwholesome transitory character of the earthly sojourn although constantly reminded of the same by the most significant facts of her worldly experience, viz., birth and death, and she seems to forget for all practical purposes the fact that as soon as one dies one ceases to have any further connection by way of continuity of consciousness with these very material objects that appear to possess a distinctive individual reference to him when alive. If by rare good fortune, the clear consciousness of the transitoriness of the worldly life is awakened in the deluded soul, she naturally tries to desist from the exclusive pursuit of worldly enjoyment and turns round to reconsider the whole position. A person who stops in the midst of his worldly pursuits to consider the implication of their transitory nature, puts to himself in some form or other these three questions, viz. 'Who am I, the apparent enjoyer of this world?' 'What is this vast world itself?' 'What is the real nature of the relation between this world and myself?'

Whenever the soul with her back to worldly pursuits asks the above questions she finds the answer in her own awakened consciousness. The answer which the inquiring soul receives being put together in a systematic form, comes to be

known as science and philosophy. The answer which the soul receives may be either (1) her own real consistent answer or (2) of a heterogeneous character. But why does not the soul, who is in essence the same, receive the same kind of answer in all cases?

The real nature of the soul is purely spiritual. The answer which she gives when she is in her own proper condition is the true answer and is the same in all cases. This mundane world is not her real home. It is material, that is to say, not of the essence of the soul but the product of the deluding power of God which makes it resemble the realm of the spirit. The illusion-producing power who has made this world is of the nature of the shadow of the superior spiritual power of the Divinity. The individual soul is an infinitesimally small separable part of the latter whose nature she shares. The soul resident in this unspiritual world is under the delusion that her essence is material and she has a natural affinity with the deluding power although there is really no such affinity at all. This is a heterogeneous alliance. The deluded soul's own proper nature is eclipsed and becomes dormant by the operation of the deluding energy resulting in the apparent identification by herself of her function with those of the body and limited mind, being thus unnaturally alloyed with the qualities of material energy. The individual soul whose real nature is purely spiritual, on imbibing this mixed character by operation of the material energy of God, functions by direction of the material mind in accordance with the dictates of this adventitious, unnatural, 'second' nature. The spiritual principle of self-luminous cognition, by such subordination to the principle of limitation, is perverted into the mind of the fallen jiva which is an extraordinary mixture, or rather incarceration, of spirit in a subtle material case. The answers that the mixed mind under the lead of the deluding material energy of God, returns to the questions put to it, are also necessarily heterogeneous, that is, self-contradictory. These answers of the soul fettered in the material mind reflect the heterogeneity of customs, dress, food, language and mode of thought of the country of the temporary sojourn of the physical body which encases the mind. Differences in respect of place of residence, age and condition of the physical body, all tend to make the answer correspondingly different in every case. There is thus a twofold perversion due to the twofold incarceration of the soul in matter, viz., in the subtle form of mind and grosser form of physical body, by

means of which she is deluded into relation of affinity with country, race, language, etc., which differ in the case of different individuals represented now by the physical body and mind.

In order to discuss in an adequate manner and in detail these heterogeneous answers it would be necessary to examine the history of all countries, to come into direct contact with the peoples by means of journeys through those countries and to master the different languages of the world. This is not the present purpose and a cursory glance at them will suffice to afford the reader a working idea of their general nature.

Of the above two kinds of answers received by the soul that variety which is true is also the one that is alone reasonable. The heterogeneous answers, although extremely diverse in character, are also, however, divisible into two distinctive groups. The first group constitutes the body of empiric practice and theory of truth; the second group is represented by activities devised for the purpose of securing selfish, transitory, material enjoyment [(1) jnana and (2) karma].

We have stated above that the true answer is also the rational one. If objection is taken to our use of the word 'rational' in this connection on the ground that the material reason admits its affinity with the heterogeneity of physical Nature, our reply is that the vocabulary that is available for expressing spiritual facts has acquired the material connotation by habitual abuse. The current vocabulary both as regards its derivation and usage refers really and exclusively to the transcendental. The words 'rational' and 'reason' used by us in connection with the soul have reference to the distinctive spiritual faculty inherent in the soul that can never err and always serves the transcendental Truth. The corresponding material faculty that dominates the eclipsed soul being subservient to the deluding energy, is, in the case of fallen souls, the approver, by its constitution, of the heterogeneous existence. This faculty in its normal, spiritual condition naturally responds in the really rational way.

That group of the two divisions of heterogeneous answers which has been named practice and theory of truth is the perversion corresponding to the Truth in the shape of answer returned by the pure soul that accepts the real and rejects the unreal. This heterogeneous 'knowledge' in its synthetic or positive aspect represents the qualities of matter and favours the view that matter is

eternal and the ultimate cause of everything, and, negatively, tries to establish the view that the Brahman or the Absolute is devoid of all distinctive qualities, a conclusion which is reached by the denial of the existence of matter.

That division of the heterogeneous answer which has been named activity in quest of transitory, selfish enjoyment, is the pursuit by the soul, under the domination of the deluding power, of non-God. The correlative of this is the pure rational activity of the soul in the form of the service of Godhead by means of spiritual thoughts and deeds.

The heterogeneous answer, with which most of us are more or less familiar, may be conveniently considered under two heads, according to the nature of the object of human life offered for our acceptance which is either (1) material pleasure, or, (2) extinction of material existence. The heterogeneous answer confines itself, as regards its subject of reference, to phenomenal Nature which, according to this view, exhausts all existence. The view that holds material pleasure as the end is in its turn divided into two sections according as the pleasure to be pursued is either selfish or unselfish.

We shall consider first the view that the end of human life is the attainment of selfish material pleasure. According to the supporters of this opinion there is no God, no soul, no other world, and no moral consequence of acts done by us. Our only proper function is to spend the time in constant sensuous pleasures with discretion to avoid any unpleasant worldly consequence. Such view has seldom been fully acted upon in civilized society. It has remained practically confined as theory to the persons who have conceived and propounded it in the different ages and countries. Such individuals are the Brahmana Charvaka in India, Yang Chu in China, Leucippus in Greece, Sardanapalus in Central Asia, Lucretius in Rome. Von Holbach maintains that the religion that leads to one's own selfish pleasure, is alone admissible. Religion is defined by him as the contrivance of securing one's own pleasure by means of the pleasures of others. The professed followers of unselfish material enjoyment have been very numerous and have in fact included the vast majority of the people in all ages and countries. The school of godless fruitive work (karma-kandis) of India is probably the oldest body of the credal followers of this view. According to this school Isvara (i.e., the Supreme Ruler) is an entity that has no antecedent (apurva) . The view has been supported by learned mal-interpretation of the

Vedic Scriptures. Democritus, the exponent of the view in ancient Greece, holds that unoccupied space and matter are eternal, the difference between substances being quantitative and not qualitative. Knowledge is merely the state of conjunction of certain external and internal substances. All substances are made up of atoms. Kanada maintains the permanent qualitative difference between different classes of atoms. According to the Vaisheshika School the individual soul and the Oversoul belong to the category of substances. Plato and Aristotle do not admit God to be the only eternal entity nor as the only cause of the world. This makes their systems share the defects noticeable in Kanada. Gassendi, Diderot and La Mettrie belong to this class. According to Comte we should regard theism as infancy, philosophy as childhood and positivism as mature stage in the evolution of thought. Men are required to be philanthropically disposed and to be disinterestedly religious in their conduct. The earth is the supreme fetish of Comte, the country his supreme medium and human nature his supreme being. Mill is in substantial agreement with Comte. The propounders of secularism in England include the names of Mill, Lewis, Paine, Carlyle, Bentham, Combe, Holyoake, Bradlaugh.

But the faculty of reason, even when it happens to be engrossed in matter, if only it could be induced to consider the subject in an impartial spirit, is bound to reject all these views for their extremely bad logic. The materialist proclaims the necessity and wisdom, above all things, of reducing the number of categories, and in fact it is this which leads him to deny the existence of the transcendental. But his own method leads him to the formulation of an infinite number of categories. Materialism is artificial and unscientific as it ignores the principle of self-consciousness and holds material Nature to be eternal. It calls self-consciousness a quality of matter and at the same time asserts it to be the regulative principle of the entity of which it is declared to be the quality. It involves the subordination of the principle of self-consciousness, which is the better and higher principle, to gross matter (Ferris). There is no proof of the permanence of matter (Prof. Tyndal). Boucher and Moleschott hold matter to be eternal, which is, however a mere assumption. The view of Comte that man should cease from the enquiry of the beginning and end of the world, if really followed, would reduce man to equality with lifeless matter. No instance of any self-born man or of a man generated by the process of progressive evolution is

known within the last three thousand years of human experience. The argument from design, if it be admitted, points to the principle of intelligence as the cause of the cosmic order and would thus be a complete refutation of all forms of materialism.

If again we consider the actual conduct of materialists in regard to society we find that they hold it necessary for men to be religious, in their acts. Sin and righteousness are held to be productive respectively of pain and pleasure of men in general. Pleasure for oneself should conform to the pleasure that is disinterested. By the practice of religion sin and its resultant misery are got rid of. It is necessary for men to investigate those laws that enable them to maintain their existence in society. The actions performed by men bear fruit even after their death for other beings of this world. In this sense acts never die. Acts are transformed into forces that did not exist before, such forces, being nourished by other future acts, are the cause of the continued improvement of the world. This is the disinterested reward of one's acts.

The professors of disinterested material pleasure as the object of human life are, in fact, identical with the school that regard the selfish pleasure of oneself as the object of life. This is proved by Von Holbach under the name of Miraboud in his "System of Nature" (1770). In that work he has shown that there is no such thing as disinterestedness in this world. Religion is only a contrivance of securing one's own pleasures by making others happy. No one would care to do that which did not bring pleasure to himself. Even the sacrifice of life is made for pleasing oneself. All pleasures flowing from religion are for one's own self. Even love for God is for one's own pleasure. Whatever is natural is necessarily selfish because nature refers to the self. Selfishness is natural. Disinterestedness is unnatural and is never to be found.

The view that God is that which is without antecedent and identical with power or force, as propounded by Jaimini and Western scholars, never appeals to those who possess clearness of understanding. Those who accept their view have to be content with a part of the whole. The view of the non-antecedentists is directly opposed to the idea of God. Jaimini was well aware of the existence of a natural inclination in the hearts of men to submit to God and has accordingly very cleverly and with great assiduity conceived a god as the awarder of the fruits of our actions and included him in his category of the non-

antecedent It is due to this cleverness in providing a reference to a god that the view of the Smarta Pandits advocating godless fruitive works, has been so vigorously prevalent in India. People with a cloudy intellect extend a ready welcome to the view of the professors of so-called disinterestedness in the hope of securing at a trifling cost the reward of unselfishness. This is another powerful reason for the spread of the creed of atheistic fruitive works.

The instructions of the professors of disinterested material pleasures may be appreciated at first, to a certain extent, by people by reason of their own selfishness; but they will scruple less to commit sinful acts the more they will enter into the spirit of the system. It is in this way that the system quickly enough degenerates into one of expediency pure and simple in which every individual member is free to act for his own pleasures in a way that appears to him to be not obviously against the general interest, and soon learns to care only for the external appearance of his acts. In the absence of a God to punish, the only check on the most reckless pursuit of selfish pleasures will be the fear of public exposure; and various expedients will accordingly be devised for avoiding the consequences of such a contingency. The truth of this criticism is corroborated by the notoriously lax practices of the ordinary Smarta Pandits who are adepts in twisting the rules to any extent to suit their individual purposes.

In the nominal provision for the worship of a god as found in this system we do not notice any of the characteristics of real devotion to God. Some of these even opine that the worship of God is only a variety of fruitive works; or, in other words, that it is prescribed for people in a general way and is optional in their own case. Comte has provided for the worship of his conceptions as God for the reason that they appeared to him to be true. In this Comte is more sincere; but Jaimini and the others are more far-sighted. The views of Comte and Jaimini are identical in theory. Those theories of the elevationists in effect sometimes affect to say to devotion, "I follow you. I make men fit for devotion to God. I shall bring the sinners to your feet after purifying their minds". These professions are the result of duplicity When work truly follows devotion it does not claim any separate recognition of itself but is content to pass under the name of devotion. So long, however, as work is disposed to retain its own separate designation it seeks its own glorification as a rival process claiming

equality with devotion. This attitude leads it to claim all credit for every effort for the advancement of science, of society and industry, etc. as flowing from itself. But as a matter of fact when such work is transformed into the nature of devotion, i.e., service of God, science, society, industry, etc., are rendered even more glorious and progressive.

The view that material extinction is the proper object of life is held by the philosophical schools of Buddhism and Jainism. The genesis of the view is supplied by the fact that material pleasure is essentially trivial and is not genial company for a spiritual being. The experience of this gives rise to the theory that all existence is misery. It is a significant fact that the ordinary, Buddhist of today, at any rate in Burma, is not a pessimist. He believes that God exists eternally, that He has created the world. It is He who appeared in this world as the Buddha and always exists as God in Heaven. Men will go to Heaven by doing good works and by following the rules laid down by the Buddha This is not the Buddhistic theory of the schools. In fact these pessimistic views, that have been adumbrated with so much subtlety of argumentation, are never accepted as common property by the Society. They are bound to remain locked up in books and in the minds of their teachers. The general population, if at any time they happen to pride themselves as the followers of these views, do so under the impression that those views are identical with their own cherished Opinions which, as have been pointed out above, are nothing but the spontaneous concomitants of human nature. Love of Humanity as the object of life, as propounded by Comte, worship of God under the name of the Non-antecedent, a constituent part of his fruitive works, as devised by Jaimini, the theory of material extinction propagated by Sakya Singha, all of these are bound to be reduced by the general body of their respective practising followers to one common form, viz., that of the religion that is natural to man. To this consummation they are tending even at the present moment

The pessimists of western countries come under this category. There is no such thing as re-birth according to these Western pessimists whose theory may be described as the view of material extinction as the desired end of human life which itself is limited to one single birth. The Buddhist and Jain Schools agree in holding material extinction as the proper end of human life attainable through a cycle of births and re-births.

According to Buddha the jiva can attain final extinction (parinirvana) as the result of long practice of gentleness, patience, forgiveness, kindness, unselfishness, meditation, renunciation and friendliness. There is complete cessation of existence on the attainment of ultimate extinction (parinirvana). After ordinary extinction (nirvana) existence as kindness persists.

The Jains maintain that in accordance with the stage of advancement of the jiva due to the exercise of all the good qualities under the lead of kindness and renunciation he attains successively to the conditions of Narada, a Mahadeva, a Vasudeva, a Para-Vasudeva and finally the state of the Divinity involved in total material extinction.

According to both Buddhists and Jains the material world is eternal. Work which is without a beginning has an end. Existence is misery. Utter extinction (parinirvana) is happiness. The system of fruitive works propounded by Jaimini is harmful for the jiva. The rules that ensure utter extinction (parinirvana) are alone productive of good Indra and other gods although they are the masters of fruitive workers are the servants of those who follow the path of utter extinction (parinirvana).

Schopenhauer and Hartmann are material extinctionists admitting a single birth. According to Schopenhauer extinction is attainable by renouncing the desire for existence, by, voluntary abnegation (tyag), humility, acceptance of physical suffering, moral purity and asceticism (vairagya). According to Hartmann it is not necessary to undergo any suffering. Extinction is easy of attainment after death. Herr Bensa has demonstrated the impossibility of extinction by asserting the eternal nature of misery.

Most of the followers of current monism are material extinctionists. One section of the monists hopes for the spiritual bliss of the Brahman after extinction; the other section accepting the extinction of all existence after death, does not admit any other form of bliss. It is these latter whom I have classed as material extinctionists.

In the theory of material extinction the specific nature of the jiva is left uncertain. All these speculations are altogether atheistical. These views having been put forward with the object of preventing the oppressions by the exponents of material fruitive works could be propagated with such great vigour by the enthusiasm and perseverance of their preachers. In India on

account of the oppression practiced on the Kshatriyas and the other varnas by the Brahmanas in course of the latter's efforts to further the establishment of the godless creed of fruitive works and the universal supremacy of the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas handed together for the promulgation of the Buddhist, and the Vaishyas similarly combined to spread the Jain creed. When the factious spirit is reinforced by the clash of worldly interests it operates with great vigour. The Buddhist and Jain views were propagated in India in this way. In those countries into which those views were subsequently imported they were accepted as God-sent due to the absence of a stronger critical faculty in the peoples of those countries. It is a matter of history that the modern professors of material extinctionism in Europe, were led to propagate those views by their hatred of the Christian religion.

According to the Tantric view the whole world including the Chit and achit has been created by an eternal power named Maya. When the zeal of Buddhist preachers cooled down due to the barrenness of the philosophy of their creed there was an attempt to rehabilitate those doctrines in a new garb. It is at this stage that the Buddhist idea was transformed into the Tantric and the new theory known as Mayavada was propounded. This cult of Maya passed under the name of Buddhism inside that religion. This subtle form of Buddhism under the separate designation of Mayavada spread rapidly among the non-Buddhist populations. We have the genesis of the illusionist Vedantists when the cult of Maya assumed the form of a philosophy resting on Vedic interpretation. The same cult obtained currency among the hill tribes as Maya-Sakti-Vada conforming to the Tantra Shastras. The Tantric view according to many is derived from the Sankhya Philosophy of Kapila. But the latter is the progenitor of the Saiva cult in which physical Nature occupies an honoured position which may have been the cause of the mistaken view that assigns, to the Tantric cult its Sankhya origin. In the Tantra physical Nature is the mother of the conscious principle but these two are co-ordinate in the Sankhya philosophy. A form of extinction in the shape of absorption into physical Nature has also been imagined. The worshippers of the power of physical Nature sometimes supplicate her in imitation of the manner in which the professors of the principle of self-conscious power express the thoughts of their minds in addressing God (vide Holbach).

In the Mahanirvana-Tantra Mahadeva in praying to the principal power Adya Sakti Kali, addresses her in one passage as the creator of the world by the will of Para-Brahma. This corresponds to Sankhya. But in other passages she is described as alone existing in the form of chaos (tamas) after dissolution of the cosmos (pralaya) ; and she is also declared to be identical with the self-conscious principle in the jiva. All this is directly opposed to the Sankhya view. It cannot be said that the Sakti-vada of the Tantras originated from any philosophical system in particular. In fact the Tantra is so full of self-contradiction that it does not admit of any systematic consideration. The distinctive Tantric processes, viz., the lata .sadhana, the panchamakara sadhana, sura sadhana, etc., do not appear to have been derived from any theistic philosophical system. Tantric (Saktivada) doctrine of supremacy of material power cannot be considered to be very different in character from the worship of the non-antecedent or god as mental formula (mantram) of atheistic fruitive works and the worship of physical Nature devised by Comte, etc.

There are a few scholars who admit the existence of nothing except mental ideas. They hold that the objective world has no real existence. Ideas are the only entities. The soul that is held by others as the subjective reality, is also ineffective. There is really nothing except ideas. Bishop Berkeley and a few others are more or less of this opinion. It is they who have given the view the name of Idealism.

Mill has also admitted this view to a certain extent. Idealism should not be regarded as identical with spiritualism. Idealism is merely the mental contemplation of material objects perceived through the senses. Such contemplation establishes the connection of the principle of self-consciousness with physical Nature. It is not essentially different from matter. Idealism is, therefore, by no means outside materialism. Among the undifferentiating monists a few have held that there are no such things as God or any substantive cosmic entities, but it is only the ideas of them that have existence and that it is the idea that is the undifferentiated truth. This view is altogether trivial. Its professors never acted up to their principles. Idealism should logically be classed under materialism.

There is a certain class of people who argue that what is supposed to exist, does not really exist. All entities are impermanent and they belong to the category of

the non-existent as soon as they undergo transformation or destruction. Therefore, the non-existent is the eternal and true. This opinion has no substance. Such sophistical argument is advanced by a class of deluded people who are especially fond of indulging in abstruse futile hair-splitting.

That the non-existent is true is a proposition that carries its own refutation. From such abstruse speculations has arisen a body of opinions which is known in the English language as Skepticism, supported by Hume and a few others. Skepticism, although in itself it is inconclusive and unnatural, was at one time welcomed by people and also accepted in practice. The doctrines of selfish material pleasure and material extinction give rise to so much mischief in the world that men came to entertain a great contempt even for the very name of such religion. The nature of man is pure and endowed with the tendency of devotion to God. It never finds joy in materialism. Skepticism is nothing but the last desperate attempt of the human reason to break its chains by its own strength after it is banished by materialism to the dungeon of ignorance and finds its hands and feet heavily fettered with chains of iron.

It was attempted to be established by rank materialism that matter is eternal and that matter alone is true. Many echoed the views of Huxley that no matter what the event may be unless it is affirmed to be the transformation of material causes it is not a scientific proposition. Nothing can be proved except matter and that which sets it in motion. The principles of cognition and feeling, it was affirmed, will be altogether discarded by the Scriptures in the long run. The soul will be steadily submerged under the rising tide of materialism. Freedom will be put into bondage by the dead hand of Providence. It was when a numerous body of men were arguing in this immoral strain that the nature of man feeling its own degradation made an attempt to direct its reason along a different track. Disregarding all the evil consequences of this new effort, being determined to destroy the materialistic theory at all costs, human reason gave birth to Skepticism. The evil in the form of materialism was undoubtedly got rid of but Skepticism did even more harm to theism than what it prevented. People began to suspect that we cannot find the real truth. We can only experience the qualities of objects. Where is the proof that even this experience is True? By means of the senses we perceive different qualities separately. As for instance we perceive colour by the eye, sound by the ear, smell by the nose,

touch by the skin and taste by the tongue. The knowledge of the object is obtained by means of the aggregate of the qualities imbibed severally through the five channels of such knowledge. We would have obtained the knowledge in a different form if instead of five we had ten additional senses. Under the circumstances whatever knowledge we happen to possess is wholly tentative and doubtful. By such Skepticism although materialism was destroyed, spiritualism did not profit in any way. Skepticism admits unreservedly the real existence of objects. What it asserts is that we do not possess any knowledge of the real nature of objects as our knowledge is imperfect, and also that we have no means of having the requisite kind of knowledge. Skepticism destroys itself in as much as it admits the undoubted existence of the reality. If there is such a thing as Absolute Reality Skepticism is left no ground to stand upon. On a careful consideration Skepticism appears to be meaningless jargon. Who is it that doubts that I exist?—I myself? Therefore, I exist.

All these three views, viz., materialism or the doctrine of material power, idealism and Skepticism are forms of atheism that have existed from ancient times. These include all possible varieties of atheism. We have arrived at the conclusion after careful enquiry that the claims of the atheists of recent times to be propounders of original views, are untenable in every case. They always express only the old views under a different name and garb. Many systems of philosophy have been promulgated in this country. Of these Sankhya, Naya, Vaishesika and Kar1t1anlimansa are professedly atheistical. Patanjala and the pseudo monistic interpretation of Vedanta, are veiled forms of atheism. We can, in this place, only bestow a passing glance at them.

Sankhya philosophical system:—God cannot be proved.—“Isvarasidheh” 1—92. If God is admitted He must be either free or dependent“Muktabaddhayorantyrarabhavanna Tatsidhih” 1—93. Free God is unrealizable. Dependent God has not the quality of Godship. Bijnana Bhikshu commenting on this says that the following is, therefore, said in regard to the particular passages of the Scriptures bearing on God, “ that they are merely eulogistic of the free soul or in praise of the successful pursuit of religious activities. God does not really exist”, “muktatmanah prasamsha upasiddhasyava, 1—96. This much for Sankhya.

The System of Nayaya philosophy: —It is made by Goutama. Goutama says that

there are sixteen entities, “pramana-prameyanihshreyashadhigamah”. The state of the highest good (nihshreyah) of Goutama is unintelligible. It appears as if the good of the jiva is attained if he can prevail in argument. God does not find a place among his sixteen entities. It is for this reason that the Vedas says that the natural inclination to God should not be allowed to be obsessed by casuistical argument. Goutama also notices the principle of evil. “Duhkha-janmapravritti-dosa-mith-yajnana namuttaraottarapaye tadanantarapayadapavargah.” Deliverance (mukti) is regarded in a general way as the cessation of extreme misery. According to Goutama there is no joy in the state of deliverance. Therefore, there is absolutely no such thing as Divine bliss. Whence the Nyaya Shastra made by Goutama, is opposed to the Vedas.

Vaishesika philosophy made by Kanada:—This system does not call for any elaborate discussion. If we consider the original .sutas made by Kanada himself we do not find any eternal God therein. Certain authors of this school have made an attempt to divest their system of its God-less-ness by naming as super-soul (paramatma) a principle under the entity ‘embodied’ (dehi) which is one of the seven entities. But scholars such as Sankaracharya, etc., in their respective commentaries on the Vedanta-sutra, have stated as their conclusion that the Kanada-doctrine is non-Vedic and godless. As a matter of fact it is found that those who do not admit that God is the Supreme Master without any reservation, even though the word God be found in their systems, are really atheists. It is the Nature of God that He must be recognized as the Lord of all entities. The view which admits the existence of eternal entities on a footing of equality with God, is atheistical

Karma mimansa:—Jaimini is the author of the original sutras of this system. He makes no mention of God. His premier subject is dharma. “Chodana lakshanortho dharmah. Karmaike tatra darshanat.” The meaning conveyed by the Vedas is dharma. Its name is karma (work). His commentator Sabaraswami writes in this connection as follows: ‘Katham punaridamavagamyate? Asti tadapurmam.’ How is this to be known? Therefore, there must be an entity which bears the name of ‘previously nonexistent’ (apurva). When work is performed something previously non-existent is thereby manifested which awards the fruit. Where is the necessity of a god for bestowing the fruits of actions? What more is there that could have been said by modern atheists such

as Comte, etc.?

Vedanta:—The Vedanta philosophy supports in every devotion to God. In its commentaries dishonest thinkers have interpolated veiled Buddhistic thought under the garb of non distinctive monism. But saintly persons have shown the good path to the people of the world by composing with great care proper commentaries of the original sutras. We shall consider the futility of monism in another place.

Yoga:—The shastra made by Patanjali Rishi bears the name of Yoga-Shastra. The following sutra is embodied in the chapter on method of the Shastra:

“Klesakarma-bipakashayairaparamristah purusavishesha Isvarah. Tatra niratisayam sarvajnyavijam. Sha purbesamapi guruh kalenanavachhedat.” The being capable of taking the initiative untroubled by tribulations in the four forms of misery, work, consequence (bipaka), subject (asraya) bears the name of god. In him is located the seed of extreme omniscience. He is the preceptor of all the people that have gone before, in as much as he is uninterrupted by time. This statement of the subject of Godhead in this system has led many to think that Patanjali is really a devotee of God. But one who has read the Patanjali Yoga Shastra to its conclusion with special care and judgment, cannot be so mistaken. In the Kaivalyapad occurs the principle “Purusartha-sunyanam pratiprashavah kaivalyam svarupapratistha. va chitisakriti,” which is thus explained in the Bhojabritti: “Chichhaktervrittisharupyanivrittou svarupamanam tat kaivalyamuchyate.” The non-alternative state (kaivalya) is the name of the existence of the cognitive principle in its own proper condition. The point that requires to be considered in this connection is this, viz., what is meant by ‘the proper condition of the cognitive principle’? That is to say, whether the jiva who has attained the non-alternative state (kaivalya) will have any function? After the jiva has attained the non-alternative state (kaivalya) what will be his relation with the god of his unrealized state? In the said Shastra there is unfortunately no answer to this question. On repeated reading of this Shastra one is convinced that its god of the state of unrealized effort, is a kind of entity that is conceived merely for the success of worship. He is not to be found in the realized state. Can such Shastra be considered as theistic?

All these atheistical opinions have been preached in this as well as other countries under different names due to difference of language.

Reason is of two kinds, viz, pure reason and adulterated reason. The faculty of the soul in its pure state that applies itself to the examination of the self-conscious, may be described as pure reason. It is without defect and is a function which is natural to the soul. The perverted form of the above faculty due to association with the material principle that is found to guide the soul when she is engrossed in matter, is the adulterated reason. This adulterated or pseudo-reason is of two kinds, viz., (1) alloyed with fruitive works (karma-misra,' and (2) allied with empiric knowledge (jnana-misra). It is also called sophistry (tarka). It is this which is condemnable for the reason that there happens to be present in it the following defect, viz., error (bhrama), delusion (pramada.), deceit (bipralipsa) and inefficiency of the organs (karanapatava). Its decision is defective in all cases. That which is established by the real reason is the same in all cases. The opinions that are produced by the adulterated reason are diverse and mutually conflicting. By acting in accordance with those opinions the incarcerated jiva. earns only the bondage of ignorance as the fruit of such procedure.

Adulterated reason owes its origin to the operation of matter. The material picture which the individual soul, imprisoned in matter, receives in the first instance by means of the senses, is carried to the brain by the nervous process. The reason then goes to work on these pictures that are preserved in the brain by the process of memory. This activity gives rise to various concoctions and abstractions. The term 'scientific knowledge' is applied to the beauty that is perceived by the assortment of those pictures. By the processes of analysis and synthesis those pictures are made to yield hues in the form of secondary conclusions. This is called reasoning. Comte said, "Assort that which has been observed and from it investigate the truth".

Let us now consider whether the reason which is brought to bear on the pictures that have been obtained originally and exclusively from the material world can be designated as reason born of matter. How is one to know about super-material objects and their qualities through this process? If there happens to exist any super-material entity there must, therefore, also necessarily exist for the realization of the same some process that is suitable for such purpose. That those who are not acquainted with this higher process, or do not like to be acquainted with it due to prejudice, adopting the reason that is based on

matter, will speak the language of delirium, admits of no doubt. In those cases in which the investigation of the material world happens to be the sole endeavour the reason that stands on matter yields the best results. This adulterated reason is specially effective in all forms of material affairs such as arts, bodily activities, warfare, music, etc., etc. In the first place adulterated reason in alliance with empiric knowledge, arrives at certain decisions and subsequently joining hands with fruitive work completes them by carrying them out in practice. When the affair of the railway was first settled in the mind of a materialist scholar, his reason was at that time alloyed with empiric knowledge. When it was reduced to practice the reason becoming imbued with fruitive work applied itself to the work of manufacture. Works such as the industries, etc., are as a matter of fact the proper subject of the adulterated reason. Supermaterial entities are not its legitimate subject and' therefore, its application to them is not practicable. Super-material reason is in a position to act only in the case of super-material entities. Materialism, the theory of material force, material extinctionism, idealism,—all these systems, adopting the reason that is dependent on matter for the purpose of investigating the cause of the world which happens to be super-material, could necessarily obtain no satisfaction. This was so because the process they adopted for the purpose happened to be quite ridiculous. All the books that have been written by them are, therefore, merely the meaningless utterances of delirious persons. Although the real reason happens to be the natural faculty of the soul yet the soul that is encased in matter, under the heavy pressure of the load of matter for making it the exclusive subject of his contemplation, shows greater honour to adulterated reason. Hence most people of this world are upholders of the mixed reason. The super-material unalloyed reason is very rare. Those alone who through good fortune are actively disposed to serve the introspective faculty, are acquainted with the greatness of pure reason or spontaneous exclusiveness (sahaja samadhi). From a remote antiquity the world with a superficial vision paying honour to adulterated reason, had been hoping to obtain from itself its own realization. All the different views which were propounded by such reason, although they are at first accepted by it with cordiality, prove unsatisfactory to itself in the long run. But the reason even when it is limited or mixed, cannot be without relation to the soul. At times it

tries to do good to the soul. When after having brought forth the long series of heterogeneous views and talked deliriously in many different ways the adulterated reason could obtain no satisfaction it developed a feeling of contempt for itself. It began to cry deliriously. It said, 'Alas, how am I abandoning my nature by straying far away from the soul to whom I am eternally joined, having been occupied in such superficial activities!' Lamenting in this way, weighed down with fear, it admits, when it happens to be on its last legs, God as the Source of all activities. At this stage the human mind proclaims to all countries that God is realizable by the adulterated reason. In this mood Udayanacharya wrote his work, the Kusmanjali. In England the opinions that are promulgated under the names of Deism and Natural Theology should be recognized as meeting the approval of those people who profess those opinions by reason of their being in the above-mentioned condition. The theistic principle that is established by the process of adulterated reasoning, is extremely imperfect and, in regard to the reality, is both foreign and incomplete ; because the theistic conception that is brought about by reason in alliance with matter, is a specific and limited idea, viz., that God is the mere cause of matter. It is artificial in as much as there is in it no real advancement towards the spiritual state proper, no direct activity of the soul nor any investigation of the Reality. This will appear later in its proper place.

Such delirious mixed reason, even after admitting God, is unable to establish the unity of God on account of materialistic errors. Sometimes it supposes God to be a dual entity. Thereupon in their judgment the spiritual principle appears as one god and the material principle as another god. The god, whose nature is imagined to be spiritual, is supposed to be the source of good. The god as the material principle, is opined as the cause of all evil. A certain scholar who bore the name of Jaradvastra, in his work the Zendavesta, admitted the dual nature of the divine principle in recognition of the eternity of the two gods, as the evil and the good principle respectively. Theistically disposed persons showed their contempt for him by designating him as the rotten interpreter (jaran-mimansaka). This designation is retained even to this day, having been applied subsequently in connection with all superficial persons of the schools of fruitive work and empiric knowledge. Jaradvastra is an ancient scholar. His view received no support in India but spread successfully in Iran. Becoming infective

his view produced, in the religion of the Jews and subsequently among the followers of the Koran, Satan as the rival of God. About the time when Jaradvastra was preaching his view of two gods, the necessity for three gods being recognized among the Jews the doctrine of the Trinity was originated. In the Trinitarian view at first the three gods were conceived as separate from one another; and subsequently, when this appeared unsatisfactory to the scholars, they elicited the inter-connection among them by the elaboration of the theological principles represented by God, the Holy Ghost and Christ respectively. In the particular Age or Sect in which Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are conceived as different gods the unsatisfactory circumstance of similar belief in three gods occurred also in India. Scholars having established the theoretical unity of those three gods, have incorporated in many parts of the Shastras advice discountenancing their separate existence. In different countries there is also found to exist belief in many gods. Specially in very backward countries monothism in a pure form is not found to prevail. At one time it was the practice to regard the gods, such as Indra, Chandra, Vayu, Varuna, etc., as mutually independent. The school of the mimamsakas (interpretationists) correcting the above view subsequently established a single god, viz., Brahma. All this is mere delirious utterances of reason deluded by matter. God is one entity. Had He been more than one the world would have never functioned in a beautiful manner. Different laws in conformity with different wills in mutual conflict, would have undoubtedly wrecked the world. That this visible universe has issued from the will of one powerful person, cannot be denied by any person who feels the impulse of goodness.

The reasoning that is generated by the spontaneous cognition of the soul, is alone pure and free from defect. The Truth that is elucidated by such reasoning, is alone real. Reasoning can have no existence apart from instinctive knowledge. The reasoning associated with the knowledge of external Nature, that is noticed in the affairs of this world, is impure or mixed. The truths that are declared by the mixed reason, are all of a trivial character. Even if it establishes God its argument is never satisfactory. There is no applicability of the pervert reason to the case of the Absolute Truth. All conclusions regarding the Absolute reached by the pure reason on the basis provided by intuitive knowledge, are true. It may be asked in this connection what intuitive

knowledge is. The soul is self-conscious and is, therefore, all knowledge. The knowledge that naturally exists in the soul is spontaneous or intuitive knowledge. Intuitive knowledge is eternally cognate to the soul. It is not produced by any process of material experience. Pure reasoning is the name for a certain process of such intuitive knowledge. Intuitive knowledge is ascertainable by the fact that the jiva has the following realization from before the generation of any experience of the material world, viz.

(1) I exist.

(2) I shall continue to exist.

(3) I have joy.

(4) There is a great entity that underlies and maintains my joy

(5) It is my nature to depend on the support of this entity.

(6) I am eternally guided by this entity.

(7) This support is extremely beautiful.

(8) I have no power of abandoning this support.

(9) My present state is lamentable.

(10) I ought to follow again my guide and support, giving up this miserable condition.

(11) This world is not my eternal dwelling-place.

(12) By the progress of this world My eternal improvement is not secured.

Unless the reason adopts such intuitive knowledge it merely continues to wander deliriously. There also exist certain axiomatic truths in the domain of spiritual science. No spiritual progress is possible unless these are accepted and followed.

There is a certain class of people who cannot form a settled opinion of their own after accepting pure intuitive knowledge and yet do not trust reason in all cases. Admitting intuitive knowledge to a certain extent they recognize oneness of God. Absorbed in knowledge they attain the exclusive state. But this exclusiveness is not the natural state of samadhi in as much as it exhibits abstruseness of thought. By such abstruse thinking even after piercing through this gross world they fail to obtain the vision of the spiritual world because the natural Truth does not manifest Himself without spontaneous exclusiveness. Having observed the symbolic world they feel as if they have seen the ultimate abiding-place of the jiva. In reality they only stand on the symbol of the

material world. The difference between the symbolic world and material world consists in this that the material world is apprehensible by the senses. The symbolic world is apprehensible by the mind. The symbolic world is merely the subtle initial stage of the material world. The material world is of two kinds, viz., (1) the very gross material world, and (2) the subtler world full of light. The astral body that the Theosophists talk about, is the lighted material body. The symbolic body is subtler than the astral; that is to say, it is mental. The subtle world that is full of the manifestations of power, according to the Pantanjala Shastra and the opinion of Buddhist ascetics, is the symbolic world. The spiritual entity is different from these. The non-alternative (kaivalya) state described in the Pantanjala Shastra, is merely the idea of the state that is the opposite of the gross and the subtle, but shows no trace of any investigation of the spiritual Truth. No one can say what the relation of Godhead is to the jiva after his attainment of the non-alternative state (kaivalya), or about the whereabouts or the nature of God in the non-alternative (kaivalya) state, although a god is met with during the pre-realization stage of such endeavour. If the jiva on attainment of the non-alternative state (kaivalya) merge with God then as a matter of fact it is monism. The Yogashastra, whether it is Theosophy or Patanjali, is not for the eternal benefit of jiva. Yogashastra is one of the numerous blind lanes that are found to exist between the grossest materialism at one end and spiritual Truth at the other. And, therefore, it yields no satisfaction to the jiva who is in quest of spiritual bliss.

Some hold that God has made this world for our enjoyment. We obtain the grace of God by religious merit earned in course of sinless enjoyment of this world. It may be objected to this that if this world had been made for yielding happiness to the jiva, God would not make it so imperfect. God has to be blamed for making it so imperfect if we assume that this world was intended by Him for our happiness. If His purpose in creating the world had been to teach us to be religious it would undoubtedly have been made differently because at present all persons of this world cannot attain to religion.

Holders of the opposite view say that this world is intended for the punishment of the jiva for offense committed by him. Being unable to find an adequate answer to the question how the jiva could commit offense a certain explanation has found a place in several religious systems to the following effect. God

having created the first jiva permitted him to live in a pleasant wood in company of his wife. He forbade them to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The first parents of mankind by the advice of a certain fallen jiva having eaten the forbidden fruit, were expelled from the happy region for the offense of disobedience to God and fell into this world which is so full of misery. For this offense of the first parents all these jivas were born sinful. As the offense could not be expiated by the jivas themselves a certain being, who is like one limb of God, being born among men in the likeness of man, chose to suffer death by taking upon his own shoulders the sin of all jivas, who would follow him. Those jivas who followed him thereby easily earned their deliverance while those who did not follow him were cast into the eternal hell. It is not possible to comprehend with the normal understanding how other jivas can be excused by the punishment of God becoming jiva.

According to the above the jiva exists as jiva from birth to death. The jiva, therefore, did not exist before birth and, after death also, the jiva would have no existence in this sphere of his work. Moreover man alone is meant by jiva. Jiva cannot in the circumstances be a spiritual principle. He is to be conceived as created in matter by accident or by the will of God. Why the jiva appears in different periods and in different circumstances, is not understood. Why should not other animals be counted among the jivas? Why should birds and beasts be anterior to man? It is incomprehensible to those who obey God how it can be the dispensation of God, Who is full of mercy, that man should earn eternal heaven or suffer eternal damnation merely for his acts done in a single birth. Those who belong to this School cannot serve God in any unselfish way. They cultivate the arts and sciences under the belief that God Can be pleased by one's attempt to improve the world. But they remain ever ignorant of pure devotion to God which is free from all impulses of worldly work and knowledge. The service of God from a sense of duty can never be disinterested or natural. That we shall serve God because He has been merciful to us, is a mean conception, because it implies that we would not have served Him if He had not been kind to us. We also cherish the immoral hope of future favours. If God were considered as merciful for His bestowal of devotion it would not have been objectionable in any way. In these religions such a statement is not to be found. The mercy of God in this case only refers to the conveniences and happiness

incidental to the worldly life.

In this and other analogous creeds of a recent origin God is formless and all-pervasive. The pursuit of knowledge is the chief work of such systems. The consideration arising from empiric knowledge that God is lowered if considered to have a form, constantly troubles their minds. God, according to this view, must be formless and all-pervasive because we have created Him such by our knowledge and He cannot be anything else than this. This conception of God degenerates into a form of idolatry that is straitly circumscribed by materialistic considerations. The sky that is found in matter is also all-pervasive and formless. The God of this School is like it. This is matter-worship. The expressions used in the prayers and hymns of praise, which are the only forms of worship in these creeds, are also altogether worldly. Those who hold this view are generally self-sufficient. They keep aloof even from good preceptors through fear lest such association may impart superstitions. Some even hold that as the truth is inherent in the soul it can be realized by one's own independent efforts, and that, therefore, there is no necessity for submission to a preceptor. Some opine that it is sufficient to accept the supreme Teacher. God is the supreme Preceptor and Saviour. He destroys our sinful tendencies by entering into our proper selves. There is no necessity for any human preceptor. Some of them regard as God-given a certain book which is a compilation from different sources. Others do not admit the authority of any book through fear lest by recognizing the authority of any Scriptures errors are admitted. Although according to this view only there is only one God yet it is in many parts inconsistent, full of insinuations of partiality against God and of no value to jivas who are naturally disposed towards God. Instead of admitting a principle of evil existing separately from God it considers the commission of sin as due to the weakness of jivas for which also, as this view offers no other explanation. God is tacitly held to be ultimately responsible. In the pride of empiric knowledge they fail to grasp the difference between soul and mind. Their spiritual science is stunted in its growth on account of arrogance engendered by their superior knowledge of the physical sciences. Their spiritual knowledge is so meager that they cannot distinguish between the spiritual principle and the material principle in gross and subtle forms. They accordingly mistake the symbolic for the spiritual.

From a long time a body of opinions bearing the name of advaita-vada (monism) has been current in this country. This opinion is born of study of the Vedas under the lead of narrow partisan bias. Although monism has also been preached by many scholars outside India yet there seems to be little doubt that this view spread originally to other countries from India. A few savants who accompanied Alexander the Great into India, made the thorough acquaintance of it. This has been hinted by authors of Greece and Rome in their own works. According to advaita-vada the Brahman is the only entity. There is not and has never been any second entity besides the Brahman. Distinctions such as spirit, matter and God are due to conventional judgment. As a matter of fact the Brahman is the unchanged cause of all cognisable principles. The Brahman is eternal, without change, without form and without differentiation. In the Brahman there is no adjunct, no kind of power and no kind of activity. There is no change of state or transformation of the Brahman. All these expressions are to be found in different parts of the Vedas. The professors of the monistic cult of the Brahman adopted these statements without any objection, But when they turned their eyes towards the differentiated world, they began to reflect how such Brahman can be the cause of the world. Whence came the world ? Unless this was explained the view which appealed to their tastes could not be rendered tenable. Arrived at this point they began to think, and numerous issues were soon brought to light that clamoured for solution. How can activity or the active power be admitted to the Brahman which is without activity in any form? On the other hand caution was necessary lest monism suffered any curtailment by the admission of a second principle. Thinking on in this manner they first of all came to the conclusion that there would be no violation of the monistic principle if a slight power of transformation in the Brahman were admitted. The Brahman is the transformation of itself. This transformation is cognisable. Those monists who considered such admission as inconsistent with the monistic position, proposed to account for the world by the assumption of deception or illusion (vivarta) due to want of true knowledge; just as a stick may be mistakenly supposed to be a snake. The world is unreal, a mere illusory idea. There is no world, no life. The Brahman exists and there also exists an illusion in the shape of the knowledge of the world. The names 'avidya' (nescience) 'maya' (illusion) etc. arose out of the effort to understand this

deception thoroughly. A deception is never a real, separate entity. Therefore, there is no infringement of the conclusion of monism that the reality is only one. After this extraneous knowledge is subdued by the knowledge of the Reality the apparent illusion is destroyed with the realization of one entity, resulting in emancipation (mukti). Yet another body of scholars refused to consider the theory of illusion as being altogether true. They said that the world is not a piece of self evident deception. The illusion of the world owes its maintenance to another hallucination, viz., the jiva or individual soul. The jiva is not a separate entity from the Brahman. This would be an infringement of the monistic principle. The jiva is the real illusion. These scholars are divided into two groups. One of those held the view that the Brahman is like the great sky appearing as jiva due to limitation like the portion of the great sky enclosed within the pot. The other section thought this would be too great a tampering with the Brahman, and necessitate His subordination to illusion. Instead of doing this let the jiva be recognized as the reflection of the Brahman like the image of the moon in the water. Being itself a false entity full of a deceptive cognition in the way of the natural function of the principle of nescience the jiva soul imagines this world as made up of matter. In reality the Brahman is one and without a second. The jiva is not a separate entity. The world also is not anything that has a separate existence from the Brahman.

The great error of these scholars, which they can neither see nor want to see, is their assumption that the Brahman is only one admitting of the existence of no second entity, and that there is no other real thing separate from the Brahman. So long as the inconceivable power of the same Brahman is not admitted all the above speculations are bound to be trivial. Is the powerless Brahman proved to be one by the postulation of illusion by one, of 'nescience' by another, of 'deception' by a third and of 'the deception of a deception' by yet another school? In all these views the abandonment of the monistic position is easily recognizable. The conception of the Brahman possessed of inconceivable power, is an infinitely greater idea than that of the powerless Brahman. Neither does the former necessitate the postulation of an entity foreign to the Brahman for the purpose of preserving His so called unity. Monism fails utterly to comprehend and harmonize all the statements of the Vedas and is equally-powerless to promote the good of the jiva. We take leave of the subject of

monism with these general observations for the present, reserving the specific consideration of the details of its numerous variants in connection with the teaching of Mahaprabhu when He refutes the fallacies of this view.

All these are mere verbal juggleries or the mischievous prejudices of self-opinionated controversialists. The Truth exists buried in the midst of erroneous speculations. It is the office of the real investigator of Truth, on ascertaining the nature of the untruths, to discard them and by making the direct acquaintance with Truth to procure and treasure Him. Victor Cousin, the French savant, although he rightly hit the method, failed in its actual application, due to the fact that he employed himself in searching for the Absolute Truth in the piles of empiric learning. Such effort is like the endeavour to obtain the grain by the process of grinding the chaff. The real sifting has been done by Sree Vyasadeva in his Brahmasutra and elaborated by himself in the Sreemad Bhagavatam; and Sree Chaitanya Deva came into this world to make the religion set forth in the Sreemad Bhagavatam possible of attainment by the fallen jiva..

Enough has been said on atheistic speculations to prove that they have always exercised, and still continue to exercise, consciously or unconsciously to their victims, a most pernicious influence on the human mind and prevent it from giving even a hearing to the subject of the Absolute Truth. It was so in the Age of Sree Chaitanya Deva. The South of India was the official stronghold of all kinds of warring doctrines and it was the purpose of Sree Chaitanya in traveling through the South to meet and refute the fallacies of the atheistical scholars of the different schools and thereby destroy their sinister influence which prevented the general body- of the people from giving their unprejudiced attention to His teaching,

The reader will get some idea of the chaotic state of religious opinion in India at the time of Sree Chaitanya Deva from the following brief sketch of the principal schools of philosophy whose views were more or less current in that Age. The more important of these have been compiled by Madhvacharya, a follower of Sankara's monism, who preceded Sree Chaitanya Deva by about two centuries, in his work the Sarba-Darsana Sangraha which has been translated into English by E. B. Cowell. The systems mainly prevalent at the time of Sree Chaitanya Deva may be arranged in the following order:—

(1) The system of Charvaka, opposed to the Vedas, hankering for things other

than God,—a devoted admirer of worldly qualities,—atheistical.

(2) The system of the Buddhists who hold everything as transitory, worship worldly qualities, are atheistical, rely on abstruse and fallacious argument.

(3) The system of the Jaina arhats, indeterminists, worship worldly qualities, rely- on abstruse and fallacious argument.

(4) The system of Sankhya, godless, holds the soul as devoid of quality, relies on abstruse and fallacious argument.

(5) The system of Patanjala, acknowledges a god, holds the soul as devoid of quality, relies on abstruse and fallacious argument.

(6) The system of Sankara, averse to God, professing the aim of harmonizing conflicting opinions, pseudo-revelationist, pure monist, rationalistic.

(7) The system of the Baiakaranas, materialists, pseudo revelationists, worship god conceived as possessed of worldly qualities.

(8) The system of the Mimansakas, rely on the meaning of words, pseudo-revelationists, worship god who is conceived as possessing worldly qualities.

(9) The system of the Naiyayikas, profess first beginning, process of effort and the unknown factor, recognize the authority and validity of evidence other than that of the Word of the Veda, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities.

(10) The system of the Baisheshikas, profess first beginning, process of effort, the unknown factor, recognize no other authority than that of the Scriptures, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities.

(11) The system of the tranquilized Saivas, profess worldly enjoyment, process of effort, the unknown factor, emancipation while still living in this world, rationalistic, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities, believe in God.

(12) The system of the Pratyabhijnas, profess material enjoyment, process of effort, the unknown factor, hold emancipation on leaving the physical body, hold unity of the soul, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities.

(13) The system of the Nakulish Pashupat Saivas, profess material enjoyment, process of effort, the unknown factor, hold souls to be separate, hold emancipation after leaving the body, believe in god as unrelated to fruitive work, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities.

(14) The system of the Saivas, profess material enjoyment, process of effort, the

unknown factor, hold emancipation as a bodiless state, hold souls as separate, believe in god as related to fruitive work, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities.

Charvaka—holds the living body as identical with the soul and its satisfaction as the object of life. Direct perception is the only proof of reality. The highest good consists in the pleasures produced by enjoyment of women, eating of wholesome food and wearing the best apparel, etc. The pain that is incidental to these pleasures should be avoided as far as possible. But it would be foolish to forego the pleasure itself which is real for fear of the pain that may occasionally be associated with it. There is no after-life. Those eminently learned men who perform ceremonies enjoined by the Vedas at the cost of much wealth and physical discomfort are all deluded by the long-standing custom of obeying the Vedas, which were originally made by the hypocrite, the cunning knave and the cannibal taking counsel together. The Vedas are full of false, atrocious, immoral and ridiculous practices.

Buddhism.—The Buddhists are divided into four schools, viz., the Madhyamikas, the Yogachariyas, the Sautranitikas and the Baibhasikas rendered by Cowell as Nihilists, Subjective Idealists, Representationists, and Presentationists, respectively. According to the first nothing exists except the void. In other words, nothing is really- true. If anything had been really true it would have been constantly perceivable in the waking state, in sleep and in dream. According to the second external objects are non-existent. The soul which is only momentary cognition, is alone true. The third school holds that external objects are true and realizable by inference. According to the Baibhasikas external objects are realizable by direct perception. According to all the schools the principal duty consists in worshipping this body by nourishing the twelve dimensions of which it is made, viz., the five active organs, the five perceptual organs and the two perceptuo-volitional organs of the mind and the faculty of discrimination. According to the Buddhists 'Sugata' is God, the world is momentarily perishable, direct perception and inference are the evidence; and misery, dimension, aggregate and the path are the four truths. The entity misery is constituted of its five limbs, viz., knowledge, pain, cognition, impression and colour. The twelve dimensions have already been mentioned. The attachments and repugnances that arise spontaneously in the hearts of

men, are called the principle of aggregation. The fixed persuasion that all impressions are momentary, bears the name of the path. .Moksha or emancipation is identical with this last.

Jainism The general term of the sect is arhat. The Jains are that sect of the arhats that follows the teachings of the Jina. The arhats refute the theory of momentariness of the Buddhists and admit the continuity and eternal existence of the soul. The body is the measure of the jiva. The Arhat is God. He is omniscient and free from attachment, repugnance, etc. The three jewels are right view, right knowledge, and right conduct. The right view consists of the right faith which is prevention of opposition or doubt regarding the truth declared by the Jina. The right knowledge consists of the knowledge of the truth declared by the Jina in a condensed or elaborate form. Right conduct consists in the abandonment of condemned activities. Right conduct is of five kinds, viz., not to kill any jiva whether it is locomotive or stationary, not to accept more than is given, not to steal, to speak words that are true, beneficial and also agreeable, to give up lust, anger, etc., and to avoid undue attachment for all things. These five constitute the great obligation. The highest state is attained by practicing these, They are 'syad-vadins' ie, believe in the doctrine of relativity, indefiniteness or indeterminateness, as opposed to the idea of the absolute.

Sankhya.—The propounder of the Sankhya system of philosophy is Kapila. There are two Kapilas. Kapila, the son of Kardama and Devahuti, belongs to the Satya Yuga. He is the Kapila mentioned in the Sreemad Bhagavatam. His view, which is also known as Sankhya, is recorded in the Bhagavatam.. It contains many statements that refer to the system of pure devotion. He must be carefully distinguished from Kapila, the propounder of the atheistical view of the current Sankhya philosophy which is our present subject. The atheist Kapila was born of the Agni-family in the Treta Yuga..

According to the Sankhya there are really two fundamental entities, viz., the pradhana or prakriti (i.e., the material principle) and the purusha (i.e., the soul). Prakriti undergoes transformation. The purusha is an essence unaffected. The twenty-five entities of the Sankhya, from the enumeration of which the system derives its name, consist of primordial matter (mula prakriti), mahat, mistaken egoism (ahamkara) , the five subtle elements (panchatanmatrah), the

five organs of sense, the five organs of action, the mind which is the organ of both sense and action, the five principles of gross matter and the soul (purusha). Of these the first is the pure essence of matter in the sense that it is not the effect of any other cause but is the cause of all the other material principles. The next groups in the series consisting of the seven categories from mahat to the five subtle elements, are related to one another as cause and effect each being the cause of the following entity. They are, therefore, both cause and effect. The five principles of gross matter are not the cause of any other entity. They are merely effect. Purusha or the soul is eternal and unchangeable. It is neither the cause nor the effect of anything.

Primordial matter (prakriti) is constituted of the three qualities, viz., sattva, rajas and tamas. The state of equilibrium of these three qualities is prakriti. The qualities (gunas) are material and transformable. The whole world is the transformation of the qualities. The sattva quality is happiness itself, it is light and illuminating. Its function is equable (santa). The rajas quality is made of misery and is active. Its function is terrible (ghora). The quality of tamas is stupefying, it is heavy and suppressive. Its function is irrational (murha) . Although thus mutually, opposed they co-operate with one another and thus produce the world. The world is thus full of pleasure, pain and ignorance. Pleasure and pain are the qualities of the principle of discrimination (mahat or buddhi), i.e. of matter, and not of the soul. These qualities of the material intelligence are reflected in the soul. The soul is eternal, free from the material qualities, self-conscious, witness, active, different from matter and many- in number. The material (prakriti) is the inactive principle, which is itself unconscious, but moving by the proximity of the soul. The soul is liberated when this relationship with the material principle is recognised by him. Such recognition leads the soul to dissociate himself from prakriti. This is the summum bonum and is called mukti or liberation.

Yoga.—This system was propounded by Patanjala Muni. It is also called theistic Sankhya. It recognizes in addition to the twenty-five entities of Sankhya mentioned above a twenty-sixth entity, viz. , god. The summum bonum is called the non-alternative state (kaivalya) which is reached by the eight processes of yoga by which the activities of the mind are controlled and subdued. The worship of god helps the purification and tranquilization of the mind. The

system is very similar to Sankhya, the chief differences being that it recognizes the attainment of emancipation as dependent on the grace of god and also lays stress on the eightfold yoga practices. On attainment of the state of freedom from any form of activity (asamprajnata samadhi or mukti) misery finally disappears. This is the goal. It will be noticed that although the existence of God is admitted in the pre-non-alternative stages, He is only a secondary entity, the primary- object being the attainment of a desirable state for oneself which does not appear to be in any way related to God after it is realised.

The system of Sankara.—Sankara has tried to deduce the doctrine of pure monism from the Brahma sutra of Maharshi Veda-Vyasa. According to this system the Brahman alone is true, all else is untrue. The world perceived through the senses is an illusion like the mistaking of the rope for the snake. There is no difference between the individual soul and the highest Soul Who is the Brahman. It is similar to the Nihilistic school of Buddhism and has been considered to be a form of Buddhism under the garb of lip-loyalty to the Scriptures. Its Brahman is only a negation of the material world and has no definable nature of its own. The assertion that the nature of the Brahman is spiritual (chit) as distinct from unconscious matter (achit), differentiates it theoretically but not practically from the doctrine of 'Void' of the Buddhists. It commits material suicide in order to establish a spiritual void. It is an unnatural and forced interpretation of the philosophy of the Brahma sutra and has obtained wide currency in this country, being recognized by many foreign scholars as the representative philosophy of Hindu orthodoxy. It is less prevalent in the south than in the north of India. Pure monism which in its present form owes its origin to Sankara, has branched out into many slightly differing forms. It has already been referred to in another place and will be considered in its relation to the teaching of Sree Chaitanyadeva in its proper place.

The system of Baiakaranas.—The Grammarian Panini is the propounder of the view that by the study of sound in the form of the letters of the alphabet and words formed of them the knowledge of the object to which they point is spontaneously realized as the result of such practice. Sound is of two kinds, eternal and transitory. The eternal sound is directly expressive of its object. The Grammarians recognize this directly expressive sound as the Brahman. They

hold that by the study of the science of sound by the gradual subsidence of ignorance the state of emancipation is attained. It is considered as the easy, royal road among the ways that lead to emancipation (moksha).

The system of the Mimamsakas.—This was made by Maharshi Jaimini. The Word of the Scripture made by God out of pity for the attainment of a desirable state for oneself which does not appear to be in any way related to God after it is realized the suffering of the jiva, is the only authority by following which the fruit in the form of happiness promised by it is attainable. This school undertakes to supply the true interpretation and to reconcile apparently conflicting statements of the Scriptures.

The system of the Naiyayikas.—The view of Gautama, the promulgator of this system, may be thus put: there are sixteen categories consisting of processes by which the knowledge of the twelve entities can be obtained. By constant hearing, contemplation and revision of the knowledge thus gained the individual soul and the Over-soul become known. This leads to the disappearance of misery and with it of false knowledge and their resultant preferences, repugnances and stupefaction, etc. There is then left no inclination for virtuous or vicious acts. After this, on the termination of the sufferings by the system of bodies produced by the previously accumulated activities leading to rebirth, there is final cessation of the twenty-one kinds of misery due to the six sense organs the six objects of the senses, the six intellectual faculties and pleasure and pain. This is the attainment of happiness or mukti.

The system of the Vaisheshikas.—This system owes its origin to Maharshi Kanad or Uluka. The summum bonum according to this system is the final cessation of misery (mukti). This is the result of true knowledge which is obtained by a critical and careful study of the Scriptures and their constant consideration and meditation. It is necessary, first of all, to differentiate the soul from the non-soul or matter. This school holds that there is definite and eternal difference between the several permanent entities and also between the objects and their qualities, although the last two are eternally associated with each other. It is this peculiarity which gives its name to the system. The atom is the final limit of matter. The world, etc., made of material atoms, are eternal and any other worlds not so made are impermanent but eternal. The system closely resembles

that of the Naiyayikas.

Saivas.—According to this, Siva who is ever affectionate to His devotees is held to be god and the jivas are designated as animals (pashu). God awards the fruit of actions in accordance with the nature of such acts. All action is followed by its appropriate effect and is therefore, the cause of such effect. This does not affect the not affect the freedom of action of god as the supreme lord and master. God is formless. There are three entities, viz., the lord, the animal and the bond. Siva is the lord and those who have attained the state of Siva and the methods whereby this state is attained, e.g., initiation, etc., form the lordly category. The jiva-soul is the animal. This jiva-soul is different from the body, is eternal and is capable of taking the initiative. The jiva-soul freed by Siva from sin is elevated to his proper lordly position and merges with the divinity.

The Pratyabhijnas.—According to this school the jiva-soul is the over-soul. This is established by the inference that a being who has knowledge and power of independent action is god; that which has not those powers is non-god, e.g., house, etc. The soul of jiva possesses the above powers and therefore it is god. This recognition of the identity of the jiva-soul with god is called Pratyabhijnas. The acquisition of this knowledge is alone necessary for the highest realization, viz., that Siva is the divinity.

Nakulish Pashupat Saivas.—Siva is god. Being the ruler of jivas, Siva is also called Pashupati, jiva being named pashu (animal). God's will is the only cause of the world. The summum bonum (mukti) according to this view consists in the absolute cessation of all misery and the attainment of the state of the divinity. Specific acts are prescribed as the method to be followed for obtaining emancipation. It considers service of god as tantamount to bondage.

Saivas (Rasesvara or Mercurial school).—The summum bonum is the attainment of the state of the divinity. This is possible only through knowledge of god. But this knowledge is naturally and easily attainable in this material body if it is tranquilized by mercury. Siva is god. Mercury is Siva's own self. The body is the friend of the soul and can be rendered spiritual and eternal in the above way. Mercury is called "parada" and "rasesvara" due to its qualities of enabling the jiva to get across the ocean of this world and being accordingly the supreme liquid.

All these and many other atheistical views have been prevalent in this country

from most remote times. All these are empirical and try to work up to God, Who is necessarily conceived as some form of sublimated or discarded matter, by the powers of the human mind working on the data supplied by the senses. Even in those cases where there is profession of obedience to the authority of the revealed Scriptures such admission is merely verbal and the method adopted is in every instance purely empirical, although help of the Scriptures is frequently sought in support of special views reached by the empiric process. In spite of the lip-profession of theism such method has consciously or unconsciously led in every case to the formulation of materialistic, unspiritual and godless systems. This, however, did not pass unchallenged. Or, it would be truer to say, that these views were really propounded in opposition to the theistic school which embodies the natural religion of the jiva and which has existed both potentially and in an explicit form from eternity.

It is in fact futile to seek for the origin of the eternal religion in history limited by space and time. It has always existed. Its continued existence can also no doubt be established as far back as our limited vision extends. All the other systems have a historical origin. The theistic (Vaishnava) religion has no historical origin and no beginning. The other systems have attained temporary prominence on account of the vigour of their attack on theism (Vaishnavism). We shall return to this subject again. For the present it would be sufficient to point out that theism in its true sense, which is identical with Vaishnavism, possesses the most numerous body of expounders and they have always been engaged in refuting the fallacies of the empiric schools. In the Iron Age (Kali Yuga) the Vaishnava religion has had four principal teachers after whom the four divisions (sampradayas) of the community are named. Those four founder-Acharyas of the respective sampradayas in the chronological order of their appearance are,—Sreemad Adi Vishnuswami, Sreemad Nimbarka, Sreemad Ramanuja and Sreemad Madhva. The Vaishnava Founder Acharyas are pure revelationists (srauta panthis) as opposed to the schools mentioned above who are empiricists. They hold devotion to Godhead Whose Nature is purely spiritual to be the summum bonum. This goal is reached by obeying the Scriptures by submitting to receive the Word of Godhead from sadhus who alone understand their true import. This submission must also be complete. But although the four Vaishnava Founder-Acharyas, who preceded Sree

Chaitanyadeva, and their followers certainly prepared the ground for the general re-establishment of pure theism their efforts only led their opponents to endless shifting of position and restatement of their views and this was done with so much vigour and success that at the time of the advent of Sree Chaitanyadeva the country had passed almost completely into the hands of the atheists as will appear from the incomplete list of the principal atheistic schools that were flourishing in His time which has been put before the reader in the above brief account. Sree Chaitanyadeva was opposed by all of these and He had to meet their leaders in learned disputations. The school which was most hostile to Him was that of the .smartas who do not admit the transcendence of Vishnu and His devotees but hold Vishnu to be a god of equal status with the other gods and endowed with specific powers. The smartas are frankly polytheistic and follow fruitive activities for the reward of material happiness promised by the Scriptures for their performance. The purely spiritual religion preached by Sree Chaitanyadeva was, therefore, utterly incomprehensible and repugnant to the doctrines and practices of the smartas.

Sree Chaitanyadeva also had occasion to engage in controversy with Chand Kazi who believed in the doctrine of impersonal Godhead, and so thoroughly convinced him that it is not the teaching of the Koran that he turned out to be one of His staunchest supporters.

The followers of the Vaishnava Founder-Acharyas had also succumbed to the seduction of the other schools and Sree Chaitanyadeva had to meet in controversy the leaders of pseudo-Vaishnava factions who were in revolt against the authority of their own Acharyas. He opposed the Ramananda sect who called themselves the followers of Ramanuja but favoured salvationism, and the tattvavadins, professing to belong to the Madhva school, for a similar reason. He did not esteem the views of Ballava Acharya who, professing to follow Vishnuswami, differed from Sridhar, the commentator of the Sreemad Bhagavatam, also belonging to the same sampradaya. The sampradaya founded by Nimbarkacharya has so utterly neglected its original Acharya that his works and those of his proximate successors appear to be lost. Sree Chaitanyadeva rescued the teachings of the great Acharyas 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 practiced 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-Acharyas 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 Brahma at the beginning of material creation. The Word, Who, beginning with Brahma, 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 Brahma 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 Leela-Avataras of Vishnu.

In this manner Truth manifested Himself successively in different forms in the

seven different lives of Brahma. The first four births of Brahma 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 Brahma, which was mental, the Fenapas learnt the Absolute Truth from Sree Narayana. From Fenapas He was heard by the Baikhanasas and from them by Chandra. In Brahma's second birth, which was ocular, by the grace of Narayana, Brahma and Rudra and, from Rudra, the Balakhilyas attained to the Truth. In the third birth of Brahma, which was oral, from Narayana, Suparna received the super-mental root-formula (mantram) of the Rig Veda. At the same time the Bighashasi sampradaya obtained the same from Vayu and from the Bighashasis, Mahodadhi received the experience of the exclusive spiritual function. In the fourth auricular birth of Brahma the eternal function (satvata dharma) was promulgated in the Vedas along with the Aranyakas. At this time from Brahma, Svarochisha Manu, from him, his son Samkhapada and, from Samkhapada, Subarnabha Manu, the son of Samkhapada, learnt the eternal function (satvata 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 Brahma.

At this time there had not yet begun the promulgation of the varnashrama dharma of the Vedic Karmakanda which was instituted in the next Age, viz., the Treta Yuga. Fenapa; Baikhanasa, Soma, Rudra, Balakhilya, Suparna, Vayu, Mahodadhi, Svarochisha Manu, Samkhapada, Subarnabha and other devotees of Hari of this pre-historic age, all belonged to the 'one-path' branch (the Ekayana Sakha) 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, Baikhanasa, Balakhilya and later the Audumbaras, in accordance with the four pre-historic divisions, formed a separate branch of those belonging to the vanaprastha stage even as early as the time when the varnashrama dharma was established. The varnashrama 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 (Treta) to which also belong three additional births of Brahma. At the beginning of the Treta Age in the fifth nasatya birth of Brahma from Narayana, Sanat Kumara received admission into the one-path religion. By Sanat Kumara, Birona, by Birona,

Raibhya, by Raibhya, Kukshi were successively admitted into the same one-path religion (aikantika dharma). While in the sixth birth of Brahma from the egg, from Brahma, Barhisat and his elder brother Abikampana, etc., obtained entry into the one path eternal religion. The chant of the Sama Veda first appeared in this sixth birth of Brahma. It is in the seventh birth of Brahma from the lotus that, from Narayana, Brahma, from Brahma, Dakshya, Aditya, Bibasvan, Manu and Ikshvaku, etc., being established in the Bhagavata religion, attained to great fame.

The Sree community (sampradaya) sprang from Ratnakara. Ratnakara obtained the religion from the ancient Bighashasi community and this last again from Vayu who belonged to the time of the third oral birth of Brahma. The Brahma and Rudra communities received the mercy of Sree Narayana in the fourth ocular birth of Brahma. Their successors, the Balakhilyas, maintained the lines of Brahma and Rudra. Sanat Kumara received the one-path religion from Sree Narayana in the fifth nasatya (nasal) birth of Brahma.

The activities of the series of the Plenary Divine Manifestations of this world (Avataras) 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, Rama son of Bhrigu, Rama son of Dasaratha, Baladeva, Buddha and Kalki as their Objects of worship, are recorded in such works as the Puranas, the Mahabharata, etc. Although these books happen to be written in Sanskrit we notice in them mention of the eternal (satvata) 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 Avataras have acquired the designations of bhakta, (devotee), 'bhagavata' (godly) or 'satvata' (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 Brahma, 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 Brahma, 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 Brahma, the Avatara in active quality of the Transcendental Vishnu in this material world, have been imagined, synthesized 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 (Treta), the ritualistic worship of Vishnu in the third (Dvapara) Age, and the chanting (kirtana) of the Name of Godhead in the fourth (Kali) Age, are specially suitable for the bound jiva for the attainment of the Sight of Godhead and His service. But the eternal Scriptures (satvata shastra) declare that in the seventh regime of the lotus-born Brahma 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 (satvata shastra) 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 (jiva) obtains deliverance from the clutches of worldly judgment by listening to the chant (kirtana) instituted by Sree Gaursundar. 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 Charitamrita 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 (jiva). 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 (jiva) and the Brahman. This religious doctrine of the intellectual realization 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 (tapasya), ijya, sama, dama, patience (titiksha), dana, 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 Aryas applied itself to the question of liberation (moksha). Sanaka, Sanatana and several others had altogether ignored the path pointed by desire for sensuous enjoyment. But Prajapati, Manu and Indra and other devas hoped to please Godhead 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 Bhagavatam is found an exhaustive discussion of these three subjects and the conclusions are clearly stated. The most merciful Sree Ramanujacharya, the disciple of the illustrious Sathakopa, was the first to bring together the fundamentals of the Vaishnava thought. Some time before him Sankaracharya by his commentary of the Vedanta sutra 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. Sankaracharya 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 Sakva clan of Kapilavastu five hundred years before Christ instituted such a vigorous movement of empiric knowledge that in consequence of it the previously established system of varnashrama 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 Aryas. Buddhism soon spread beyond the Punjab, under the patronage of kings such as Kanishka, Huvishka, Vasudeva, etc., of the Scythian dynasty, into the trans-Himalayan 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 Aryas 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 Brahmanas might be destroyed. When this undesirable disturbance assumed

the most dangerous proportions, in the seventh century of the Christian era, the Brahmanas becoming furiously indignant began a steady and organized attempt for the destruction of Buddhism. In this crisis Sreemad Sankaracharya eventually became the leader of the Brahmanas 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, Yamunacharya, Ramanuja, Vishnuswami and Madhvacharya and a host of eminent scholars. Sankaracharya failing to achieve much success with the help of his Brahmanized following, having adopted the ten orders of sannyasins bearing the designations of Giri, Puri, Bharati, etc., winning over the Brahmanas fond of materialistic activities, by the physical and controversial prowess of those sannyasins, 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 Naga sannyasins for his purpose. And, finally, by the compilation of the commentary of the Vedanta sutra, by mixing up therein the doctrine of fruitive works of the Brahmanas with the principle of empiric knowledge of the Buddhists, he effected the unification of the views of Brahmanas 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 Brahmanas 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 Avatara. 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 Brahmanas. 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 Brahmanas.

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 Arayas, a process which had been in progress. Especially did he change the mentality of the Aryas by introducing into Arayan books the controversial method. The impetus which was thus imported by him enabled the Arvan 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 Ramanujacharya, by the vigour of argumentation imparted by Sankara and by the grace of God, by composition of a fresh commentary of the Vedanta sutra, resuscitated the vigour of the Vaishnava thought. Within a short time Vishnuswami III, Nimbadiya and Madhvaswami, establishing the Vaishnava view in slightly different forms, also wrote commentaries of the Brahma sutra in accordance with their respective opinions. All of them after the manner of Sankaracharya, wrote a commentary on the Geeta, a bhashya 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 Acharyas the four current schools of Vaishnavism, viz. those of Sree, Brahma, 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 sannyasin Sree Chaitanya elaborated the full knowledge of the two ultimate principles of the Vaishnava religion. That the real significance of the land of Gauda (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 Nityananda and Advaita, encompassed by Rupa, Sanatana, Jiva, Gopala Bhatta, the two Raghunathas, Ramananda, Svarupa, Sarbabhauma, etc., has expounded clearly the true relationship of the individual soul (jiva) with Godhead, has shortened our work in regard to spiritual method 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 Badarikasrama. Its adolescence was nursed in the forest land of Nimisha on the bank of the Gomati. Its youthful activities are observed in the Dravida country on the beautiful bank of the Kaveri. The maturity is manifested to our view on the bank of the stream of the Jahnabi, 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 (jivas). If the Supreme Soul, Who is the Integer, is not served with love, He Call 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 (santa), (2) as of the servant (dasya), (3) as of the friend (sakhya), (4) as of parents (batsalya), 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 characterized by servitude (dasya rasa) is the next in order of manifestation. It possesses all the treasures of tranquil mellowness (santa rasa) and something more. This new factor is affection, i e , a sense that an object belongs to me (mamata). 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 mellowness of personal servitude (dasya rasa) is very much superior to that of impersonal tranquillity (santa rasa). As servitude (dasya) is superior to the state of perfect unconcern (santa), so also is friendship (sakhya) very much superior to servitude (dasya). Because in servitude (dasya) 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 (santa and dasya rasas). Just as friendship (sakhya) is higher than servitude (dasya), in like manner parental affection (batsalya) 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 (batsalya rasa) the constituent values of all the four mellownesses (rasas) are combined. Although the mellowness of parental affection (batsalya 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 (santa 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, Sanatana, Sananda, Sanatkumara, Narada, Mahadeva, etc., renouncing all attachment for the material world, experienced the mellowness of tranquillity (santa rasa) by being thereby established in the Super-soul. Long after this the mellowness of servitorship (dasya rasa) appeared as in Hanuman, the ruler of the Kapis. The mellow quality of tranquil spiritual servitude (dasya 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 Kapis 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 (batsalya 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 (aisvaryagata), 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 (jivas). 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, realizing 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 characterized 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-Acharyas

The contributions of Vishnuswami, Nimbadiya, Ramanuja and Madhva, the Founder-Acharyas of the four Vaishnava communities (sampradayas) 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 Acharyas who preceded Sree Chaitanya.

The necessity of sampradaya or organized community. in the domain of religion, has been explicitly recognized in the Shastras. The words of Sree Vyasadeva in the Padma Purana on this subject are to the effect that the verbal formulae 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 (sampradayas) founded by their respective Acharyas, 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 (sampradayas) of the Iron Age are connected with the ancient times by their recognition of the ulterior authority of the eternal ancient teachers, viz, Lakshmi, Brahma, Rudra and the four Sanas (chatuhsanah), respectively. The four Founder-Acharyas of the Iron Age professed to preach the views of those original teachers of the religion. Sree Rudra is the source of the teaching of Sree Vishnuswami; Sanaka, Sanatana, Sananda, Sanat Kumara, that of Sree Nimbarka Swami, Sree Lakshmidēvi that of Sree Ramanuja Swami and the four-faced Brahma that of Madhva Swami, in the Iron Age. The original pre-historic teachers, who are the ultimate source of the four communities, in the chronological order of their appearance, are (1) Lakshmi, the eternal and inseparable Consort of Vishnu, (2) Brahma sprung from the navel-lotus of Garbhodasayi Vishnu, (3) Rudra sprung from the second Purusha, and (4) the four Sanas who are the sons of Brahma born from the mind. The chronological order of the Acharyas of the Iron Age is (1) Sree Vishnuswami, (2) Sree Nimbāditya, (3) Sree Ramanuja, and (4) Sree Madhva.

Sree Vishnuswami

There are three different Vishnuswamis belonging to the same line. The first of them in order of time is known as Adi Vishnuswami and also as Sarbajna Muni. He was born in the Pandya country, the southernmost part of ancient Dravida in the third century B.C. His name, before he accepted sannyasa, was Devatanu. He was a tridandi sanyasin and re-established the old institution of tridanda sannyasa in the Iron Age. We find among his immediate followers no less than seven hundred tridanda sannyasins who were availed by him for preaching Vaishnavism against Buddhism. Vishnuswami is sometimes confounded with Sarbjnatma Muni who was an exclusive monist (kevaladvaitavadin). The system

propounded by Adi Vishnuswami or Sarbajna Muni is known by the name of .suddhadvaita siddhanta., the pure monistic doctrine, as distinct from exclusive or pseudomonism.

According to Sree Vishnuswami the individual soul (jiva) is a constituent part of the Substantive Reality (vastu); the power of the vastu is maya; the activity of the vastu is the world; none of these being separate from the 'Vast'.

The first point to be noticed in this connection is that Vishnuswami does not identify the individual soul (jiva) with the Brahman; neither does he conceive of the individual soul (jiva) as independent of the Brahman. His metaphor to bring out the relationship between the two, is that of the sparks of a great fire and the fire from which the sparks issue. Therefore, in the Scriptures the individual soul (jiva) has been sometimes called the Brahman, being qualitatively the same; and in other passages the individual soul (jiva) has been differentiated from the Brahman. In the next place the world being the activity of the Brahman, is also real and eternal. The origin and dissolution of the world as found in the Scriptures, mean its temporary disappearance but not substantive loss. The world is the unchanged transformation of the Brahman, just as the different ornaments made of gold are unchanged gold. Godhead, according to Vishnuswami, is the Embodiment of existence, self-consciousness and bliss in the embrace of the twin powers of 'Hladini' (that which delights and is delighted) and 'Samvit' (that which knows and makes known), as distinct from the bound soul who is, on the other hand, the source of all misery and enveloped in nescience. In his state of pure monistic consciousness the soul (jiva) is established in the relationship of servant to Godhead, which is the natural condition for the soul (jiva) who in the pure state is a fractional part of the whole, viz., Godhead. Godhead is the Lord of 'maya' the soul (jiva) is subduable by the deluding or limiting energy (maya). Godhead is self-manifest and transcendental bliss. The soul (jiva), although also self-manifest by reason of his being an integral part of the Whole, is located in the plane of misery, due to his attachment for a second entity besides Godhead. Godhead is ever free and never submits to any adjunctive modifications. He is possessed of transcendental qualities, is all-knowing, all-powerful, the Lord of all, the Regulator of all, the Object of worship of all, the Awarder of the fruit of all

actions, the Abode of all beneficent qualities and substantive existence, consciousness and bliss.

Sree Vishnuswami following in the footsteps of Sree Rudra, was the worshipper of Sree Panchashya (Man-lion). He admits the Bodily Form of Godhead made of the principles of existence, consciousness and bliss, and the eternal co-existence of worship, worshipper and the worshipped. In his own words 'the emancipated also, playfully assuming bodily forms, serve the Lord'. The main authorities recognized by the Vishnuswami community (sampradaya) are 'Nrisimha tapani,' 'Sreemad Bhagavatam' and 'Sree Vishnupuranam' Of the works of Vishnuswami himself the 'sarbajna sukta' alone is mentioned. The Vishnuswami school counts very few adherents at the present day. Sree Vallabhacharya, although he calls himself his follower, differs in certain respects from the views of Sree Vishnuswami.

Sree Nimbadiya

Sree Nimbadiya is the propounder of bifurcial monism (dvaitadvaitada). Sree Nimbarkadiya appeared in the town of Baidurya-pattan (mod. 'Munger-pattan' or 'Mungi-pattan') in the Telugu country. He is known variously as 'Nimbadiya,' 'Nimbarka,' or 'Nimbabibhavasu' and sometimes also as 'Aruneya,' 'Niyamanada,' and 'Haripriyacharya,'. His followers are known as Nimayets and are different from the 'Nimanandis' who profess to be followers of Sree Chaitanyadeva under His appellation of Nimananda,. Sree Nimbadiya was an ascetic of the triple staff (tridandi sannyasin); the line of his preceptorial succession being (1) Sree Narayana, (2) Hamsa, (3) the Chatuhsanas, viz., Sanaka, etc. and (4) Nimbadiyacharya. Sree Nimbadiya's commentary of the Bhasya known as the 'Vedanta parijata-saurabha' and there are also several other works written by him.

The system of Nimbarka holds the 'heard transcendental sound' (sruti) as the highest natural evidence of the Truth, and also accepts the testimony of other Shastras when they follow heard sound (sruti). The source of Nimbadiya's

teaching is the instruction imparted by the four Sanas to Sree Narada Goswami in the seventh prapathaka of the Chandogyopanishad, which may be summed up as follows, viz., 'that the Puranas are the fifth Veda; Vishnu is the Lord of all, devotion to Godhead in the forms of firm faith (sraddha) and close addiction (nishtha) is glorified; there is nothing equal or superior to the love for Godhead; the eternal Abode of Godhead is praised; Godhead is independent of any other thing; the perfectly emancipated are the eternal servitors of Godhead and are engaged in eternal pastimes in the region of self-conscious activities in the company of Godhead; Godhead has power of appearance to and disappearance from our view; the Vaishnavas are eternal and transcendental; the grace of Godhead is glorified, etc., etc.'

According to Sree Nimbadiya the individual (jiva) soul and the Supreme Soul are related to each other as integral part and Whole. The soul (jiva) is different from Godhead, but not separate. The soul (jiva) is both knowledge and knower, like the Sun which is self-luminous and also makes visible other objects. As an infinitesimal particle of consciousness the soul (jiva) is subordinate to Godhead Who is plenary consciousness. The souls (jivas) are infinite in number. By reason of his smallness he is liable to association with and dissociation from bodies made by the deluding energy of Godhead (maya). In the bound state the soul (jiva) is imprisoned in the gross and subtle physical bodies; in the free state he is dissociated from them. Souls (jivas) are of three distinct kinds, viz., those that are (1) free, (2) bound yet free, and (3) bound. There are various gradations of each one of these. The soul (jiva) is freed from the bondage of the deluding energy (maya) by the grace of Godhead, there being no other way. The inanimate objects are two, viz., (1) time, and (2) deluding energy (maya). Time is either transcendental or material. The former is self-conscious and eternal, i.e., undivided into past, present and future. The deluding energy (maya) is the perversion of the self-conscious (chit), or the shadow of the latter, and possesses the qualities of the shadow. Divinity is free from defect. The real nature of Godhead is full of infinite beneficence. Godhead as Krishna is the highest Brahman. Krishna is the source of all beauty and sweetness. Attended by His Own Power, the Daughter of Brishabhanu, constantly served by thousands of intimate female friends (sakhis) who are the extended self of the

Daughter of Brishabhanu, Krishna is the Object of the eternal worship of the individual soul (jiva). He has an eternal and transcendental bodily Form. He is formless to the material vision but possessed of form to the spiritual eye. He is independent, all-powerful, Lord of all, possessed of inconceivable power and eternally worshipped by the gods such as Brahma, Siva, etc. Worship is of two kinds, viz., (1) tentative devotion during novitiate, and (2) the highest devotion characterized by love. The latter is aroused by the practice of nine kinds of devotion as means, consisting of hearing, chanting, etc.

The Nimbarka community is not mentioned in his works by Sree Jiva Gowami. He is also unnoticed in the Sarbadarsanasamgraha of Sayana Madhava. From which it is supposed that the current views of the present Nimbarka community were not extensively known till after the time of the author of Sarbadarsanasamgraha, or even of the six Goswamins. There is, however, no doubt whatever that Sree Nimbadiya is a very ancient Acharya and the founder of the satvata dvaitadvaita sampradaya.

Sree Ramanuja

Sree Ramanuja made his appearance in the year 938 of the Saka era in the village of Sriparambattur or Sree Mahabhutapuri about twenty-six miles to the west of Madras, in the family of a Dravida Brahmana. His name, before he became an ascetic of the triple staff (tridandi sannyasin), as Lakshmana. Lakshmana Desika accepted renunciation (sannyasa) on the bank of Anantasar at Conjeeveram invoking grace of Sree Yamunacharya. He soon became the head of the Sree community (sampradaya) , which had its headquarters at Sree Rangam. He travelled all over India visiting Kashmir, Benares, Puri, etc., and established the pancharatrika view (the system of fivefold knowledge) at all the important centers of religion. We do not intend to enter further into the details of his wonderful career at this place.

Sree Ramanuja is the author of numerous works, the chief of which are Vedanta-sara, Vedanta-dipa, Vedartha -samgraha, Geeta Bhashya, Sree Bhashya, etc.

In the Ramanuja community every one is required to undergo purification by the method of the fivefold purificatory process (pancha-samskara). Even a high-born Brahmana, according to the Ramanujis, who has not gone through the above purificatory process, is as much an untouchable as the lowest of the Chandalas, and a Chandala so purified is held to possess the highest sanctity. In the Ramanuja community Vishnu is exclusively worshipped and the worship of all other gods is absolutely forbidden. In this community there is also the institution of renunciation of the triple staff (tridanda sannyasa).

Sree Ramanuja is the propounder of the view which is known as Distinctive Monotheism (Vishishtadvaitavada). This view is formally established scripturally in his commentary on the Brahma-sutra known as Sree Bhashya. The system of Sree Ramanuja may be set forth as follows: The Nature of the Supreme Brahman is unitary. Brahman who is without a second is, however, possessed of quality. The cognitive principle (chit) and the principle of nescience (achit) are His quality and body. The cognitive principle (chit) and nescience (achit) are each of them of two kinds according as they happen to be either gross or subtle. The subtle cognitive (chit) and non-cognitive principle (achit), in the causal state, are transformed into the gross cognition and non-cognition as effect. Brahman Who is non-bifurcial knowledge being the sole Cause, both efficient and material, there exist in Him qualities corresponding to such activities. The qualities must be considered as qualifying the possessor of them. Therefore, self-consciousness (chit) and unconsciousness (achit) are the qualities corresponding to the activities of Brahman as the Cause. The body is dependent on, is enjoyed and regulated by, its possessor and is also that by which the latter is known. Self-consciousness and unconsciousness depend upon, are enjoyed and regulated by, non-bifurcial Brahman, and, as effect, are the manifestations of Brahman as Cause. There is no such difference in the individual (jiva) soul as deva, man, etc. It is the soul obtaining enjoyable bodies, as the appropriate result of his own activities, that makes the effect known in terms of such bodies. Therefore, devas, men, etc., are only indications of different activities of the soul. The bodies such as those of devas, men, etc., are thus modifications or qualities of the soul. The relation in which the body stands to the individual (jiva) soul is also that in which the individual (jiva) soul stands to the Supreme Soul. In Distinctive Non-dualism three categories

are admitted, viz., (1) the self-conscious principle (chit) which means the individual (jiva), (2) the non-conscious principle (achit) or matter, and (3) Godhead (Iswara), the Regulator of spirit (chit) and matter (achit), Who is the highest Personality of Narayana. This view categorically denies the following: Absolute dualism (kevala-dvaita-vada), absolute non-dualism (kevala-advaita-vada) and attributive dualistic non-dualism (vishista-dvaita-advaita-vada) .

The self-conscious principle (chit) or individual (jiva) soul is infinitesimal (anu) as opposed to the greatness of Brahman and is an integral part (amsa) of the Integer (amsi) or Possessor of the part, viz., the Brahman. This littleness of the individual (jiva) soul is directly and explicitly stated in the Scriptures as his specific characteristic. It is an integral part of Brahman, just as his body is an integral part of the individual soul or as His glow is an integral part or quality of the fire or the Sun; or as the quality is an integral part of the substance. The individual soul is of three kinds, viz., (1) bound (baddha), (2) emancipated (mukta), and (3) eternal (nitya). His proper nature is existence and bliss and he is cognisable to himself.

As regards the non-conscious (achit), according to Ramanuja it is devoid of cognition and liable to transformation. It is of three kinds, viz., (1) pure, e.g., objects in Vaikuntha, (2) mixed, i.e., constituted of the triple mundane qualities, and (3) insubstantial or time.

Sree Narayana is Godhead. He is distinct from the principle of consciousness (chit) and non-consciousness (achit) as substance from quality. He is the only cause of the origin, continuance and destruction of the spiritual (chit) and material (achit) worlds and of cessation of the cycle of births. He is free from every imperfection, full of infinite beneficent qualities, the soul of all, the transcendental Brahman, the transcendental Light, the transcendental Entity, the Supreme Soul, the only Subject of all Scriptures and the Guide of all hearts. The nature of Godhead is fivefold, viz., (1) the ultimate Reality (para tattva), (2) the principle of expansion (byuha tattva) for creation, maintenance, destruction, for protecting the bound jivas and showing His mercy to worshippers, as Samkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, (3) the principle of

the origination of any state (bibhava tattva), viz, Avataras like Rama, Nrisinha, etc., (4) the inner Guide (antaryami tattva) as (a) the Supreme Soul Who dwells in the hearts of His servants, and as (b) Narayana with Lakshmi residing in the hearts of enlightened persons, (5) the principle of symbolic manifestation (archa avatara) as Conglomerate Embodiment (Sree Vighraha), Name, Form, etc., worshipped by His servants in accordance with their respective aptitudes. He seems as if ignorant although All-knowing, as if powerless although All-powerful, as if needing help although His wish is ever fully realized, as if needing protection although the Protector, and as if serving His devotees although their Master.

Devotion is the proper method of worshipping Godhead, is extremely pleasing, the only thing needful and is of the nature of a particular kind of knowledge which produces a distaste for every other thing. Godhead is attainable by the soul imbued with devotion.

Srimat Purnaprajna or Sree Madhvacharya

Srimat Purnaprajna or Madhvacharya made his appearance in this world in the Saka year 1040 in the sacred tirtha known as the Pajaka Kshetra situated about eight miles to the south-east of Udupi Kshetra in South Canara. His name, before he accepted sanyasa, was Vasudeva. Sree Vasudeva came of a Brahman family, his father's name being Sree Narayana Bhatta, who bore the surname of Madhvageha due to the fact that one of his ancestors, who was an immigrant from the country of Ahichchhatra, built his dwelling in the middle part of the village-settlement. His mother's name was Vedabati or Vedavidya. Vasudeva accepted renunciation of the ascetic's staff (danda sanyasa) from Sree Achyutapreksha, the disciple of Sree Prajnatirtha, in the line of Garudabahan, without obtaining the previous permission of his parents, at the age of eleven, and received the designation of 'Anandatirtha', or its equivalent 'Madhva'. Sree Achyutapreksha at that time happened to be in charge of the shrine of Sree Ananteswara, situated in the neighbouring village of Rajatapeethapura. The order of spiritual preceptorial succession, according to the Madhvas of

Rajatapeethapura, of Madhvacharya, is as follows: (1) Sree Narayana as Hansa, (2) Four-faced Brahma, (3) Chatuhsanah, (4) Durvasa, (5) Pasatirtha Yati, (6) Satyaprajna, (7) Prajnatirtha, (8) Achyutapreksha, and (9) Madhva. It is not our purpose in this place to enter into the details of his career which was long and eventful. Sreemad Madhva was the worshipper of Boy Krishna, whose holy Form, miraculously rescued from a sinking boat, was solemnly installed by him at Sree Udupi Kshetra and still receives worship from the sannyasins, his successors in the disciplic line. Sree Madhvacharya had a most powerful physique. He journeyed twice to Sree Badarika and visited all the principal tirthas of India where he preached his doctrines and engaged in successful disputations with the leading scholars of the rival schools. Sree Madhvacharya disappeared from this world in the 79th year of his advent.

Sree Madhvacharya wrote numerous works and established many Maths with organized service and worship for the purpose of spreading his bifurcial theistic view. As many as thirty- eight separate works, all in Sanskrit, from his pen, are still extant. The literature thus brilliantly inaugurated swelled to immense proportions by subsequent additions of many valuable works by his successors.

The teaching of Sree Madhvacharya is found summarized in a short verse which is regarded by the members of the school as giving a correct view of his position and may be rendered thus: "Divine Vishnu is the Highest of all. The world is true. Between Godhead, jiva and matter there exists fivefold eternal reciprocal difference. The jivas (individual souls) are the servants of Sree Hari. There exists gradation of fitness among jivas. The manifestation of the function in conformity with the proper nature of the jiva is emancipation (mukti). The practice of the realized function conformably with the soul's own proper nature is pure, unalloyed or causeless devotion. Sound, inference and direct perception constitute the triple evidence. Sree Hari is the only Object Who is knowable by the whole body of the Scriptures; or, in other words, realization of Godhead is possible only by following the path of the heard revealed sound (sruti)." The whole of this position has been accepted specifically by Sripad Baladeva Vidyabhusana in his 'Prameya Ratnavali'. This definitely establishes the descent of Sree Gaudiya Sampradaya, that follows Sree Krishna Chaitanya, from the

Madhva school and justifies its descriptive title Madhva-Gaudiya (or Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya) Sampradaya, current among the devotees.

According to Sree Madhvacharya, as has already been stated, Sree Vishnu is the Highest Entity. Reality is of two kinds, viz., (1) self-regulated and (2) subordinate. Vishnu is the one perfectly self-regulated Entity. He is the Abode of infinite, free-from defect, beneficent, qualities. He is all-powerful, autocrat, the Regulator of the animate and inanimate worlds, from the tip of finger-nail to the top of hair the holy embodied Form of existence, intelligence and bliss, cognizant and delighting in His own real nature and without any subjective heterogeneity. There is no distinction between His body and Himself as the possessor of body. There is absolute identity between His Body, Quality, Action and Name. That is to say, there is no dividing line between His Name, Form, Quality and Activity (Leela). He is Eternal, the Regulator of all, the Lord of all, Iswara (Ruler) of even Brahma, Mahesa and Lakshmi and for this reason He is the Highest Godhead, i.e., God of all the gods. He is in every Age and country the holy embodied Form of the Possessor of all pure energy. Those persons who notice any distinction or distinction and non-distinction in the Name, Form, Quality and Activity of the Avatars viz., Fish, Tortoise, etc., certainly enter the realm of gross ignorance (tamas). There is no particle of absence of self-consciousness in Sree Hari. His holy Form possesses hand, foot, mouth, belly, etc., all those being of the nature of pure bliss. From Him proceed always creation, stability, destruction, the course of the souls, knowledge, bondage, emancipation, etc. Divine Vishnu exists eternally as the Archetype of all individual souls who are His differentiated parts. In other words, in the realm full of the pastimes of the pure intelligence, an endless series of differentiated souls from Brahma to the lowest insect endowed with the embodied forms of the principles of existence, cognition and bliss are eternally existent. They are the unqualified counterparts of the corresponding Forms of Vishnu Who, in His eternal and various Forms, is their Archetype. The individual souls in Vaikuntha are the substantive, unqualified reflections of the corresponding Divine Forms. Individual souls are differentiated from Godhead. The soul is an embodiment of the principles of cognition and bliss in a small measure, which principles exist in their fullest measure in the Person of Godhead. The material

bodies of the bound souls do not correspond to their original pure spiritual forms, and, therefore, from the nature of the physical forms of the bound souls the nature of their original forms cannot be inferred. Sree Hari has two kinds of constituent parts (amsas) viz., (1) differentiated counterparts, e.g., individual souls (jivas) in Vaikuntha, and (2) undifferentiated parts of Himself, viz., the Divine manifestations (Avataras), e.g., in the divine Forms of the Fish, Tortoise, etc. In His pastimes Divine Vishnu manifests Himself in a fourfold Form, viz., Vasudeva, Samkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, for the purpose of such activities as creation, etc. In the Form of Pradyumna He creates the world, in the Form of Aniruddha maintains, and in the Form of Samkarsana, destroys it. In the Form of Vasudeva He delivers souls. The functions of creation and destruction are carried out by Divine Vishnu by means of gods exercising delegated power, or by the highest grade of souls exercising similar power. Vishnu as Pradyumna in this manner endows Brahma with the creative power and as Samkarsana confers on Rudra the power of destruction. He himself as Aniruddha exercises the power of maintenance, and as Vasudeva confers deliverance. Divine Vishnu from time to time appears in this world as Avataras in the Forms of Fish, Tortoise, etc. In the twenty-four Forms as Keshava, etc., and Vasudeva, etc., He is the Regulator of the gods who represent the twenty-four principles of the universe, and in the five Forms as Vasudeva, Samkarsana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, and Narayana, He governs the five encasements. He regulates the four states of differentiated souls, viz., (1) waking, (2) dreaming, (3) sleeping, (4) unbound, in the four Forms of Visva, Taijas, Prajna and Turiya.. As the Soul and the Soul of souls He is the Regulator of the gross and spiritual bodies, corresponding to the real nature of the souls and, remaining manifest in all the limbs of souls as Ananta, He rules over them. He is the Source Who imparts their initiative to the gods representing the principles of the universe, and to the different senses. He is not responsible for the meritorious and sinful acts of jivas to which He employs them according to their fitness and in exercise of their freedom of will. Although He appears in the world in the various Forms of Fish, Tortoise, Man, etc., His birth and activities or bodies are not phenomenal, notwithstanding their material appearance to the vision of bound jivas. His Avatara are of two kinds, viz., (1) Embodiments of knowledge, and (2) Embodiments of power. Sree Krishna is the Appearance

(Avatara) of Divine cognition and power in conjunction. In such Divine Appearances as those of Dhanvantari, etc., Krishna's power of showing mercy to His devotees alone is manifest. Sree Vaikuntha is the eternal Divine Abode of Vishnu. At the beginning of creation the twin Divine Abodes, viz., the White Island (Sveta-dvipa) and the Divine Seat in the form of Sree Ananta (Anantasana), appear in this world. Sree Lakshmi is the beloved Divine Consort of Vishnu. She accompanies Her Lord to this world in His Appearances and is associated with Him in various Forms with the infinite reciprocal Forms of her Lord. The different names of Sree Lakshmi are: Sree, Bhru, Durga, Maya, Jaya, Kriti, Santi, Ambhrani, Sita, Dakshina, Jayanti, etc., each having distinctive functions. Vishnu creates the material universe at the beginning of every cycle (kalpa) using the eternal inanimate force, that has no beginning, as the material cause. This world is neither non-existent, nor false, nor 'momentary'. The different objects are limited in duration as regards their existence in their particular forms, but are eternal as regards their constituent principle.

There is categorical difference (1) between the individual soul (jiva) and Godhead, (2) between one individual (jiva) and another, (3) between matter and Godhead, (4) between individual soul (jiva) and matter and (5) between one form of matter and another form. Sree Madhvacharya accepts this fivefold difference as real.

Individual souls (jivas) are divided into three classes, according as their original nature is made of either (1) intelligence and bliss, or (2) of a mixture of intelligence and joy and misery of ignorance, or (3) of unmixed misery and ignorance. Individual souls (jivas) are provided with physical and mental bodies in accordance with their actions of the previous cycle (kalpa), at the beginning of material creation. Individual souls (jivas) are infinite in number. One's proper nature or the capacity of attaining to it, is eternal and belongs eternally to all individual souls. It is the primal cause of all efforts of all individual souls. Action (karma), although destructible, is eternal in the continuity of its flow or sequence. Previously performed activity (karma), which is without a beginning, is the second cause. There is a third cause in the shape of the effort at the time of the performance of the act. All these are

subject to Vishnu, Lord of the material energy (maya). In other words Godhead awards the worldly course of individual souls by means of these three causes, but they have no power over Him as He is the Lord of material Energy (Maya). Liberation (mukti) is the realization of their own proper natures by persons endowed with the luminous, self-expressive (sattvic) quality, on the dissolution of the symbolic material body, by the practice of devotion. It is not something adventitious but only the continued establishment of the individual soul in his own proper nature. The eternal material cases, super-imposed on the real or spiritual nature of the soul, are two in number, viz., (1) the case forged by the soul and (2) the envelope bestowed by the material energy of Godhead (Maya). When Godhead is favourably disposed He destroys completely the coating of nescience caused by the soul and removes the screen of the material energy (maya) which is a gift of the Divinity. Thereupon the soul is enabled to see with his spiritual eye the Supreme Person dwelling in his own heart. The devotion that is aroused after the beatific vision is the highest or unalloyed, being devoid of all foreign impulses in the shape of physical activity (karma), etc. It is only by devotion that the favour of Godhead is attained. This leads to liberation (mukti), being the attainment of the Feet of Vishnu. This is followed by devotion in her real, proper form which is not the means but the goal. The initial stage in the process, is listening with faith to the words of Scriptures glorifying the greatness of Godhead, from the lips of devotees (sadhus).

Sree Madhvacharya admits the authority of the triple evidence of (1) direct perception, (2) inference, and (3) revelation (agama). The last is sub-divided into (1) those Scriptures that are not made by any person, and (2) those so made. To the first of these groups belong the Vedas such as Rik, etc., Upanishad, the formulae that deliver from mental function (mantram), Brahmanas, the concluding portion of the Veda (parisista), etc. To the second group are assigned History- (Itihasa), supplementary accounts (Purana), fivefold knowledge (pancha-ratra), etc. The Puranas, etc., help in understanding the real significance of the Vedas. The Puranas are of three kinds, viz., (1) Sattvika, (2) Rajasika, and (3) Tamasika. The Sattvika Puranas, such as Sreemad Bhagavatam, etc., are alone admissible as evidence of the Truth. If any portions of the Rajasa Puranas are in conformity with the statements of the Sattvika

Puranas those may also be accepted as evidence. Those parts of the Sattvika Puranas that express ideas contrary to the sattvika view, were intended for deluding the atheists (daityas), and should not be accepted by righteous persons. The Tamasa Puranas were concocted for deluding evil-minded persons (daityas). All Puranas, in so far as they support the sattvic view, are admissible as evidence. The following views of Sree Madhvacharya are also interesting. The servant of Vishnu (Vaishnava), the All-pervasive Lord, is the highest of all animate beings (jivas). The worship of Vishnu alone is to be performed. All worship of other gods is forbidden. Everything is gained by uttering the Name of Hari. The Vaishnava, even if he be sprung from a Chandala family, is the revered of all. Vaishnavas are to be served with zeal and no offense must be permitted against them. The Brahmana is recognized by straightforwardness, the Sudra by duplicity of conduct.

Sree Chaitanya is the disciplic successor of Sree Madhvacharya and ultimately of Sree Brahma, the original Founder after whom the community (sampradaya) is named as the Brahma Sampradaya. The order of spiritual succession (amnaya) up to the present time from Sree Brahma, as preserved in the Brahma Gaudiya Sampradaya, is as follows: (1) Sree Krishna, (2) Brahma, (3) Narada, (4) Vyasa, (5) Madhwa, (6) Padmanabha, (7) Nrihari, (8) Madhava, (9) Akshobhya, (10) Jayatirtha, (11) Jnanasindhu, (12) Dayanidhi, (13) Vidyanidhi, (14) Rajendra, (15) Jayadharma, (16) Purushottama, (17) Vyasatirtha, (18) Lakshmipati, (19) Madhavendra Puri, (20) Iswara (Advaita, Nityananda), (21) Sree Chaitanya, (22) (Swarupa, Sanatana) Rupa, (23) (Jiva) Raghunatha, (24) Krishnadasa, (25) Narottama, (26) Viswanatha, (27) (Baladeva) Jagannatha, (28) (Bhaktivinode) Gaurakishore, (29) Sree Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Sree Barshabhanavidayitadas. All these are paramahansas and Sree Chaitanya's undifferentiated servitors. The writer is devoid of all aptitude for service and endeavours to have his mind humbly fixed on the lotus feet of Sree Guru Sree Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur, as the unworthy object of his causeless mercy and of his associated counterparts.

The views of the four Founder-Acharyas of the respective Vaishnava communities (sampradayas) briefly noticed above, stand in such close and

organic relation to the teaching of Sree Chaitanya and to one another that their relationship will be best brought out in course of the narrative and at the proper place, in the light of the philosophy of Sree Chaitanya which, as I have already noticed, reconciles, harmonizes and perfects them. For the present it will be sufficient for our purpose to notice in regard to these four schools that the system of Sree Chaitanya, although it is identical with none of them, either wholly or partially admits the special excellence of certain features of each. Thus, for example, Sree Chaitanya accepts more or less the eternal specific Form of the Divinity as Embodiment of all-existence, all-knowledge and all-bliss sachchidananda nitya Bigraha) of Madhva, the postulations of Ramanuja regarding Divine Power, the principle of unalloyed non-dualism and of Godhead as 'the All of His Own' and the eternal dualistic-monotheism of Nimbarka which last has been perfected by Sree Chaitanya into the truly scientific Truth of the Doctrine of inconceivable simultaneous distinction and non-difference.

The act of Sree Chaitanya in preferring the Brahma community (sampradaya) by His entry into it as Disciple, to which Sree Madhvacharya also belongs, to the other Vaishnava schools, is explained by the fact that the doctrine of unalloyed differentialism propounded by Sree Madhvacharya which makes the mutual difference, as between, Godhead, individual soul (jiva) and the material world, definite and permanent and also recognizes their eternal separate existence, keeps all individual souls (jiva) most clearly and frankly at a great distance from the fell disease of absolute monism which is the opposite pole, being the empirical denial of the essence of all theistic thought passing itself off as theism to the insidious seductions of which most worldly people are so easily liable to succumb. We shall return to this important subject in its proper place.

It is the empiricists who are responsible for the origination of the current notion that theism is a product of a particular stage of material civilization in its progressive onward march. It will be our purpose to prove in the next chapter that such a view is opposed to all historical experience. It is no doubt true that the revelationists do not admit the applicability of the theory of evolution in its present form to spiritual subjects as it does not recognize the existence of any

other entity except matter and mind. The history of spiritual evolution is connected with the progress of material civilization correspondingly and negatively, and not causally, the latter only serving to bring out that aspect of the former which happens to be the most intelligible to itself at the stage. This difference is wholly overlooked by materialistic evolutionists and no less by the so-called critical school of historians who have essayed to treat of spiritual events. The transcendental aspect of theism is the oldest fact known to history and, philosophically speaking, is incapable of being evolved out of the empirical consciousness. The abandonment of no historical principle worth the name, is involved in the recognition of this fact as a fundamental and axiomatic truth even on the evidence, although necessarily negative in character, of our empirical experience as will appear from an impartial consideration of the historical facts contained in the next chapter.

VIII.— Historical Vaishnavism

The Scope of History does not extend to the transcendental for the simple reason that History deals exclusively with the phenomena of this world. The historical view of any Divine event is, under the circumstances, only that of the deluded soul under the thralldom of the material Energy. It is not its business to deal with anything that is outside the ordinary sensuous experience of men in general. Therefore, we cannot expect modern historians, who are limited to the above view of their function, to sympathize with, or even to consider seriously, the subject of this work as one that belongs properly to their particular branch of knowledge. But in spite of this purely secular attitude of modern historians they have been unable to rule religion altogether out of their subject. There have been empiric historians who have, in the spirit of specialists, without discarding the secular outlook which it is really impossible for them to do without denying their avowed function as investigators of a branch of empiric knowledge, attempted to isolate and treat 'exclusively' of religious history. While professing all due respect for their methods, without

ignoring their necessary limitations, we propose to employ their method, divested of unnecessary and hostile narrowness, in this chapter, for the purpose of proving our proposition that the worship of Vishnu as transcendental Godhead has been prevalent from time immemorial.

It is of course not possible to treat exhaustively in the course of a short chapter a subject that is both large and, by its nature, controversial. That effort must be reserved for a separate work. I shall be content in this chapter with supplying a rough sketch of the account of the worship of Vishnu as it has prevailed from the earliest times, on the evidence supplied by the religious books directly, by the course of the evolution of ritual and the activities of outstanding personalities.

The Rig-Veda is regarded on all hands as being the oldest of the existing books. The worship of Vishnu is found mentioned in the very first mantrams of this work, which contain a reference to the Vamana (Dwarf) Avatara of Vishnu. The beginning of the compilation of the Rik mantrams may accordingly be considered as at least subsequent to the Vamana Avatara. The subject of the ten Avataras of Vishnu will be considered from another point of view in the next chapter. The ten Avataras are mentioned everywhere in the following chronological order, viz, (1) Matsya (Fish), (2) Kurma (Tortoise), (3) Varaha (Boar), (4) Nrisimha (Man-Lion), (5) Vamana (Dwarf), (6) Parasu-Rama, (7) Rama, (8) Balarama, (9) Buddha, and (10) Kalki. When the Rig-Veda was being compiled the first five Avataras of Vishnu had already taken place.

Objection may be taken to the above on the ground that there is no mention of the other Avataras in the Rig-Veda, which are mentioned only in the Puranas which are subsequent to the Vedic period.

The Puranas assumed their present form long after the compilation of the Rig-Veda. But the original Purannas were written in very old Brahmi which has survived in the language of the mantrams that have been preserved in the Vedas while the original books themselves have disappeared completely. The present Puranas which are in the Sanskrit language were written later and replaced the older works from which much of their accounts was derived. Many of the

events recorded in the Puranas occurred in the pre-Vedic Age. This is well known to the critical historians and the subject has been treated with ability by an English scholar Pargiter, in his recent work 'The ancient Indian historical tradition'.

There is another striking point of difference between the Vedas and the Puranas. The Vedas do not contain really much matter that is of the nature of the supernatural. They refer to Natural phenomena and display an almost exclusive attachment to mundane advantages in their prayers to the various gods, who are regarded as presiding over the different forces of physical Nature. This naturalistic or materialistic character of the Vedic religion has been noticed by all Vedic scholars. The singular absence of the really supernatural factor in the oldest existing religious book of the world has not received sufficient critical attention. The Puranas are full of the supernatural. To the so-called critical historian this has always appeared as the special disqualification of the Puranas as a source for sober history. But this feature is capable of a very different and far more rational interpretation.

I have already mentioned that the worship of Vishnu occurs in the Vedas along with that of the other gods. If we direct our close attention to the character of the hymns of the Rig-Veda we would notice a great difference between the hymns addressed to Vishnu and those addressed to the other gods. All the hymns, without a single exception, that are addressed to the other gods, are full of purely mundane expectations and references. All the hymns, without a single exception, addressed to Vishnu are absolutely free from all mundane reference. The worship of Vishnu is absolutely pure. Vishnu alone is Infinite, all the other gods are limited. Vishnu is also a personal God, as the other gods. The finite gods are approachable by their worshippers by limited references. But Vishnu is recognized as unapproachable by mundane reference.

As Vishnu was not available by esoteric efforts, this led to the formulation of the worship of the other gods. Vishnu was never a god of Nature. The other gods were gods of Nature. These formed, as it were, the esoteric faces of Vishnu and were regarded by their worshippers as independent of Vishnu. From the

earliest times the worship of these gods had existed alongside the worship of Vishnu.

The Vedic religion viewed in this light will appear to have been of the nature of a later reaction against the older pure worship of Vishnu. It is, in fact, the first movement of the anti theistic thought, of which we possess any written record.

This establishes the identity of Vishnu, and the worship of Vishnu, of the Rig-Veda with the Vaishnavism of the Puranas and of the present Age. This fact has been most clearly established by the Vaishnava Acharyas, within the narrower historical period, from the time of Adi Vishnuswami onwards.

An attempt was made in the subsequent period to mix up the pure worship of Krishna with the other worships. This attempt was exposed by the Vaishnava acharyas who helped to restore from time to time the pure eternal religion.

Historically speaking, therefore, the anti-Vaishnavite thought is almost as old as the Vaishnavite, but not quite so old.

The Vedic religion, which, in its fruitive aspect, degenerated into ceremonialism and aimed solely at trivial worldly advantages, led to a schism in the ranks of the anti-theists marked by the rise of Buddhism. Gautama Buddha belonged to the sixth century B.C. Buddha is directly anti-Vedic and himself belonged to the Vaishnavite school. But his teaching was misunderstood by his atheistical followers who severed all connection with the chain of the Avatars of Vishnu to which their Founder had belonged. This explains the philosophical affinity of extant atheistical Buddhism with the polytheism of the Vedas as expounded by Sankara, in spite of the traditionally supposed opposition of Buddha to the Vedas.

The major portion of the Vedas, therefore, constituting what is known technically as the Karma Kandiya part (i.e. that portion which is devoted to

fruitive activities), is polytheistic or, more truly, anti-theistic. But its ritual was not exclusively its own. The Yajna, or sacrifice was originally a form of Vaishnavite worship, but it was subsequently adopted as the basis of the anti-theistic worship and in that form elaborated into its later complex forms. But the Yajna itself was not the oldest form of the Vishnuvite worship. The original form of the Vishnuvite worship was dhyana (i.e. meditation corresponding to solitary rationalistic worship the term means that mode which is established through argument). This mode of worship is represented in its pure form by Astabakra. It became mixed up with mundane references in the later Hatha Yoga. But at first it was not so. It is the form of worship that corresponds to the inactive or the meditative temper. This was the earliest theistic form of worship. The Yajna, 'sacrifice' was the next stage and represents the active temper. The institution of yajna developed into that of archana or ritualistic worship. The sankirtana propounded by Sree Chaitanya replaces archana as the final form of Vishnuvite worship. This order of development is in accordance with the shloka of the Sreemad Bhagavatam (XII-3-52, What is obtained in the Satya Age by means of dhyana, in the Treta Age by yajna, in Dvapara by archana, may be gained in the Kali Age by chanting or kirtana of Hari.

The necessity for the preservation of the older Puranas was probably less imperatively felt after the composition of the Mahabharata in which were incorporated their principal contents in a condensed form. The present Puranas derived their accounts mainly from the Mahabharata, with later embellishments and interpolations. The Mahabharata and the Puranas thus contain the oldest historical tradition of India which is not in conformity with the extant portion of the Vedas either as regards their narrative or their religious tenets. A group of Puranas is specially devoted to the history and doctrines of Vaishnavism, which also appears more or less in all the Puranas. In this history is found the supernatural account of the numerous mundane Appearances (Avataras) of Vishnu.

We have already stated that the hymns of the Rig-Veda that are addressed to Vishnu, contain no mundane reference. Vishnu is considered as being outside physical Nature. In the hymns He is also spoken of as the Infinite and the

Divinity in His fullness and perfection. As He happens to be Infinite He is also to be worshipped not by any limited reference but infinitely or by the fullness of His worshippers. But although Vishnu is thus believed to have been situated beyond this universe, His occasional 'descent' or Avatara into this nether world, was also known to the Rishis of the Rig-Veda. The fifth of the well-known ten Avataras of Vishnu, is actually mentioned in several passages of the Rig-Veda. The Vamana Avatara of Vishnu appears to be nearest to the Age of the Rig-Veda and might have preceded its compilation by an interval of time which was sufficiently short to allow its impression to persist in the memory of those who were not very keen regarding His worship. Vamana is the last Avatara of Vishnu in the Satya Age.

The fact that the accounts of these Avataras of Vishnu that are found in the Puranas, happen to be supernatural need not prejudice us against their authenticity. Such a procedure will lead us to taboo the Bible and the Koran and Sree Chaitanya Charitamrita and to court the misfortune of leaving out of the consideration of history the substance of religion or to misstate it as unhistorical, thereby condemning the subject of History itself to the class of purely atheistical studies, and, therefore, fit to be shunned as tainted by partisan bias against Godhead or even as a snare, by all theistically disposed persons. History would indeed be incomplete, unwholesome and meaningless if it left out the all-important subject and stunt itself to the purely mundane aspect of our experience, under the untenable, mischievous and atheistical plea of scientific necessity.

But the mundane and the spiritual should of course be kept rigorously separate, as they really are so by their nature. Mundane matters should certainly be represented as mundane. They should not be allowed to pass in the name of the spiritual. This is the eternal line of demarcation that separates the material from the spiritual, i.e., the temporary and the untrue from the eternal and the absolutely True. If the office of the historian be to investigate into the Real Truth he cannot possibly find Him if he rigorously confines himself to the manipulation of untruth for his own particular satisfaction. By adopting such a procedure he will fail in his duty towards his subject, towards himself and

others. Therefore, the very first thing which he ought to do is to abandon once for all the so-called critical, or as it too often means, the sneering and worldly, attitude towards the supernatural for the utterly foolish reason that it does not obey those narrow canons gratuitously set up by himself and which are inapplicable to the Truth by being willfully based on the principles of limited space and time and an insatiable desire for the attainment of worldly advantages.

If this reasonable attitude of our natural partiality for the Real Truth, is adopted, our eyes would open of themselves and begin to distinguish between the grain and the chaff in the treatment of the history of the world. When the Vaishnava Acharyas declare that the only way, in which the individual soul engrossed in the materialistic outlook (bound jiva), can get rid of his ignorance of the Real Truth Who alone matters, is the constant perusal, listening to and contemplation of the supernatural Activities of the Descents (Avataras) of the Divinity, with faith and reverence, they do not refer by these terms to the erroneous concoctions of the human imagination but to the only history of the Divinity that is alone true in the judgment of those who are acquainted with it, both by realization in their life and by the study of the history of the truth. The objection that what is supernatural cannot exist at all under the conditions of time and space and, are, therefore, unreal and fictitious, is also contradicted by the actual experience of mankind who have, in the teeth of such objections, always believed in such happenings for the sound reason that nothing should be impossible with Godhead.

Once the force of the above argument is really admitted we are immediately relieved of the illogical bias that leads us to declare that history does not prove that the supernatural had ever happened at all. We should rather say that the supernatural never appeared as such to the blinded vision of unbelievers who have always formed the majority, as they do now, in this godless world. But such was the inexplicable force of those very. supernatural events that their reality was admitted by the best, i.e., by unworldly and pure minds of all Ages, and, on their authority, they have continued to be believed generally, although crudely, by all overwhelming majority of the peoples of all subsequent Ages.

Mahabharata— The prejudice of the critical school is due to its failure to distinguish between the supernatural and the unnatural or anti natural. This has led to the adumbration of the doctrine of miracles. The Divine law is never broken and is sufficiently capacious to accommodate within itself with perfect consistency both the natural and the supernatural. Those who suppose that they can detect a breach of the Law on the part of Godhead for the purpose of convincing (?) unbelievers, are sadly deluded, indeed. The supernatural happens to be supernatural because it is above or beyond the natural or limited. Anything that is limited, whether it is called a 'miracle' or by any other name, cannot be anything but limited. And for this reason the supernatural lies beyond our present limited understanding. The Avataras of Vishnu belong to the category of the supernatural and cannot be perceived by any of the senses or be apprehended by the materialized understanding if such Avatara or Vishnu's descent into the finite world takes place even before our very eyes and in these days of the noon-day light (or darkness?) of almost unqualified empiricism.

It is not the paucity of materials, which exist and have existed in abundance from the remotest antiquity stored up in the pages of the innumerable Scriptures, that is the difficulty of the historian of theism. The difficulty is to convince the sophisticated reader regarding its proper place in History.

Before the advent of Buddha the Vaishnavite or theistic thought had already been recorded in a vast literature. The older Puranas still existed and the Mahabharata had been recently compiled. The Vedas in their Samhita portion could not avoid all reference to it and the Upanishads are altogether theistic, containing, as they do, the rich harvest of the realizations of the Age of contemplation. The Vaishnavite thought maintains its distinctive character in the sutra period and the Grihya and Sautra sutras are full of Puranic matter. These together with the Tapanis and the Vedangas, which had their theistic group of works, formed the source from which the Vaishnava Acharyas have drawn their materials from the third century B.C. onwards within the comparatively recent period of recorded History.

The present classical Sanskrit language came into use about four thousand years ago. It rendered obsolete the older works and replaced them by books written in the new language.

Anti-Vishnuvite thought is as old as the beginning of history. The Avatars of Vishnu are declared to have been due to the prevalence of atheism. The portions of the Vedas devoted to the cult of fruitive works, as we have already observed, belong to the anti-Vishnuvite school under the garb of friendly co-existence. This is an ordinary and very old rule. On the side of philosophy we find a continuous development of atheism which runs parallel to the Vishnuvite thought and culminates in the atheistical schools of the subsequent period under the garb of Scriptural sanction. This mixing up of theism with atheism in the Scriptures themselves, is quite natural and is due to the cunning of a group of intellectual atheists.

But within the atheistic camp this caution was not observed by all. Buddha was opposed to the fruitive yajnas of the Vedas and was Himself a leading Vishnuvite having been recognized as the ninth ,Avatara of Vishnu by the theistic school. But his pseudo-followers, misunderstanding the anti-Vedic attitude of their Master and by abusing the method of abstruse discussion which He had employed against the sophists, drifted into nihilism which was by that time a recognized body of opinion handed down by a regular chain of former teachers. The active impulse which had produced the yajna form of worship was restated by Buddha to counteract its abuse at the hands of the fruitive school of the Vedists, so as to include ethical conduct. But Buddha's followers separated ethics from its theistic purpose and applied it in its purely mundane form to the attainment of a negative spiritual result. This misunderstanding the active principle underlying the method of worshipping Godhead by yajnas practiced by the early theists, by those who professed to follow Buddha, was fraught with far-reaching consequences to humanity from the effects of which the modern world is still grievously suffering.

Just as the intellectual distortion of the principle underlying yajna led to the

atheistical ethics of the pseudo-Buddhists, a somewhat similar distortion of the principle underlying Vishnuvite archana led to the development of the cult of the Jains.

The archana as the method of Divine worship was elaborated in the Agama consisting of its twenty-four Samhitas. The Vedas are in old Sanskrit and were for that reason called the Nigama. The Agama was so named as having been written in the then new language to distinguish it from the Nigama. The Vishnuvite Agama bears the name of Pancharatra . The Pancharatra contains the rules for the regulation of the spiritual life of the Vaishnavas. These are the sattvika Tantras. There are also rajasa and tamasa Tantras.

The term Pancharatra means that which contains knowledge about the five subjects, viz., tapa, pundra, nama, mantram and worship. It is the sattvata or Vishnuvite Tantra. The term Tantra, which means that which elaborates, is ordinarily applied to the rajasa and tamasa Tantras. The Pancharatra instructs regarding the application of those theistic principles which are declared in the spiritual portion of the Vedas, illustrated concretely in the narratives of the Puranas and collated in the Sutras.

All those are the extensions of the real Veda. If the Veda is conceived as a person the Upanishads may be regarded as his intellect and the Vedangas as his different organs for the performance of his function (karmanga). The Vedangas are six in number, viz, (1) Siksha, i.e., intonation, (2) Kalpa, i.e., procedure, (3) Nirukta, i.e., dictionary, (4) Vyakarana, i.e., the science of sound, (5) Jyotisha, i.e., astronomy including astrology dealing with space, time and direction, and (6) Chhandas. These furnished the starting point of the various physical sciences of the subsequent rationalistic Age in which there was a great advance in practical facilities of all kinds.

The aphoristic literature which took upon itself the collation of the Vedangas, led to the Grihya and Srauta sutras, the forerunners of the Pancharatra or the Tantra literature.

The Dharmashastras or Smritis belong to a later period. The twenty Dharmashastras which are also divided into the sattvika, rajasa and tamasa, are concerned with the regulation of the whole life of individuals. The sattvika smritis, viz. , those of Vashista, Harita, Vyasa, Parasara, Bharadvaja, Kasyapa, are categorically distinguished from the rest. The clue to this distinction is furnished by such old shlokas as state definitely the principle that the king possessed the authority to frame laws for the regulation of the secular affairs of the people but had no power over the Brahmanas and the Vaishnavas. "Sarvatra skhitadesah sapta-dwipaikadandadhrik Anyatra brahmana kuladanyatra chytagotratah (Bk. 4XXI.12.) The rajasa and tamasa Dharmashastras were made by royal authority and are of a miscellaneous and secular character. They had no jurisdiction over the intellectual communities. The Dharmashastras do not belong to the class of revealed literature. The Pancharatras bear the names of persons to whom they were spoken by Narayana and are in the form of conversations between Siva and Parvati.

The Pancharatra s are thus an authoritative expansion and supplement of the Veda (Truth or Absolute knowledge) in the same way as the Puranas. There are very early statements in the body of the technical Vedic literature itself to the effect that the Puranas are an integral part of the revealed literature. Those passages have been pointed out by the later Vishnuvite Acharyas. It is specifically stated in the Mahabharata and by Manu that the Veda should be supplemented by the 'Itihasa' (History) and the 'Purana'. Because the Veda is supplemented by the Purana, therefore the latter is called 'Purana'. The Madhyandin Smriti classes 'Itihasa', and 'Purana', with the Vedic Samhitas, as forming the body of the revealed literature.

The principal sattvata, i.e., theistic or Vishnuvite, Pancharatra or Tantric, works are the Hayasirsha, Prahlada and, especially, Narada, Pancharatra. The names of the six sattvata Puranas are Vishnu, Narada, Bhagavata, Garuda, Padma and Varaha. The six rajasa Puranas are named Brahmanda, Brahmavaivarta, Markandeya, Bhabishyat, Vamana and Brahma. The tamasa Puranas are Matsya, Kurma, Linga, Siva, Skanda and Agni. The sattvika Puranas are stated to confer emancipation, the rajasa lead to paradise, and the tamasa to hell. This principle

holds in regard to the Tantras. The distinction between sattvika, rajasika and tamasika shastras is also defined in another way. The sattvika shastras are those that establish that Godhead is full of all the Qualities and is the Highest of all. Those shastras that declare the superiority of Brahma, Agni and Saraswati, are rajasika. Those that state the superiority of Siva and recommend the Sivalingam as object of worship, are tamasika Tantras. Sattvika persons worship Vishnu, rajasika persons Brahma and the tamasika worship Rudra (vide Padma and Garuda Puranas). The superiority of the sattvika Purana. is nowhere explicitly challenged.

The position we have reached so far may be summarized as follows. Godhead is the Divine Person who is supernatural, supersensuous and situated beyond the utmost limits of empiric knowledge. Knowledge is of two kinds, viz., (1) para, i.e., transcendental or absolute, and (2) apara, that is, non-final. Rik, Saman, Yajus, Atharva and Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Chhandas and Jyotisha, etc., and all those branches of knowledge that follow these, belong to the category of the apara-Vidya. But Godhead is never accessible to this limiting knowledge which is subject to modification by time. The shastras in which the Unchangeable and Absolute Entity is the subject-matter of investigation, belong to the category of 'para-Vidya'. The sattvata shastras belong to this class.

Thus theistic knowledge is found to be present, only to a very slight extent, in the extant Vedic Samhitas and their adjective literature. The originals of those parts of the Vedic works from which the sattvata Puranas once derived their theistic accounts have almost wholly disappeared in course of time, having become obsolete, probably on account of the Sanskritization of those works in the form of the present Purana Therefore, the present Puranas, although they happen to be in modern garb, preserve the theistic tradition, the Vedic or old linguistic sources of which are for some reason or other not available to us at present. But the narratives contained in these Puranas belong to a period that is also anterior to the period of the compilation of the Rik Samhita by an immense interval of time Among the Sutra works we are fortunate in possessing a few that are theistic, viz. those made by Sandilya, Bharadwaja and several other Rishis. The Bhikshu Sutra and Karmandi Parasariya Sutra were written long

before the Vyasa Sutra. The bhakti sutras became current at the time of the composition of the present sattvata Pancharatra works. The sattvata sutras are composed in a way that is different from that of the rajasika and tamasika Tantras. The lines of thought designated as Bhagavata, Vaishnava, Naishkarma, Baikhanasa, Pancharatrika, etc., were prevalent in the pre-Vedic period. Thereafter, when the theistic thought suffered a partial eclipse by the preponderance of philosophical schools that were addicted to materialistic methods, the old theistic tradition was revived in the form of the present Puranas.

The atheistic rationalism which subsequently culminated in historical Buddhism, was already in existence as early as the period of the Nrisingha and Vamana Avatars. Henotheism and pantheism of the Vedic and cognate schools present the poly-theistic or positive aspect of this line of thought which is negatively represented by historical Buddhism and Jainism and later in a marked form, by Sankara who recognized and clearly brought out the philosophical affinity between the two branches of the same line of thought and thus re-established friendly relationship between the two groups

This atheistical pseudo-rationalism in its palmy days also coincided with the period of the triumphs of the Indian intellect in the different fields of empiric knowledge. This would not appear to be very- wonderful if we consider the present state of affairs in Europe. The Protestant movement degenerated into commercialism and the almost exclusive pursuit of material well-being which has given its secular tone to present western society. Great material prosperity is not a necessary indication of progress in spiritual science. Devotion to material facilities may be rewarded by success which, if it be not controlled by a clear spiritual purpose, may be of the nature of a nemesis to confirm the successful person and community in their unspiritual course. The salutary aim should be not merely to juxtapose the two but to subordinate the material to the spiritual. This has never yet been practically possible in the world.

Indian thought may be the subject of study in both its theistic and atheistic aspects under which latter is included, unfortunately, its secular systems. Those

who lament that the absence of material prosperity of India today is due to its exclusive spiritual pre-occupation, may do well to take note of this. The theistic thought proper cannot be subordinate to the aim of material improvement. The two do not equate at all, being on different planes. A community that adopts the theistic course will be purified in its morals, improved in unity, and direct all its energies to those activities that are conducive to spiritual progress. It will be contented and orderly in all its parts in as much as it will have a common objective which is situated outside the limits of all clashing, temporary interests. There should be no limited, conflicting interests in a community regulated by the higher principle. Such a society will possess all the requisites of spiritual well-being which will prevent it from being disturbed by the operation of any unbridled disruptive ambitions of its constituent units. The nature of the ideal of one universal community will become clearer as the spiritual position itself clarifies in course of this narrative. It is, however, necessary to guard against possible misconception at the outset in view of current and deep-seated prejudices against religion for purely worldly reasons.

The political greatness of Magadha belongs to the Age of the progress of Indian empiric knowledge. The Puranas lament the final corruption of politics in the hands of the 'upstart' kings of Magadha who favoured the indiscriminate subordination of the spiritual to the secular authority in defiance of the methods of the theistic periods. Under the kings of the dynasties of Magadha Buddhism became the official and the predominant religion of India. But India progressed materially. Secular progress also characterized Indian society under the Gupta Emperors who belonged officially to the henotheistic cult of panchopasana or the worship of five principal gods, viz., Sakti, the Sun, Ganapati, Siva and Vishnu.

This worship of five gods (panchopasana) is the religion of the large majority of the 'Hindus' of the present day and requires a few words of comment as regards its origin and character and its place in the general scheme of religious evolution.

This worship by the fivefold orthodox Hindu community, corresponding to the

five gods, viz., the Saktas, Sauras, Ganapatyas, Saivas, and henotheistic (panchopasaka) Vaishnavas, has prevailed in India from the remotest antiquity.

The tendencies of the human mind are of two kinds, viz., (1) those that are directed towards material objects, and (2) those that are turned towards the highest good. From the first of these issue such activities as those undertaken for the nourishment of the body, the building of a home, marriage, production of offspring, the pursuit of different secular studies, the earning of wealth, physical sciences, arts, government and the accumulation of merit by good deeds, etc., etc. Many of these worldly activities of men are identical with those of the lower animals; but the purposive utilitarian efforts of man are superior to similar instinctive endeavours of the lower animals. But men, even although they may carry on all efforts and acts conducive to worldly advantage, are considered to be only two-legged animals unless they make an attempt to place themselves under the guidance of their spiritual nature. The function of the pure soul is the natural religion of all animate beings. In the natural state the function that is proper to the soul is fully manifest. In the bound state this natural function, or religion, is reduced to the form of 'quest' after the highest good. The worldly activities already mentioned attain their fulfillment only if they are performed in subordination to the spiritual purpose; otherwise they fail to establish the highest position of man. Therefore, the first appearance of the effort for the highest good, differentiating itself from the exclusive pursuit of worldly interests, may be termed as a slight turning toward Godhead. From this stage to the highest spiritual state there is all infinity of gradations.

The Sakta religion is the name of the search of Godhead in the material world. In this religion material Nature is observed to be recognized as the supreme Regulatrix of the world. The customs and practices that are enjoined in the Sakta religion (dharma) are suitable for the stage of slight Godwardness. In reward to worldly people who have not yet begun to inquire after the highest good the customs recommended by the Sakta dharma may prove attractive and help to bring them over to the principle of the summum bonum. The religion that worships material energy is, indeed, the first spiritual effort of the bound soul and is extremely beneficial for people situated at that stage.

When the Godward tendency has acquired strength, in the second stage of advance, the superiority and efficacy of heat among material objects being noticed, the Sun as the source of all heat is accepted as the object of worship. This leads to the origin of the Saura cult. Subsequently, when even heat also comes to be regarded as material and lifeless, the principle of animation is recognized as superior to it and gives rise to the worship of Ganapati, who represents the principle of animality. This is the third stage. In the fourth stage, the pure human consciousness comes to be worshipped as Siva and gives rise to the Saiva creed. In the fifth stage appears the Vaishnava religion or the worship of the Supreme Soul as different from the fractional soul of the individual.

The religion that seeks the highest good is naturally divided into the above five grades. Therefore, in all countries these five religions have been prevalent in the different periods under different names. If we consider all the different religions that are current in this and other countries they can be put under one or other of the above classes. The Christian and Muhammedan bear a strong affinity to the Vaishnava religion of the henotheistic (panchopasaka) school. Buddhism and Jainism are similar to the Saiva cult. This is the scientific explanation of the differences between the different religions. Those who regard their own particular religion as the only true religion and stigmatize other religions as irreligion or pseudo-religion, are disabled by such prejudices from ascertaining the real Truth. As a matter of fact, having regard to the different stages, the respective religions should be considered as really different. But the religion that is natural to the soul is only one. In the graded condition of humanity it is not the duty of those who look to the essence of the matter to ignore this inevitable gradation of religion. In undertaking this discussion of the natural religion of the proper self of all animate beings we have no desire of withholding regard that is due to the respective grades of the different religions, in their natural and scientific order of precedence.

The eternal (sattvata) theistic function (Vaishnava dharma) is the only religion

(dharma) that is proper to the soul; or, in other words, it is the eternal religion of all animation. But the Vaishnava religion that is found to exist in the community which professes illusionism (mayavada) is only a caricature of the religion of the pure soul. The so-called Vaishnava religion of the henotheistic (panchopasaka) school when it becomes free from mundane references, that is to say, from illusionism (mayavada), thereby attains to the nature of the eternal function (sattvata dharma). The distinction due to Dualism, Dualistic-Dualistic-non-Dualism, Absolute Monism and Distinctive Monism, professed respectively by the four theistic schools of the pure Vaishnavas, are merely indicative of the diversified character of the Vaishnava thought itself. This difference of school (sampradaya) is not due to any real difference of principle, Mayavada is the one creed which is really opposed to the principle of devotion. Those Vaishnavas who profess Mayavada are not theistic Vaishnavas at all.

The religious systems educed out of the perception of physical Nature, always fortified themselves by reference to old precedents and the Veda or the revealed Word. The philosophical systems which assumed their regular form in the sutra period, elaborated in the commentaries, furnished them with ready-made arguments, justifying their particular methods of worship and doctrine. All these were interconnected by their unity of outlook which was mundane and with the fruitive works and the gods and goddesses of the karmakandiya portions of the Veda and of the Tantras that were not spiritual. This is the tangled web of the current religious (?) life of India. It possesses an external appearance of being based upon the general body of the Scriptures of this country although showing a variety of faces that are by no means easily reconcilable with one another. Any systematic friendly treatment of current Hinduism is the despair alike of historians and philosophers. But in spite of their absurdities, their materialism which is often frankly explicit and their want of internal homogeneity, they have always impressed both outside and inside critics as presenting only the exterior or the covering matter that hides the sterling truth lying buried underneath. There are real grounds for such suspicion.

We have dealt elsewhere with the non-theistical philosophical systems which

arose during the sutra period or the beginning of the rationalistic Age and also with the Buddhistic and Jain systems. The philosophy of theism was collated in the Brahmana sutra, known also as the Vedanta sutra. The Brahmana sutra produced its commentators through the agencies of both the theistic and non-theistic schools. The most famous, and one of the earliest extant, commentary belonging to the latter class, is that of Sankaracharya in which he expounds the Vedanta sutra with wonderful dialectic skill to prove the exclusive monistic view. Armed with this, Sankara, by appealing to the Authority of revealed theism, succeeded in patching up an apparent reconciliation among all the warring non theistic creeds by throwing over them the deceptive coating of Illusionism and winning over even the followers of Buddhism, who had till then been openly hostile to the Vedic tradition, within its roomy fold. Although the other rival philosophical systems were not altogether driven out of the field and even continued to inspire the various non-theistic creeds, the superior logic of the system of Sankara secured more or less the approval of all non-theistic cults, especially as it tolerated and supported the practices of all of them, differing apparently only in regard to their methods in pursuance of the common end to be attained by those methods.

The effective and uncompromising opponent of Sankara was the Vishnuvite thought itself which could not be stamped out by Sankara. The commentaries of Sankara were refuted by Sree Ramanuja and Madhvacharya who re-stated the theistic position by carefully exposing the errors of Sankara and laying bare his real object, which was different from his profession. Under the guise of loyalty to the revealed Word (sruti) Sankara proved even a greater enemy, on account of his profession of loyalty, of the theistic thought which was the real philosophy of the revealed Word, than even its open foes.

The Vishnuvite thought had been vigorously reinforced by the compilation of the two great epics, viz., the Mahabharata and the Ramayana which in their present forms contain a good deal of interpolated matter. The process which was in progress, of rewriting in the new Sanskrit language the contents of the older original books, furnished the opportunity, which was not missed by the opponents of the theistic thought, of consciously. or unconsciously importing

into the Vishnuvite Narrative of the Epics a good deal of the thoughts and ideas of the other creeds. The Mahabharata was at once recognized by the Vishnuvite teacher as the text-book of their religion. The significance of the Teachings and Activities of Sree Krishna was, however, most fully and clearly brought out in Sreemad Bhagavat Purana which devoted itself exclusively to the task of finally separating the grain from the chaff and presenting the history of theism in its unadulterated and highest form of perfection embodied in the Teachings and Activities of Sree Krishna. Sreemad Bhagavatam is the gathering up and the final and complete statement of the theistic position successively revealed in course of the Ages.

There is a class of thinkers, who without belonging to the school of successively heard transcendental sound, affect to value a religion in proportion to the antiquity of its origin. Revelation, according to such people, even if it were admitted as a true fact, by way of argument, could have taken place only in very remote times or at the very beginning of creation, and is, therefore, necessarily enshrined in the oldest (?) of all the extant Scripture, viz, the Rik Samhita. On this ground they are not disposed to regard as belonging to the class of revealed Scriptures any works that in their estimation appear to belong to an Age later than the Vedic. This view is directly opposed to such statements as that the Rik Veda itself is outside 'Brahma Vidya' or 'para Vidya', the knowledge of the Absolute. We have tried to explain the significance of such and similar statements that refuse to let the Brahman as transcendental Sound to be labeled, catalogued and finally closed in the manner that the physical scientist would like to do according to his limited notions that refer exclusively to the finite objects of this world. The 'Word of God' is not anything that is capable of being limited by space and time. That is also the reason why we are told that it is not possible for us to have any idea of Him except by the process of revelation. That which is unrelated to this world cannot be known by any kind of mundane reference, gross or subtle, physical or mental. Such prejudices, which the impartial voice of logic emphatically condemns, should be completely eradicated if we really want to acquire the spiritual perspective proper.

The Puranas, in their spiritual significance, are eternal. They are accordingly spoken of as appearing and disappearing, in accordance with the strict logic of unadulterated theism. The Age or country or person to which they choose to appear, does not in the least affect their eternal character. They are neither old nor new but eternal, i.e., situated beyond the scope of past, present and future. Unless this is remembered no one need pretend that he really accepts, tentatively or even for the sake of argument, the logical implications of theism. The esoteric side which alone is present to the view of limited minds represents the misleading view of the Absolute. This esoteric vision requires to be temporarily discarded in order to be able to loyally follow a theistic narrative that is derived from unimpeachable sources and for that reason alone entitled to such hearing from every one of us, for our own benefit.

In the light of the above observations it is possible to understand the meaning of those passages of the Scriptures that try to define the position of Sreemad Bhagavatam. It is the only uncontaminated source of the revealed religion in its purity and completeness, available to us. Sreemad Bhagavatam is the explanation of the Brahma sutra; it settles the significance of the Mahabharata; it is of the nature of the commentary of the formula for delivering from worldliness (gayatri), the transcendental Sound Who is, as it were, the germ of all knowledge regarding the Absolute; and is the fulfillment of all the statements of the Vedas. 'The substance of all the philosophy of the Vedas is called Sreemad Bhagavatam. Suka churned the butter from the curd of the four Vedas and Parikshit ate of the same. After Sree Krishna returned to His own Abode the Sun in the shape of this Purana has arisen of late for the enlightenment of the blinded souls of this Age of discord' The position of the Sreemad Bhagavatam as being the premier among the sattvata Puranas is attested by various passages in the different Puranas.

The historian who maybe obsessed by his partiality for antiquity, being so wedded to the cult of time and space as to be unable to live in the pure atmosphere that is free from those dark vapours of this mundane world, should do well to take the help of those philosophers who possess a longer vision than his and who may warn him against riding an old error too hard as it is bound to

expire in the process, if, indeed, it be his purpose to preserve it for the particular benefit of nobody.

This is so as regards the so-called historical position of Sreemad Bhagavatam. The nature of the actual contents of this unique work cannot be indicated in a few words. By the side of the revealed Word the Avatars of Vishnu constitute a Source of transcendental knowledge forming the truly historical manifestation of the Word of God. The Word of Godhead tells us about Godhead, His Activities, Qualities, Abode and Servitors. The Avatars are the descent of these into this world in a shape that is visible to all of us in the forms of apparent mundane occurrences, by reason of the mundane nature of our present vision. The revealed Word is explained and corroborated by the narrative of the deeds of the Avatars. If the gayatri is comparable to the first appearance of the bud, Sreemad Bhagavatam is like the full-blown flower, being the inspired narrative of the successive Avatars of Vishnu, culminating in the advent of Sree Krishna Himself, into this world.

Sree Krishna Chaitanya's career and teaching offers the illustration of the Vaishnava religion in its highest development. The sankirtana of Krishna propounded by Sree Chaitanya is the highest form of worship of this religion, being equivalent to the loving service of Sree Krishna, as practiced by the milkmaids of Braja, the form itself being the method as well as the object of this transcendental worship. The nature of these will be explained in course of the narrative.

But we would avail of this opportunity to ask the reader not to accept the current practices of the pseudo-followers of Sree Chaitanya in Bengal and elsewhere as the religion taught by Sree Chaitanya. We would also request him to forget what is offered in the pages of certain modern writers as the so-called history of the movement. Both are concoctions of the imaginations of people who are themselves utterly ignorant of the transcendental nature of the spiritual function. Such travesty of the Truth as is offered by the pseudo-Vaishnavas and empiric writers, is the necessary consequence of attempting to practice and explain the religion by worldly people, in as much as its nature cannot be

understood by the limited intelligence of persons leading a worldly life who may give themselves out to be the followers of Sree Chaitanya or who may be betrayed by their self-sufficiency born of utter ignorance to undertake to write its history. We may quote again the dictum of Sree Chaitanya, which is so apposite in this connection, viz. 'no one is fit to teach the religion who does not practice it himself.'

The psilanthropic (prakrita sahajia) cult passing under the name of Vaishnavism, is allied to the practices of those who follow the teaching of the tamasika Tantras. This class of Tantras, which had their zealous followers in the tracts of Chittagong (ChattogRama), led in those parts to the practice of revolting sexual excesses in the name of religion, and from there the contagion was carried to different parts of the country which also had their own tamasika Tantrikas by whom they were welcomed. This feature of decadent Buddhism is quite well known. The natural transcendental function (aprakrita sahaja dharma) that finds expression in the genuine poems of Chandidas and Vidyapati, which were approved by Sree Chaitanya, belongs to the category of unalloyed devotion to Godhead. But those songs that now pass under the names of Vidyapati and Chandidas have suffered interpolation and alteration in the hands of the sensualists of former and present generations. The sensual feature is altogether absent from the practices recommended by Sree Chaitanya both by His own conduct as well as by His teachings. But many pseudo-sects that profess at the present day to be the followers of Sree Chaitanya try to pass off the sensual cult as the religion of pure love for Godhead taught by Sree Chaitanyadeva. The congregational chanting (sankirtana) as performed by these pseudo-Vaishnavas is nothing but a musical dissipation that falls in with their other taste for unbridled sexuality. It will appear in its due place in this narrative that the congregational chanting (sankirtana) propounded by Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is something that is altogether different, both as regards its method and object, from what now ordinarily passes under its name. In the concluding chapter of this work we will return to the details of the history and shall try to supply the reader with the real account of the development of pseudo-sankirtana among the sensualists. The process of misrepresenting the pure Vishnuvite religion by pseudo-followers and opponents in the various

forms of pseudo-Vaishnavism and non-Vaishnavism, which operated with such signal consequences in the past, have not been less active during the four centuries that have elapsed since the disappearance of Sree Chaitanya, to obscure and misrepresent the religion of pure love for Godhead, taught and practiced by Him.

The history of India, written too exclusively by ethnologist and archaeologists, has left out of account the factor that really matters, viz., the substance of its spiritual culture which possesses a continuous and recoverable history. Much work for the elucidation of the religious history of India has been done by foreign empiric scholars whose judgment cannot, however, be relied upon in essential matters which are doubly opposed to their experience and local mode of life. The 'Orion' of Balgangadhar Tilak made a nearer approach to the true method. But Tilak was swept off his legs by his association with physical efforts, to the detriment of his intellectual and theological speculations. Those who are sincerely anxious to work in the field of spiritual culture must first of all get rid of all lesser considerations than the Absolute Truth, both in their intellectual and worldly lives, as 'he alone is fit to be a teacher of the religion who also practices the same'.

The History of India of the pre-Christian period is still enveloped in the darkness of obscurity. But from the mediaeval period we are on firmer ground. There is no lack of materials from firsthand informants in writing the life of Sree Chaitanya.

I shall conclude this chapter with a few words of observation on the system of caste. Sree Chaitanya is wrongly supposed to have been an opponent of the caste-system. As a matter of fact Sree Chaitanya kept strictly aloof from secular society and politics. He never encouraged social rupture in any form. Spiritual society, according to Sree Chaitanya, is only camp-life. Theists alone are in a position to live such a life. Sree Chaitanya called into Himself particular individuals from all ranks of the then existing society. He formed the spiritual association of such individuals. His householder-followers did not bring over the members of their households, nor their relatives, into the religion. It is not

a hereditary community that can be formed on the spiritual basis. It was also, therefore, a proselytizing religion in its external appearance. Several of its leading Acharyas came from the lowest ranks of the orthodox society or even from outside. Thakur Haridas was a Muhammedan by birth

The subject of 'varna' hinges on the answer to the question "Who is Brahmana?" There are numerous passages in the Scripture which contain a clear answer to the question. There is a long discussion on this point in the Vajrasuchikopanishad which, after rejecting for different reasons answers that identify the Brahmana with (1) the individual soul himself, the physical body, (3) the species, (4) the cognitive principle, (5) the principle of activity, arrives at the conclusion that the Brahmana is the possessor of certain qualities. 'He knows the real nature of the self and by reason of such knowledge remains always free from any defects due to greed, anger, etc., is possessed of equanimity and self-control, is uninfluenced by caprices, malice, thirst, desire or infatuation, with mind unaffected by arrogance, egotism, etc. This is the purpose of the Sruti, Smriti, Itihasa and the Puranas. No other view of Brahmanism tenable, In the Chanddogya Upanishad we have the following, "Gautama said,, 'Fairlooking one, to which lineage (gotra) do you belong?' " He answered, "I do not know to which gotra I belong. I asked my- mother. she said to me, 'In my youth in course of ministering to many persons, as their servant, I begot you as my son. I do not really know to which gotra you belong. My name is Jabala. Your name is Satyakama.' I am thus Satyakama Jabala." To this Gautama replied, 'Child, the truth which you have spoken cannot be given out by any one who is not a Brahmana . Therefore, are you Brahmana. I accept you, good-looking one; collect the requisites for the performance of the formal rites of the occasion. I will admit you as pupil for the study of the Scriptures. (I will invest you with the sacrificial thread of a Brahmana.) Do not fall away from the truth.' This attitude of Gautama is thus described in the Saman Samhita, 'In a Brahmana straightforward sincerity and in a Sudra crookedness respectively, are to be found. Haridrumata Gautama by considering this difference of quality bestowed on Satyakama the right of the Brahmana to study the Scriptures (upanayana), or purification by the gayatri.' " 'We do not know whether we are Brahmanas or non-Brahmanas,' this doubt arose in the minds of the truth-

loving Rishis” (text of the Sruti quoted by Nilakantha). In the Geeta Sree Krishna says, “I have created the four varnas in accordance with difference in the qualities and works of different persons. Although I am the Lord, know Me as not the Creator of those institutions.” That is to say, the institutions of ‘varna’ and ‘ashrama’ are created by the deluding energy of Godhead Who in His proper Nature is indifferent to them. In the Puranas and Mahabharata there are long lists of persons who acquired the status of Brahmanas although they were not born in Brahmana families. The principle underlying the institution is stated most clearly in a shloka of the Mahabharata (Anusasana parva, 143—50, 51) which may be rendered thus, ‘Birth, purificatory ceremony, the study of the Vedas or descent,—none of these is the cause of the status of the twiceborn; one’s disposition is the only cause. If a Sudra is found to possess the proper disposition, he attains to the condition of the Brahmana ., This britta-Brahmanata, or Brahmana hood by disposition, is the real principle underlying the division into varnas, and is attested by numerous passages that are to be found in all the Scriptures. While there is not a single passage which declares that Brahmana hood is due to birth alone, there are other passages which declare the inevitable loss of the status of a Brahmana and lapse into that of a Sudra with deterioration of disposition.

In the case of the Brahmana there are three births. The first of these is the seminal birth on coming out of the womb of the mother. After the upanayana (bringing of the boy to the preceptor, i.e., entrance into pupilage for Vedic studies) the second birth takes place; and, thereafter, on the attainment of initiation into the sacrifice, the third birth occurs (Manu, 2/260). Thus there are three kinds of birth, viz., (1) seminal (shaukra), (2) through gayatri (savitrya), and (3) through initiation (daikshya). This is expressed by the word tribrit which means these three kinds of birth. If a person, born in a Brahmana family, remaining ignorant of the Veda, or the Truth regarding the Divinity, manifest extreme arrogance on the strength of his possession of the sacrificial thread, by right of seminal birth, for such sin that Brahmana is designated by the name of ‘animal’ (pashu) (Atri Samhita, shloka 372). According to Manu, 2/168, the twice-born who, without devoting himself to the study of the Vedas, applies himself to other matters, becomes thereby a Sudra even during his lifetime with

his whole family. The Padma Purana defines the term Brahmana bruva (pseudo-Brahmana). "The Brahmana who after undergoing purification (?) by the tenfold samskara does not perform either the eternal (nitya) or adventitious (naiimittika) functions, is called a 'Brahmana-bruva'. That twice-born person who having undergone niyama, brata and all the samskaras does not yet perform any of the duties enjoined by the Vedas, is a Brahmana -bruva (pseudo-Brahmana). If a person, who has obtained purification (samskara) and the sacrificial thread, neglects the regular performance of duties that are enjoined and does not study the Vedas, he is to be considered a Brahmana-bruva (pseudo-Brahmana). He who does not himself study the highest Veda-shastras nor teaches them to disciples, although such a person may happen to possess the tenfold samskara (purification), is nevertheless a Brahmana bruva (pseudo-Brahmana)." This is confirmed by Kulluka Bhatta in his remarks on Manu, 7-85, "the person born of a Brahmana family who, although devoid of the performance of the duties proper for a Brahmana , passes himself off as a Brahmana, is designated by the term 'Brahmana-bruva' (pseudo-Brahmana)," etc., etc.

The position is thus summed up in a shloka of the Sreemad Bhagavatam (7-11-35), 'by- those signs that have been enumerated, which indicate the respective varnas of men, the varna of a person is to be settled.' This is corroborated by Mahabharata, Santi parva, 189-8. The varna institution as found in the Scriptures is an individualistic classification of man according to disposition. The necessity for such institution is thus stated, 'Divine Vishnu is worshipped by a person who practices the functions (dharma) enjoined by the institutions of varna and asrama. There is no other way of pleasing Him than by such activities as are enjoined by the institutions of varna and asrama. In the Satya Yuga there was only one varna. The division into four varnas was made in the Treta Age. In the Kali Age cannibals (rakshasas) are born in the Brahmana families for troubling those whose tenfold purification (samskara), pursuit of Vedic studies, etc., have lost their vitality.' Accordingly 'as in the Kali Age Brahmana s by seminal birth do not possess any purity and are like the Sudras

they are not purified by following the Vedic path. They are purified by the pancharatric method alone'. 'Because just as by some particular chemical process the bell-metal is transformed into gold in the same way by the sattvata Tantric diksha (elaborated spiritual initiation) every one is enabled to acquire the nature of a Bipra.' The words of Digdarsini, quoted by Sree Sanatana Goswami, declare that the status of a twice-born belongs to all men after initiation.

Initiation (diksha) is of two kinds, viz., (1) Vedic, and (2) in conformity with the Vedas. Of these the second is again of two kinds, viz., (1) Pauranic, or (2) Pancharatric. The difference between them consists in this that the Vedic diksha is the initiation of the duly purified twice-born considered as a fit person for receiving spiritual enlightenment. The Pauranic diksha is initiation of an unfit person on the assumption of fitness. The Pancharatric diksha is the initiation of an unfit person with the object of ensuring his fitness. Of these the Vedic initiation is ruled out as inadmissible in the Kali Age. Sree Haribhaktivilas gives the preference to the Pancharatric (tantric) diksha over the Pauranic. The diksha of Sudras formulated by the smartas, who belong to the creed of the panchoasakas and who favour exclusively the principle of seminal descent, is not entitled to be called diksha in any sense. At the time of Sree Chaitanya the Pancharatric diksha alone was in use as the Panchopasaka (i.e., atheistic) smartas had not been able to obtain such a great influence over society by that period as they have now. The subsequent disuse of the Pancharatric diksha by the so-called Vaishnava Acharyas of a later day who were under the thumb of the smartas, will be described in due course.

Diksha is so called by savants well versed in the knowledge of the Divinity because it confers the spiritual knowledge (i.e., the knowledge of one's relationship with Godhead) and destroys sinfulness with its root-cause.' The upanayana corresponds to matriculation or admission into the path of the true knowledge. the diksha corresponds to graduation, i.e., the actual attainment of the enlightened state, or, according to the Pancharatric method, its actual attainment in the future if the conditions enjoined by the process are fulfilled. One becomes a Brahmana on the attainment of such knowledge. It is this

spiritual status that is referred to in such passages as in Brihad., 3-9-10, 'Gargi, he who having known the Divine Truth thereafter leaves this world is alone a Brahmana,' and Brihad., 4-4-21, 'the intelligent Brahmana having learnt about the Brahman from the Scriptures will endeavour to cultivate love for Him,. Thereupon he is called Vaishnava, as being related to Vishnu. The Vaishnava is thus higher than all the varnas. The condition of the Brahmana is included in and surpassed by that of the Vaishnava.

Britta-Brahmana ta (the status of the Brahmana by disposition) is the condition precedent to the attainment of the higher status of the Vaishnava or servant of Vishnu, in accordance with the teaching of the Scriptures. The status of a Brahmana resting on seminal birth alone is nowhere mentioned in the Scriptures. One of the very first steps that is required for the re-establishment of the spiritual (daiva) varnasrama institution is to make britta-Brahmana ta the legal institution in order to ensure its practical recognition as the genuine Scriptural institution by all communities and the re-establishment of this proper gradation in the Vaishnava communities (sampradayas). The form of britta-Brahmana ta is prevalent in the Ramanandi community. It is the basis of the arrangement laid down in the Satkriyasaradipika.

The Brahma movement, which at one time applied itself to the reform of religion in Bengal, has now become almost a purely social movement and has cut itself completely away from the revealed Scriptures. Its founder Raja Rammohan Roy became latterly inclined towards mundane facilities. It is such worldly considerations that also lie at the root of the subsequent split in the Brahma community. The intellectual vigour which at one time distinguished the community has practically left it and gone over to the Theosophists who are careful not to commit themselves in spiritual matters to anything definite. The position of the Theosophists is the intellectual counterpart of the social ideal of the Brahmos to which the latter attach supreme importance. The Brahmos want to do away with caste, as it stands in the way of mundane facilities. But organized society is in every sense better than indiscriminate individualism. The Brahma program offers only the individualistic in place of the communal. All mundane systems have their special defects. No real progress towards the

spiritual state is possible by the adoption of such a course. What is needed is not to ignore the spiritual, and substitute in its place the material and worldly, but to acknowledge the spiritual and try sincerely to follow its lead in arranging our temporary affairs of this world.

The one method of attaining to the spiritual is by listening to the history of Godhead Who frequently comes down into this world in order, by His activities made visible to this world, to afford the bound jivas the opportunity of having the transcendental in the very- midst of the mundane. Such history is necessarily unintelligible to the bound jiva and, therefore, it has to be listened to from the lips of sadhus who can alone understand and properly expound it. By listening constantly to the narrative of the transcendental pastimes of the Divinity recorded in the Scriptures from the lips of sadhus who themselves live the spiritual life bound jivas are enabled gradually to attain to the consciousness of their real spiritual nature.

In the next chapter we intend accordingly to present the reader with a brief explanatory account of the Descents (Avataras) of Godhead. After one's spiritual nature is freed from the delusions of this material world he is in a position to understand what the service of Godhead really means. The life of Sree Krishna Chaitanya Who is the living Embodiment of the very highest form of service, cannot be really intelligible to bound jivas unless they are prepared to undergo spiritual novitiate at the feet of real devotees in the manner prescribed by the Word of Godhead and exemplified in all its stages, from its first beginning to the highest development, in the life of Sree Krishna Chaitanya. This is the truth of the life of Sree Chaitanya. It is indispensable to the bound jiva to be properly acquainted with it if he is disposed to attain to and continue in the state of the pure service of Godhead. The one thing needful for us all is, therefore, to listen to the Divine history from the lips of sadhus, to chant the same and to act in strict conformity with its teaching after the manner taught by and exemplified in the life of Sree Krishna Chaitanya.

IX.— History Of Divine Descents (Avataras)

This term 'Avatara, means 'coming down' of the Divinity, Whose Nature is purely spiritual, into this material world, retaining fully. His own transcendental Nature. Therefore, the English word 'Incarnation,' which means putting on of the material coil, is wholly inapplicable to the process. When Godhead actually chooses to come down into this world He appears to the view of bound jivas as an animate being possessed of a physical body not essentially different from that of other bound jivas. But Godhead although He appears to them to belong to this world, does not really belong to this world at all. The deluding Energy of Godhead, who is instrumental in the creation of this world of limitations as the dwelling-place of individual souls that are averse to Godhead and who stunts their vision, has no power over Godhead Himself. Godhead is the Lord of the deluding Energy who is different from His spiritual Power. The deluding Energy herself is subordinate to God's own spiritual Power. The Form and everything pertaining to the personality of Godhead, belong eternally to the category of the spirit and are located above and beyond the jurisdiction of His illusory power. But in spite of the existence of eternal demarcation between Him and the realm of His deluding power, Godhead chooses to come down occasionally into the realm of physical Nature in the plenitude of His spiritual Power with all His eternal Paraphernalia and becomes actually visible to bound jivas in whose sight He seems to appear not as spirit, because the spiritual essence transcends their power of vision, but in the likeness of a mundane phenomenon. The eternal servitors of Godhead who also appear in this world in His company, may alone have the sight of Him and His Activities as They really are. These manifestations of the Absolute, as Absolute, in the domain of this relative existence, are designated by the term Avatara,.

In the Geeta Sree Krishna says to Arjuna that He comes down repeatedly into this world and in this respect resembles the bound jiva who is caught in the cycle of physical birth and rebirth. But there is a very great difference between the two processes. Sree Krishna is the Lord of all, has no physical birth and as

regards His proper Nature He is absolutely unchangeable. He appears in this world through the medium of His spiritual Power. But the jivas are born in this world being endowed with physical bodies for the purpose by the power of the deluding Energy (maya sakti) as the result of their active aversion to Godhead. The Appearance of Godhead in this world in various forms, such as those of gods, reptiles, etc., is brought about by His Own Will. When He chooses to come down into this world His pure spiritual Body does not become enveloped in a double encasement of matter in the gross and subtle forms as in the case of the bound jiva. Godhead is simply pleased to make manifest in this world His own eternal spiritual Body that exists eternally in the Absolute Realm of Vaikuntha. If this appears incomprehensible to the limited reason of the bound jiva it is so for the reason that the Power of the Divinity is inconceivable and above all controversy. Therefore, the real nature of the Activities of Godhead are not at all ascertainable by the reason of the jiva. What the jiva can understand, if he chooses not to be perversely inclined, is that Godhead, Who is possessed of inconceivable Power, never becomes subject to the laws of physical Nature. The deluding power by which the bound jiva is controlled is also Divine. But the Divine power that belongs to Godhead is nevertheless always spiritual and is categorically different from material Energy. The Power of Godhead is one. As spiritual Power alone She is eligible to directly serve Godhead. As material Energy She has no access to the presence of Her Lord. The material Energy is subordinate to the spiritual Power, as shadow is subordinate to substance or as darkness to light. It is the function of the non-substantial deluding material energy to provide souls that are averse to Godhead with a shadowy world for their deluded existence.

The only law that governs the Descent (Avatara) of Godhead into this world is the Divine Will. Godhead appears in this world when He wills. He chooses to appear in this world whenever there is any unbearable decline of religion leading to the prevalence of irreligion. The laws that govern the course of this material world, as they proceed from the Will of Godhead, are irresistible. But in course of time when for some undefinable reason those laws suffer a change for the worse, due to defects bred by time, irreligion waxes strong. No one except Godhead Himself is able to set right those defects.

Therefore, appearing in this world with His spiritual paraphernalia, the Supreme Lord puts down all such abnormal deterioration in religion.

Godhead manifests Himself in a twofold way. The creation of the spiritual and non-spiritual worlds and the regulation of them by inviolable laws, is one of these. The Activities of Godhead, as distinct from His creations, in these created worlds, constitute the second kind of His manifestations. Individual souls (jivas) are associates of the activities of Godhead. The successive manifestations of Godhead that appear to the view of the jiva in the material world, correspond respectively to those states that he happens to be in as the result of his meddling with matter, such activity itself being due to his falling away from his own proper spiritual nature by the prevalence of his desire for selfish enjoyment. His Infinite Kindness towards the fallen soul, is the only cause of the manifestations of Godhead in this world. These manifestations are called Divine Descents (Avataras). From the stage that is anterior to the appearance of the spine in organisms to the appearance of the fully-developed man several great Rishis have recorded their observation of eight successive Descents of the Divinity, others have noticed eighteen, and a third group have observed twenty-four, Divine Avataras. The well-known view of the Ten Avataras is the one that is held by most Rishis who were versed in Divine science. Those Rishis postulate ten particular states through which the soul passes successively from the beginning to the end of each stage of his bondage. These are indicated by (1) absence of the spinal column, (2) appearance of the circular spine, (3) the elongated spine, (4) the vertical spine or the man-animal state, (5) the man of dwarfish stature, (6) man in the savage state, (7) civilized man, (8) intellectual man, (9) ultra-intellectual state, and (10) complete destruction of the unspiritual state. In accordance with these successively appearing historical states in the evolution of the bound state of the jiva, the ten Avataras, viz., Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Dwarf, Parasu Rama, Rama, Balarama, Buddha and Kalki are observed as the corresponding Forms of the Divine Appearance. The narrative of Their Supernatural Activities is recorded in the Puranas and specially in Sreemad Bhagavatam. Those specialists of the science of devotion, who have understood the nature of these Divine manifestations by means of intensive concentrated investigation, have,

by the grace of Sree Krishna Chaitanya, been enabled to realize the Truth regarding Krishna and specially the unique exquisiteness of His Braja-pastimes. 'Of all the pastimes of Krishna His human activities are the highest and His proper nature and His proper Form is the Human.'

The Descent of Divine Spiritual Power into the realm of the material energy, or, in other words, the manifestation of Godhead's own spiritual Power in the apparent form of the manifestation of material Energy, is known as Divine Descent (Avatara). By means of such Descent the association of the novice, on the path of spiritual life in this world, with the realm of the spirit, is effected and such association is the only way by which the person practicing spiritual endeavour (sadhaka) is enabled to attain spiritual realization.

It will be observed that the account of the ten Avatars that correspond to the respective stages of the human mind in the course of the development of its spiritual consciousness, has been explained by means of terms that have recently been employed in the domain of physical science in connection with the evolution of the human physique from the first beginning of animal life in the amoebae. From this apparent analogy the modern reader may scent, in the explanation recorded in the Scriptures, an unacknowledged and crude misapplication, to an irrelevant subject, of the truly scientific theory of the evolution of the physical form of animal life. Or, if he is at all inclined to recognize the priority of the Scriptures, he may be also led by a foregone conclusion to suppose that the Myth of the, Avatars might be connected with those periods that correspond to the respective stages in the evolution of the animal form, and are of value as a piece of antiquarian curiosity as a vague anticipation of the modern theory, that might have served its purpose in the past. Or, again, the doctrine of the tenfold Descent may lead the reader to suppose that it refers in some way to the progress of material civilization culminating in the elimination of all unspiritual elements in an ideal future ensured by the progress of physical scientific knowledge.

In reply to such speculations we refer to the principles that have already been discussed at some length, viz., that the Descents (Avatars) of Vishnu are

neither physical phenomena nor have They any reference to the progress of material civilization. But although the spiritual is eternally and categorically different from the material it can be described to those who are totally unacquainted with its nature only by analogy with, and by means of terms that actually-refer exclusively to, the mundane. This analogy is however not wholly inapplicable only if it be clearly and constantly remembered as an analogy and not as the spiritual entity itself that is analogically described. The individual soul in the bound state has to pass through forms of deluded existence that correspond analogically to the physical bodies with which he is successively endowed for the purpose. Those forms themselves are, however, material, and signify a progressive development of the functions of the incipient principle of the adventitious life of the false-ego of the bound jiva There is a regular chain of physical and mental progress (?) on the mundane plane for the bound jiva. This progress, however, derives what deceptive appearance of reality it seems to possess, from its being really the perverted reflection of the Absolute. But in as much as it happens to be a deluding reflection of the Reality it reproduces in an unwholesome and distorted form the features of its corresponding spiritual condition, which latter is the subject-matter of the history of the ten .Avataras. Godhead exists in all the forms in the realm of the Absolute that are reproduced in the distorted material phenomena of this universe. In the region of the Absolute there really exist eternally all varieties of jivas; and Godhead Himself is there eternally manifest in all those Forms. The adventitious physical form of the jiva in this world is material and limited ; but the corresponding spiritual forms of the transcendental world, are eternal, unlimited, self-conscious and free from all defects. The varieties of the forms of this world owe their relative existence, being related as shadow to substance or as darkness to light, to the real entities of the transcendental plane. The ordinary fish of the transcendental plane is not merely superior to the Darwins of this world but His nature is realizable by a process that is only obscured by those very notions with which the physical form of the fish has been endowed by the mental speculations of the Darwinian science, however applicable these speculations may appear to us to be in respect of the evolution of the principle of life of this world. Man as fully evolved animal in the Darwinian sense, is too perverted a creature to be reclaimable by the Form of Vishnu as Fish and hence the necessity of

progressively fuller manifestation of the Divinity for curing the evils of a progressively retrograding world.

These Descents, or manifestations of the Divinity in this world, take place in all Ages in accordance with the spiritual aptitude of the particular forms of material animation to whom They choose to appear. India has been the chosen land where in all the Ages the Descents (Avataras) of the Divinity have taken place. Indians have been fitted by the Will of Godhead, by their spiritual varnasrama institution to deserve this special favour.

Sree Krishna is the Own Self of the Absolute Reality, Godhead Himself. If Godhead simultaneously manifests Himself in many places and if those manifested Forms happen to be equal to their source in respect of their Qualities, Activities, etc., those Forms are designated as prakasha (manifest) murtis (Forms) of Godhead. There is usually no qualitative difference as between these manifest Forms and the Form That is their Source. As for example, on the occasion of His marriage Sree Krishna at one and the same time married, in qualitatively same but numerically different manifest forms, sixteen thousand consorts ; and, on the occasion of the Rasa-pastime, He appeared simultaneously in the company of every one of the gopees as His partner in the dance. On the Rasa Site of Braja the manifest Forms of the fullest Source-Form made their appearance and in the city of Dwaraka, on the occasion of His marriage with His Consorts, the Forms that manifested themselves were Those identical with the full Source-Form. No difference was observed to exist between those manifest Forms and the Source-Form. But we also hear of particular Forms of direct manifestation for special purposes and in those manifestations there are also observed differences as regards the Form. As for instance, in the Son of Devaki we find the four-armed Form. In this instance in spite of this difference in the Form the principle of direct manifestation is admitted. This also holds true in other similar instances. All these are Prakasa-Murtis of Sree Krishna or Godhead Himself.

Next to the above are Tadekatmarupas. These are Divine Forms that are essentially identical with that of Godhead Himself. These may accordingly be

called Forms that are included in the nucleus of the Divine Form but are slightly different as regards Their figures from Godhead's Own Form. These constituent Forms are of two kinds according as They happen to be either (1) Forms for expanded Activity (bilasa), or (2) constituent fractional Forms (svangsa). Of These He Who possesses powers that are nearly equal to those of Godhead Himself, is called Form for extended Activity (bilasa), e.g., Sree Baladeva and Sree Vaikuntha-Narayana. He Whose powers are less than those of the form for extended Activity, is called the constituent fractional Form of the Divinity, e.g., the Forms of Fish, Tortoise, etc.

Next comes the manifestation of Divine Descent in the form of inspiration. He is called Divinely inspired into whom any one of the powers of the Divinity is transfused. Such inspiration occurs only in the case of the highest individual souls (jivas) . Divine inspiration is of two kinds according as the inspiration proceeds from Godhead Himself or from the Power of Godhead. The individual soul (jiva) who is inspired by Godhead regards himself as the Divinity. He who is inspired by Divine Power considers himself as the servant of Godhead. Vyasadeva and Rishabhadeva, etc., are inspired Avataras.

Next come those Avataras who are mainly of three kinds, viz., (1) Purushavatara, i.e., Descent of Godhead as Master, (2) Gunavatara, i.e., Descent of Godhead as the Manifestation of any Divine Quality, and (3) Leelavatara, i.e., Descent for the manifestation of Transcendental Activities. Of these the Avatara of Godhead in exercise of His Supremacy is of three kinds, viz., (1) the Person who watches and guides the inmost purpose of primordial physical Nature, creates the material principle itself and reposes in the liquid of the Causal Ocean without directly interfering in any phenomenal occurrences. Samkarsana and Maha-Vishnu are other Names of this first of the Purushavataras. He is a constituent Plenary Subjective Portion of Samkarsana Who is the second of the constituent enveloping Forms of Sree Narayana, Lord of Vaikuntha. (2) The second Purushavatara controls from within the aggregate universe in its subtle stage, is the Creator of Brahma and reposes in the spiritual liquid in the womb of physical Nature. He is subjective plenary Portion of Pradyumna, the third constituent enveloping Form of the Lord of Vaikuntha. (3) The third Purusha

guides the material universe in its constituent parts, that is to say, is the Controller from inside of individual jivas, as the Supreme Soul and reposes in the Ocean of Milk. He is the Plenary Subjective Portion of Aniruddha, the fourth of the constituent enveloping Forms of Sree Narayana.

There are three Gunavataras, viz., Vishnu, Brahma and Siva. The third of the purushas mentioned above is the same as Vishnu Who is the Maintainer of this world by exercise of the quality of cognitive manifestation (sattva). Brahma, sprung from the navel-lotus of Vishnu, is the creator by means of the active (rajas) quality and is only another aspect of Vishnu. In certain Kalpas (i.e., regime of Brahma) jivas, as the result of their previous performance of pious deeds that make them fit for such distinction, may hold the high office of Brahma, the creator. Brahma of this type, by reason of the fact that the Divine Power is infused into a jiva, is also called inspired Descent (Avatara). Such a Brahma should not be regarded as the equal of Vishnu. In those Kelps in which, due to the absence of jivas of requisite fitness, Vishnu Himself plays the role of Brahma, it is only then that Brahma should be viewed as the equal of Vishnu. This principle holds in the case of all the gods who exercise any authority over Nature, such as Indra, etc. They are sometimes jivas, possessed of special fitness, invested with the Divine power, and sometimes they are Vishnu Himself. From the lowest to the highest region of the universe the aggregate of all material objects forms the gross body of Brahma. This also is called Brahma. The second Purusha who guides the inner workings of this aggregate is their Lord or Isvara. Siva is the destroyer by means of the tamas (stupefying) quality. Brahma, who is sprung from the navel-lotus Vishnu, effects the destruction of the world by assuming the form of Siva. In certain Kalpas pious jivas also hold the office of Siva, the destroyer. In certain Kalpas again Vishnu Himself performs the act of destruction in the Form of Siva. These destroyers are all called Gunavataras. But He Who exists in the realm of Siva (Sivaloka) inside Vaikuntha as Sadasiva, is not Gunavatara. He is devoid of worldly qualities and, like Narayana, is a Manifestation, constituent Form, or Plenary Subjective Portion of Sree Krishna Himself. Sadasiva stands to Siva in the relation of the whole to the derivative portion, is higher than Brahma and is equal to Vishnu. He is differentiated from jiva by the fact that the latter is engrossed in worldly

qualities.

Next in order are the Leelavataras. These are twenty-five, viz., Chatuhsana, Narada, Varaha, Matsya, Yajna, Nara-Narayana, Kapila, Datta, Hayasirsha, Hamsa, Prisni-garbha, Rishabha, Prithu, Nrisingha, Kurma, Dhanwantari, Mohini, Vamana, Parasurama, Raghunatha, Vyasa, Balabhadra, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki. These appear in every successive Kalpa.

The Manvantaravataras are all of them also Leelavataras but are so called as they rule over their respective manvantaras, i.e., intervals between the appearance of one Manu and his next successor. There are fourteen such Avataras, e.g., Yajna, Bibhu, Satyasena, Habi, Vaikuntha, Ajita, Vamana, Sarbabhauma, Rishabha, Bisvaksena, Dharmasetu, Sudama, Yogeswara, and Brihadbhanu.

The Manvantaravataras become the Yugavataras in a particular Yuga (constituent Age) of his Manvantara for the promulgation of particular forms of worship. There are four Yugavataras corresponding to the four Yugas. The Avatara of Satya Yuga is white, of Treta red, of Dvapara green, and of Kali usually, dark colour. In the Kali Yuga there is also mentioned, rarely, a yellow Yugavataras. Of these Yugavataras some are inspired, some are prabhava (master), some baibhava (expansion) and some parabastha. Among these He Who possesses the full power of the Divinity is parabastha. In baibhava the power is less than in parabastha and in prabhava the power is less than in baibhava. In abesha or inspired, Avatara there is manifestation of only a single potency. Chatuhsana, Narada and Prithu, etc., are inspired Avataras. Matsya (Fish), Kurma (Tortoise), Narayana, Varaha (Boar), Hayasirsha (Horse-headed), Prisnigarbha, Balabhadra, Yajna, etc., are baibhava, and Nrisingha (Man-Lion), Ramachandra and Sree Krishna are parabastha, in the inverse order of superiority. Of These again Sree Krishna is Godhead Himself. There is no one greater than He. Sree Krishna has four Abodes, viz., Braja, Madhupur, Dwaraka and Goloka, each superior to the next in the order of enumeration. Sree Krishna is Fullest, sporting in Braja with His own and with Baladeva. The same Krishna is Fuller in Mathura and Full in Dwaraka with His family and with Pradyumna and

Aniruddha. In Goloka although Sree Krishna is conceived as Full, His Goloka Activities being the same as those of Brindabana, belong to the same category as the Fullest. In these Abodes (dhamas), on account of the difference of the degree of predominance of the mellow quality there is corresponding difference in the extent of the abeyance of the intensity of Divine Power as controlling Force. That is to say in proportion to the prevalence of mellowness there is corresponding obscuration of Power as compelling Force. In the nether worlds, due to lesser degree of mellowness, the aspect of Authority becomes more and more manifest.

Prithivi is the first envelope of the universe constituted of the fourteen worlds beginning with Patala at one end and extending to Satyaloka on the other. This Prithivi as cause is the ingredient and support of the phenomenal universe as effect. The phenomenal universe is successively encased by the six outer envelopes of water, heat, air, sky, the ego and mahat. Outside these seven the eighth case is Nature (prakriti). This last is full of profound darkness and is the support of the whole universe. Time in the form of the power of activity of the Divinity is, in turn, the support of Nature. Time is upheld by the Will of Godhead. Beyond this is the stream of the Biraja so named from the fact that its water washes off all mundane qualities. This stream is situated between the chit (spiritual) and the achit (material) worlds. The Ocean of Cause (karanarnava) is the alternative name of Biraja. In the liquid causal current of the Biraja billions of worlds adorn the cavities of hair of Maha-Vishnu. Biraja is like the moat of Maha-Vaikuntha and the boundary of the luminous region of Brahman which forms the outer limit of Sree Vaikuntha. Sree Golokadhama is in the upper region of Sree Vaikuntha. The holy realm of Goloka is located in the centre of all mundane and spiritual manifestations of the Divine Power. In Goloka Sree Krishna abides with all His Family as Lord of Goloka, acting as a god. Dwaraka, Mathura and Braja are the successive inner tracts of Goloka. In the Abodes of Krishna bearing the names of Dwaraka, Mathura and Brindabana there is progressive increase in the proportion of mellowness due to the increasing preponderance of human activity. This leela is of two kinds according as it happens to be, (1) manifest, or (2) non-manifest. The non-manifest leela is the name of that eternal pastime in which Krishna engages

simultaneously as Boy, Adolescent and approaching Youth, in the company of His own mother, father, servants, friends, sweethearts, etc., in the infinite manifestation unperceivable by this world. The successive leelas as Boy, Adolescent and dawning Youth that He performs in the company of His kin and entourage in this world, in course of one and the same manifestation, are called His manifest leela. The manifest leela visible to this world has as its sole object the free bestowal of His mercy on the jivas. It is eternal. No sooner does it end in one universe than it rises in another like the rays of the sun lighting up the successive points of the zodiac in its progress; so that the manifest leela is always enacted simultaneously in different worlds but in its due order of successive appearance. All the manifest leelas of Sree Krishna in their perennial flow, are eternal and are all existence, all-consciousness and all-bliss, with the exception of the mausala leela and the leela of the abduction of His consorts, which are illusory and intended to mask the eternal nature of the series of His transcendental pastimes.

The devotees appear next in the order of Descent. The Vaishnavas, as Markandeya, Ambarish, Vasu, Vyasa, Bivishana, Pundarik, Bali, Sambhu, Prahlada, Bidur, Uddhaba, Daliya Parasara, Bhishma, Narada, etc., are the devotees of Godhead. It is our duty to serve all these devotees in the same way as we serve Sree Hari. Otherwise offense is committed. Among the devotees the order of superiority is as follows: Prahlada; the Pandavas who are superior to Prahlada; the Yadavas of whom Uddhava is superior to the rest; the Braja-devi superior to Uddhava; Sree Radhika is the highest among the damsels of Braja.

The four Yugas, viz., Satya, Treta, Dvapara and Kali are called divya-yugas. A thousand four-yugas form one kalpa. There are fourteen manvantaras in each kalpa. One day of Brahma is equivalent to one kalpa. The pralaya or complete absorption that takes place at the end of every kalpa is known as the night of Brahma. This is the daily pralaya. Thirty kalpas make one month of Brahma, twelve months of Brahma make one year; and fifty years of Brahma make one parardha. The duration of the life of Brahma is that of two parardhas. At the end of the period of two parardhas there is dissolution of phenomenal Nature and the attainment of the highest state by Brahma. Thereupon the phenomenal

world is re-absorbed into the primordial principle (prakriti). The first of the series of the thirty Kalpas bears the name of Sveta Varaha or Brahma Kalpa and the last of the series as Pitri or Padma Kalpa. Thousands of the series of Kalpas from Brahma to Padma have passed away thousands of times.

Theism has a long history which may be summed up in one word as the Descent of Godhead into this mundane world. Such Descent accomplishes two Divine Purposes, viz., (1) it is intended to gladden those devotees who may happen to be at the time in this world, and (2) to destroy Godhead's opponents who oppress His devotees and obstruct their devotional activities. These opponents of Godhead are also deputed by Godhead Himself to serve Him by the method of opposition. There is and can be no real independent rival of Godhead, such as a so-called Satan, to be the captain-general of the sinners. The asuras, who disturb the devotees and are in consequence destroyed by Vishnu, appear to sinful jivas to undergo chastisement that they deserve by reason of their un-godliness. But those who are privileged to be chastised by Godhead are no sinners. Such chastisement is the appropriate reward of their real service of Godhead, although of an indirect nature. They are servitors of Godhead who appear in the world being deputed by Him for serving Him, in that way. By their opposition they serve to bring out most brilliantly the glory of Godhead. Ordinary jivas are not to follow their example; and, if they do so, they are not so easily delivered by direct Divine intervention. The fallen jivas are only delivered when their aversion to Godhead is eliminated. Their aversion to Godhead is due to ignorance of their own proper nature as eternal servants of Godhead. The Descent of Godhead into this world serves also to destroy the root of this ignorance of fallen jivas. This is His causeless mercy towards willful offenders. But all this is still only His secondary purpose. The main purpose of Divine Descent is to make the devotees happy. The secondary purposes are accomplished periodically by the various secondary Avatars who are endowed with the requisite measure of the Divine Power for that purpose. But the main purpose, viz., that of making His devotees happy, is effected only by the Descent of Godhead Himself. Sree Baladeva is the ultimate Source of all the secondary Avatars. He may be regarded as occupying the position of Viceroy for the performance of all official work of the Sovereign. Sree Baladeva destroys

the asuras and protects the devotees and re-establishes the rule of righteousness.

Krishna Himself comes into this world in the Sveta Varaha Kalpa (the cycle of the White Boar) of the Vaivasvata manvantara of the twenty-eighth aggregate of four-Yugas, appearing as Son of Yasoda, in His own eternal human Form in His fullest charm and power. The Son of Yasoda, is Godhead Himself, in His private, domestic, informal role, enjoying Himself unreservedly in the company of His own most beloved ones.

The process of the Advent of Sree Krishna is thus described in the Scriptures. As the different gods prepare to descend into this world through the medium of the series of their respective subjective portions (amsas), the heavenly plenary portions of Vasudeva, etc., such as Kasyapa, etc., merging with their original sources (amsis), viz., Vasudeva, etc., who belong to the eternal Divine Leela, appear in Mathura as Sura, etc. The Highest Personality of the Divine Leela, viz., Sree Krishna, Whose manifest Form is Sree Narayana, Lord of Mahalakshmi, desiring to appear in Mathura, causes, first of all, the manifestation of His constituent Form, Samkarsana. Thereupon the Lord, having decided to make visible two other Forms that are Plenary Facsimiles of Himself and Who bear the Names of Pradyumna and Aniruddha, manifests Himself in the heart of Anakadundubhi. After this, in response to the prayer of the gods for the purpose of relieving the hard-pressed mundane world, towards the close of the Dvapara Age of the twenty-eighth aggregate of four-Yugas of the Vaivasvata manvantara, Aniruddha, the Same Who lies in Kshiroda, merging with the Form of Sree Krishna in the heart of Vasudeva, becomes manifest in the heart of Devaki moving thither from the heart of Anakadundubhi. Being nourished in the heart of Devaki by the nectar of loving bliss in the form of motherly affection, Sree Krishna, like the waxing Moon, manifests the gradual development of His Form in the heart of Devaki. Thereafter in the great night of the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Bhadra Sree Krishna, disappearing from the heart of Devaki, appears in her couch in the lying-in chamber in the prison of Kamsa. The mother and the other people think that the Baby is born by the ordinary worldly process with the greatest ease.

Thereupon Vasudeva entering the apartment of Yasoda in the Great Forest and leaving there his own Son Sree Krishna and taking away the daughter of Yasoda, hurries back to his prison. Some ancient Bhagavatas also hold that the first of Sree Krishna's own Facsimiles, Who bears the Name of Vasudeva, appears in the apartment of Vasudeva and that in Gokula Sree Krishna, the Highest Personality of the Divine Leela, makes His Appearance in company of Yoga-maya. But Vasudeva sees only a daughter in the lying-in chamber of Yasoda. On Vasudeva's return to Mathura with Yasoda's baby-daughter Vasudeva merges into Sree Krishna. This is corroborated by such statements as the following, "Krishna born in the Yadava family is different." "He Who is full Divinity is higher than He, that is to say, is His original Source." "Divinity in His Plenitude, or Godhead Himself, never leaves Brindabana, nor goes elsewhere." "He is always two-armed and is never four-armed." "He always sports in Brindabana in the company of only one of the Gopees." In the Padma Purana it is stated that the cowherds of Brindabana, such as Nanda, etc., with all families and birds, beasts, deer, etc., all of them, by the grace of Vasudeva assuming the heavenly form and mounted in chariots, attained the region of the highest Vaikuntha. This is explained as follows. Those constituent parts of the Lord of Braja, etc., viz., Drona, etc., who had come down into this world, were sent by Sree Krishna to Vaikuntha. But Sree Krishna is always sporting in Brindabana in the company of His most beloved devotees, viz., the denizens of Braja.

The subject of the Avataras of Vishnu is vast and intricate and we have attempted merely to touch its outermost fringe in the above short account. But before we leave the subject it will be useful to deal briefly with a few of the controversial issues that are ordinarily associated with this subject.

A distinction has been made between different, Avataras of Vishnu on the basis of partial and complete manifestation, and the partial manifestations have also been graded one under another in different groups, so that we have also part of a part, and so on. These distinctions do not mean that Godhead is a divisible entity. In fact in all these manifestations it is the indivisible and undivided Divinity Who appears. The difference is due either to the degree of

manifestation or the greater or lesser presentation or reservation of any particular face or faces of the Divinity. Godhead is One but His powers are many and various and He can exercise all those powers in the way that He likes. This distinction between the Will of Godhead and the Power of Godhead, should be clearly grasped. The Will of Godhead constitutes His distinctive and specific personality. It is not delegated. But the Power Who is subordinate to the Will, is capable of delegation by the Will of Godhead. Godhead alone possesses an absolutely independent Will to Whom everything is subordinate. The wills with which other beings are endowed, are more or less limited in their effectiveness; that is to say, they are controlled, as regards their effective exercise in the shape of exerting power, by the Will of Godhead. The freedom of will of the jiva does not mean that the jiva can actually act as he likes, but that he is free to like or not like to act. The jiva has freedom to choose his course of action but such choice can result in effective action only by the Will of Godhead. The tendency is free but its issue is strictly controlled. There is no such gap between the Will and the Power to act, in Godhead. In Him alone the two are identical but yet not the same. The Power of Godhead is capable of delegation but the Will is not. Therefore it is the Will that constitutes the specific character of Divinity.

The Divine Power is manifold although she is one in essence being the expression of the one and indivisible Divine Will. The gradation, that is noticed in the case of the different ,Avataras, is in respect of distinction of power. Godhead chooses to manifest His powers partially or fully, directly or indirectly. This is what is meant by the gradation of the Avataras of Vishnu. The partial manifestation is regarded as the plenary subjective portion, or amsa, of His proximate whole to Whom He is immediately integrated.

The relation between will and power is this that the latter always acts under the direction of the former. Power does not regulate herself. Will is the active principle of Whom power is the actively obedient associate. Power has no initiative of her own. But Will is not effective unless He is associated with power. Such dissociation is never possible in the Absolute in Whom the two are eternally associated and in this sense they may be regarded as being only

complementary aspects of one and the same entity. Godhead's Power is, therefore, not external or separable from Godhead Himself although she is always subordinate to His will.

Godhead is the Possessor of infinite powers. Of these, according to the Scriptures, three only are realizable by the jiva viz., (1) the chit (cognitive energy), (2) jiva (differentiated souls), and (3) maya (limiting energy) There are also three functions that belong to each one of these three powers, viz., (1) sandhini (uniting), (2) sambit (enlightening), and (3) hladini (harmonising). These three functions are eternally operative in their pure and unmodifiable fullness in chit power. In differentiated souls they are also manifest but in an infinitesimally small measure. In maya the presence of only their dim reflection in a perverted form, is noticeable. To the individual soul the functions of the limiting energy are unwholesome. The functions of the individual soul himself, due to littleness of power, are inadequate although salutary. The jiva cannot attain perfect happiness except in conjunction with the Hladini Function of the Power of Enlightenment. This conjunction is possible only through the mercy of Krishna and His devotees.

The coming down of the Absolute into this limited world, effects the deliverance of fallen jivas by bringing about this conjunction between the bound-jiva and the higher world. The difference of degree in the manifestation of the Divine Power represented by the different Avatars, is in accordance with the spiritual condition of the jiva at the time of such manifestation. The manifestation by way of Descent attains its perfection in Krishna. The other, Avatars dispel the ignorance of the fallen jiva and arouse in him, in varying degrees, the desire to worship Godhead with awe and reverence. Krishna, Who is the Source of all the Avatars, reserves to Himself the right of bestowing love for Godhead. This constitutes the supreme excellence of the Activities of Krishna when They appear in this world. In no Avatara, except in a small measure in those of Nrisingha and Ramachandra, is to be found the extreme deliciousness of the relationship of jiva with Godhead characterized by confidence and intimacy, that attains to freedom from all restraint in the case of the Braja-gopees, that is to be found in the Krishna Leela. Therefore, the mercy

of Godhead reaches its climax in Krishna Who appears before the bound-jiva in the most intimate relationship, free from all reservation. The mercy of Krishna, in as much as He happens to be Godhead Himself, is thus superior to that of all other avatars. This fact is at the root of the broad differences that constitute the dividing line between the various religions. Such difference is due to the degree of intimacy of relationship that it offers between the jiva and Godhead.

But the mercy of Godhead, which is so continuously, copiously and causelessly manifested, cannot be realized by the bound jiva due to his ignorance of its real nature. Sree Chaitanya came into this world to supply the knowledge of our natural relationship with Godhead which alone can enable us to realize the greatness of Divine mercy. Sree Chaitanya taught us that the highest service of Godhead, viz., that of unreserved loving devotion embodied in the Braja-devis, is spontaneously attainable to all of us as soon as we fully realize our true relationship with Godhead. That relationship may be briefly described as that of serving Sree Krishna under the lead of the Hladini Function of the Divine Power. This is not an abstraction of the human brain. On the highest spiritual plane such service is realized as a part and parcel of the amorous pastimes of the damsels of Braja under the lead of Sree Radhika with the youthful son of the Lord of Braja. This is the highest significance of Krishna Leela and is exemplified in the Career and Teaching of Sree Chaitanya.

With these insufficient preliminary observations of a general character towards the elucidation of a number of current misconceptions on the subject of Religion, I shall venture to proceed to narrate the Transcendental Career of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya in course of the following chapters.

The Narrative seeks to present the Absolute as He is in His Supreme Magnanimity. The Career of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is identical with the Divine Personality in the Form of His Own Loving Service. It is not possible for individual souls, who are detached infinitesimal particles of the Marginal Potency of the Divinity, to realize the Nature of the Loving Service of the Divinity by His Own Integrated Power and his own proper function within the same, except by the Eternal Support of Divine Love Himself. The Magnanimous

Activity of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is identical with His Co-ordinate Absolute Activity as the Amorous Lover of Sree Radhika in Sree Brindavana. The individual soul has, therefore, no access to the Realm of the Amorous Pastimes of Sree Sree Radha-Govinda except by the realization of this identity of relationship between the Two distinct Leelas.

Nota De Edicion

“The existing English works although they sometimes profess to be historical in reality offer a superficial, extremely crude and misleading view of the subject. They confine themselves almost exclusively to the esoteric issues. This at least is not the method of the source-books, but a departure from the bona fide position of the theme itself. The historical method proper should aim at presenting the religion as it is really found in the genuine original sources and in the spirit of its first propounders. But many of these writers, due to their empirical training, have failed to observe this essential canon of historical judgment. Moreover these writers generally happen to be very poorly equipped in respect of their knowledge of the vast body of Scriptures to which the teachings of Sree Chaitanya stand in the closest relationship; and, even if any of them happen to possess a general acquaintance with the texts of these Scriptures, they fail to take a scientific view of the subject due to lack of spiritual insight.”

“The prominent defects that mar the value of these works are the purely empiric point of view of their authors, their want of spiritual knowledge of the Scriptures and their lack of critical caution in the choice and use of authorities.”

“.....The empiric method is unsuitable for the treatment of a spiritual subject. The vision of the empiricist is confined to things of this world. The Vaishnava authors on whose narratives we have to base our account of Sree Chaitanya, were not empiricists. The subject of which they have left us the account, is the Absolute, as distinct from the empiric, Truth that comes down to them in the

chain of disciplic succession from Godhead Himself. They acquired this esoteric vision, when they prove to be true, by the methods of loyal submission and sincere service at the feet of spiritual preceptors as enjoined by the Scriptures on all those who desire to obtain spiritual enlightenment. They are never tired of repeating that the Absolute Truth, inherent in a bona fide soul, who expresses himself in their books' is not derived from any experience of this world and is not intelligible to those whose vision is obscured by knowledge derived from the experience of this world.”

“The Absolute Truth is transcendental and, therefore, no human being can attain to Him by his sensuous efforts, i.e., by the ascending process, as all phenomena that are exposed to the faulty, limited senses are, by this virtue, non-transcendental. The Absolute Truth is eternally existent but is not realizable by men so long as they are not relieved of the aptitude. of their defective vision. The Absolute Truth is to be received, undoubtedly in the spirit of honest inquiry, from those wise men who bear no reference to the world of their sensuous gratification.”

“Very few of the existing English works on Sree Chaitanya satisfy these essential conditions of theistic authorship that are so strongly insisted upon by these devotional writers without which such description carries no useful purpose. On the contrary, these later writers are apt to offer their own views, derived from their empiric association, regarding the subject-matter of the original works, in a manner that leaves on the mind of the reader the impression that they are more anxious to point out the crudities and errors of these old authors than exhibit their views in a scientific and impartial manner. This is certainly neither history nor religion but only an uncalled-for and useless distortion of both.”

“The object of writing this book is to place before the English-knowing readers a strictly accurate theistic account. of Sree Chaitanya, Who teaches the Absolute Truth that has been handed down through the Ages by an unbroken succession of unbiased spiritual preceptors. This narrative is broad-based on all the authoritative sources and seeks to fully present the esoteric side as

explaining the esoteric in pursuance of the method of all really enlightened writers on spiritual subjects.”

“...The Deeds of Sree Chaitanya, the Subject of the present work, are the living Embodiment of the teaching of Srimad Bhagawatam. The Deeds and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya stand alone as history of the service of the Supreme Lord in the form of the deepest and perfectly unreserved intimacy.

The privilege of this form of service, the hidden truth of all Scriptures, was never before given to the fallen jiva. In the words of Sree Rupa Goswami Prabhu, the authority on the esoteric significance of the Deeds of Sree Chaitanya, “God Himself with the beautiful golden complexion out of mercy appeared in this world in this most degenerate Age to confer the grace of devotion to Himself, of the superior order that had not been given to this world before. Even the Geet a which teaches the service of Godhead with single-minded devotion and in the spirit of complete self-surrender, does not tell us much about the actual, concrete form of the highest service. The Srimad Bhagawatam describes all different kinds of service in the concrete form and establishes the supreme excellence of that which was practised by the transcendental milk-maids of Braja. Sree Chaitanya is the living Embodiment of this highest and most intimate form of the service of the Divinity.”

“The Brindabana pastimes of Sree Krishna, which have been given the place of honour in the greatest devotional work of the whole world, are of all forms of Divine service the one that is also liable to be most grossly misunderstood. The subject will be treated in greater detail in its proper place in the body of this work. It will suffice for our purpose here to state that Sree Chaitanya made clearly manifest by His Deeds and Teachings what this form of service really means. His Deeds are in fact the Brahmasutra, Geet a and the Srimad Bhagawatam displayed to our view in the living form. He is the living Vedanta. Other Avatars and prophets have taught the reverential worship of the Supreme Lord. Sree Chaitanya proved by His Deeds that the highest form of service is to be found in the Srimad Bhagawatam, that its inner meaning had not been properly understood up to His time by anybody and that it offers what all the

Scriptures have been endeavouring from eternity unsuccessfully to express. Sree Chaitanya's own career is the concrete living expression of this highest form of the service of the Lord.”

“...The materials for the present work have been drawn from— (1) the Sikshastakam of Sree Chaitanya which gives the summary of His teachings in His own words; (2 and 3) the Karchas (memoirs) of Sree Murari Gupta and of Sree Swarup Damodar (the latter as embodied in his works by Sree Raghunath Das Goswamin, Sree Swarup Damodar’s closest associate); (4) Prema Vivarta of Sree Jagadananda; (5) Sree-Krishna-Chaitanya-Chandrodaya-Nataka of Kavi Karnapur; (6) Sree-Chaitanya-Charitamahakavya of Sree Chaitanya Das, the elder brother of Kavi Karnapur; (7) the works of Sree Prabodhananda Saraswati; (8) the Bhajanamrita of Sree Narahari Sarkar Thakur; (9) the numerous works left by five of the famous six Goswamins; (10) Sree Brind bandas Thakur’s Sree-Chaitanya-Bhagawat; (11) Sree Lochandas's Chaitanya-Mangal; (12) Sree Krishnadas Kaviraj ’s Sree-Chaitanya-Charitamrita and lastly (13) the works of those later writers who have strictly followed the above authors. Most of these works are in Sanskrit, some of them in Bengali.

“Sree Chaitanya has not left any books written by Himself. A few shlokas composed by Him are quoted in the works of His associates, the chief of them being the Siksh astakam which gives in eight stanzas a summary of his teachings.”

“...Sree Brindabandas Thakur was the recipient of the favour of Sree Nityananda, the associated facsimile, so to say, of Sree Chaitanya. His mother Sree Narayani was the niece of Sribash Pandit, the foremost of those Vaishnava householders who were the direct followers of Sree Chaitanya. Sree Lochandas got the materials of his work partly from Narahari Sarkar Thakur, one of Sree Chaitanya’s close associates and by his devotional impressions. Sree Krishnadas Goswamin got his information as has already been mentioned from his preceptor Sree Raghun athd as, one of the six Goswamins.”

“Most of the works of the authors named above are still extant and they are the authorities for all subsequent writers. The chief of these later authors whose works have been consulted in the compilation of the present account are, (1) Sree Narottamdas Thakur who was the disciple of Sree Lokanath Goswamin, one of the closest associates of Sree Chaitanya, (2) Sree Viswanath Chakravarty belonging to the line of disciples of Sree Narottamdas Thakur, (3) Sree Baladev Vidyabhusan the first Gaudiya commentator of the Brahmasutra, (4) Sree Narahari Chakravarty in the line of disciplic descent from Sree Viswanath Thakur, (5) Sree Bhaktivinode Thakur, the sincere guardian of the true Vaishnavas of the present day, and (6) my Sree Gurudeva, His Divine Grace Paramahansa Paribrajakacharya Sree Sreemat Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaj whose mercy is my only hope of attaining the service of Godhead.”

“It will be seen from the above that there is no lack of materials of the most reliable character available to the historian of the Career and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya. It is, therefore, rather strange that the personality of Sree Chaitanya has been misunderstood and misrepresented by a certain class of writers. The neglect of the original sources was one cause of this. A constructive motive was supplied by the animosity of sectarians and the greed of worldly interests of pseudo-followers.”

“It was the life-work of Thakur Bhaktivinode to re-discover the true history of Sree Chaitanya and make the same available to the present generation. The magnitude of this service to his country, to humanity and to all animate beings time alone will show. The eternal religion taught and practiced by Sree Chaitanya have been made intelligible to the modern reader by the labours of Thakur Bhaktivinode. It is bound to re-act most powerfully on all existing religious convictions of the world and make possible the establishment of universal spiritual harmony of which the whole world stands so much in need. Most of the works of Thakur Bhaktivinode were, however, written in Bengali and Sanskrit. The present work is a slight attempt to present in the English language an outline of the Life and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya made known by Thakur Bhaktivinode, the pioneer of the movement of pure devotion in the

present Age, which aims at reestablishing in practice the eternal religion of all animate beings revealed in the Scriptures and taught and practiced by Sree Chaitanya. The activities of my most revered Preceptor are well known to the world. His Divine Grace is commissioned by Godhead to spread the Teaching of Sree Chaitanya to every village of the world and re-establish the spiritual society. This was foretold by Thakur Bhaktivinode.”

Gaura Hari Bol!

Visuddha Sattva dasanudasa

All Glory to Sri Guru and Gauranga

SREE KRISHNA CHAITANYA

(VOL. II)

By
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WITH A FOREWORD

BY

PARAMAHAMSA PARIBRAJAKACARYA (108) SREE SRIMAD
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All glory to sree guru and gauranga

Volume II—Sree Krishna Chaitanya

Auspiciary Observance

I make my prostrated obeisance to Sree Guru in the two forms of the Guide who imparts enlightenment and those who teach the function of Divine service to prevent lapse into the conditioned state by ensuring progressive advance on the path of devotion. Obeisance to the Devotees of the Lord, to the Supreme Lord Himself, to those eternal Forms in which the Lord manifests His Appearances (Avataras) on this mundane plane, to His different Manifestations and His Powers! I bow to the Name Krishna Chaitanya Who is Krishna Himself

and all the Divine Categories. Obeisance to Sree Krishna-Chaitanya with Lord Nityananda Who are like the Sun and the Moon risen in conjunction on the Eastern Hill of Gauda ! Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya manifested His Appearance in this world in order to give away by His causeless mercy the highest loving service of Himself that had never been bestowed on the conditioned souls of this world prior to His Appearance. May Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, resplendent with the concentrated hue of beauteous shining gold, manifest Himself in the inmost chamber of the hearts of all persons!

Submission to Sree Hari, Sree Guru and the Vaishnavas is the only condition of attaining to loving devotion to the Feet of Sree Krishna and His devotees. The fulfillment of this condition assures the success of the undertaking by enabling all persons who listen to the Narrative of the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya to obtain His mercy in the shape of the highest quality of devotion to the Feet of Sree Radha-Krishna.

Sree Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami in the opening verses of his work on the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya has mercifully explained in some detail, for our benefit, the nature, purpose and necessity of the auspictory observance as a preliminary for the success of all spiritual undertakings. I can do no better than follow in his footsteps by attempting to explain the significance of the form of the auspictory observance.

The auspictory observance consists of three parts, viz, (1) the postulation of the subject-matter, (2) benedictory purpose, and (3) offering of submissive obeisance.

The subject-matter of the present work is Sree Krishna Chaitanya. Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is identical with Sree Krishna. He is the Final and Absolute Reality. He is Isvara, the Gurus, the Devotees, the Divine Appearances and the Divine Powers. These are the distinctive Divine Identities. The undifferentiated Brahman of the Upanishads is the glow of His Person. The Oversoul, Who indwells and regulates every entity, is His Portion. Bhagawan, Who is full of all Supremacy, all Power, all Glory, all Beauty, all Knowledge and

Freedom from every mundane Desire, is Sree Chaitanya. There is no higher Entity than Chaitanya and Sree Krishna.

The Deeds of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya are narrated in this work. His Deeds were made manifest to the view of the people of this world that all conditioned souls may be enabled thereby to attain to the realization of loving devotion to the Feet of Sree Sree Radha-Govinda, which constitutes the highest platform of the service of the Divinity and the knowledge of which had not been divulged to any soul of this world by any former Dispensation. All this will flash to the hearts of all persons who really seek for the Truth, by the causeless mercy of the Son of Sree Sachi Devi wearing the yellow colour of shining gold.

The Deeds of Sree Chaitanya are grounded in His Divinity!-. The Activity of the Hllhadini Potency born of the reciprocal Love of Sree Sree Radha Krishna, Who constitute One Personality, brings about differentiation of Divine Body as Couple. The Two Bodies of the Divine Couple re-unite as Chaitanya. The united Form is Krishna's Own self clothed with the glow of the Beauty of Sree Radhika.

The secondary Purpose of the Appearance of Sree Krishna Chaitanya in this world found in the Scriptures is what has been stated above, viz., the bestowal of loving devotion to all conditioned souls. But there was another Purpose which is the main cause of His Appearance. It is not explicitly mentioned in the Scriptures but is recognizable as their hidden Import.

The main Purpose of the Appearance of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is connected with His distinctive Nature that has been indicated. Krishna is anxious to learn how His Divine Counter-Whole, Sree Radhika, realizes His Own Sweetness and Beauty. In order to have this experience Sree Krishna clothes Himself with the mood of Sree Radhika and appears in the Form of an Eternal Union with Her, alongside of and identical with the coupled Form.

This is the inner hidden significance of the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya. This distinguishes the Leela of Sree Chaitanya from that of Sree Krishna.

Sree Nityananda and Sree Advaita are inseparably associated with the Appearance of Sree Chaitanya in this world. It is not possible to realize the nature of the Deeds of Sree Chaitanya without the knowledge of the Personalities of Sree Nityananda and Sree Advaita.

Through Nityananda and Advaita the connection of Sree Krishna with the mundane world is established and maintained. This brings us to the question of the transcendental cosmology of the Scriptures. There is a gradation of spheres one above another up to Goloka, the Abode of Sree Krishna. In Goloka are found Baladeva, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, the “Other Selves” of Krishna. Nityananda is identical with Baladeva in Goloka.

Below Goloka, in the realm of the Absolute, is Vaikuntha. In Goloka Balarama or Baladeva is the serving Self of Krishna (Bilas-bigraha). Baladeva is Krishna in the role of serving His Own Self in various capacities. Vaikuntha is the realm of the exclusive Activities of Baladeva. In Vaikuntha, accordingly, the fourfold expansion of Sree Narayana, the Lord of Vaikuntha, the manifestation of Baladeva corresponds to the “Other Selves” of Krishna in Goloka with the difference that in Vaikuntha the “expansion” (byuha.) is of the “Other Self” of Krishna or Baladeva Who is delegated the power of expressing his service of Sree Krishna in a realm of his own where His plenary Manifestation, Sree Narayana, is served by the method of reverence. Baladeva and his realm of Vaikuntha express and serve the Majesty of Sree Krishna. The conception of the service of Sree Baladeva, the Majestic Other Self of Krishna, is the highest that is reached by the help of such imperfect Revelation as is not wholly unacceptable to the empiric instinct, although the practice of this pure form of the reverential service is also very rare in this world. All the revealed Scriptures, with the single exception of the Bhagawatum, are to a more or less extent the text-books

of reverential worship. The reverential service of Godhead in its genuine form is wholly free from any mundane grossness, although there is in it a comparative reference of eligibility. The ordinary degenerate practices of the revealed religions are a caricature of the real function which cannot be realized till the soul is released from the fetters of Nescience.

In Vaikuntha there exist positive transcendental activities resulting from the relationships of servants and Master between the individual souls and Godhead. But Godhead is there present in His Majesty and not in His Beauty and Sweetness except in the sense that is compatible with the predominance of His Majesty. The ideal of Heaven and Paradise of the Elevationist religions is a misrepresentation of Vaikuntha in terms of mundane felicity. Vaikuntha is, however, the goal that is dear to ordinary theistically inclined persons with pure morals. It is substantially inconceivable but is not apparently opposed to the ordinary aspirations and functions of this world, at the first sight.

Next below Vaikuntha is the realm of the Brahman in which there is no specific spiritual activity neither any form of worldly existence but which is full of a light which has the negative quality of dispelling all worldly ignorance without having power to disclose the specific nature of the transcendental realm. This is the realm of the Brahman of the Upanishads, which has been the source and support, as manipulated by Sree Sankaracharya, of the empiric worship current in this country that denies the existence of Godhead and substitutes in place of the religion of His service one aiming at complete spiritual annihilation by the process of merging the individual soul in the Divinity. As a matter of fact the realm of the Brahman of the Upanishads is not a habitable region at all but a sphere of light which has to be got across to reach the realm from where it proceeds and with which alone the emancipated soul can have anything really to do.

The realm of the Brahman is the outer limit of the Absolute world. Between this

outer uninhabited zone of the spiritual realm and the highest sphere of this mundane world there flows the stream of the Biraja whose water is the causal essence in the nascent form of liquid. This liquid is pure from all mundane quality. A person who bathes in the river prior to entry into the realm of the Brahman is freed from all mundane aptitudes.

It is in this stream that there appears the Purusha, Who is the derivative of Balarama, being a secondary plenary Form of the Divinity. There are three Purushas in the successive order of such secondary derivative manifestation, viz, (1) He, Who lies in the Ocean of the causal water of the Biraja, (2) He Who lies in the-water of the Ocean of Milk, and (3) He Who lies in the Ocean of the fluid of the Womb of the worlds. It is these Purushas, the secondary extended Selves of Baladeva, each being the proximate source of the One next following Him, Who are the Creators and Regulators of the mundane world without being themselves any constituent part, or whole, of the same.

The first of these three Purushas wills the creation of the world and wills to make use of the deluding Potency for the purpose. In respect of the process of material creation He occupies the position that the potter occupies in the making of pots of clay. The potter's wheel, clay and appliances attain their effective existence by another potency of the same Purusha. It is, therefore, the first of the series of the Purushas Who is the source of both the efficient as well as material cause of creation. But in neither capacity He Himself belongs to this world. He does all this work from outside the plane of the limiting energy. Brahma and Siva are connected with the material energy by actual incorporation with her. While Vishnu (the Purusha), although exercising His function with reference to the material world, is situated wholly beyond all touch with, the material energy. The Purushas bear the Name of Vishu by reason of this transcendental pervading relationship with the mundane world.

As transcendence, in the form of both cause and material of the mundane creation, belongs to the first Purusha, the second Purusha is charged by Him with the function of the collective regulation of the created entities. The third Purusha performs the same function from inside each separate created entity.

These two, therefore, are the sources of those spiritual functions that bear some analogy to the imperfect empiric notions, enunciated by Kant and other philosophers of the idealist schools of the West, conveyed by the ill-defined terms, Immanence and Transcendence. These terms of the empiric vocabulary refer to aspects of limited phenomena but the immanence and transcendence of the third and second Purusha Avatars of Vishnu are not a continuum of the material shelf which is called phenomenon. There is always the categorical difference of plane between the phenomena and the spiritual transcendent and immanent functions of Vishnu that have a reference to them by way of being their spiritual source.

The functions of Brahma and Siva are those of creation and destruction. These two great personages belong to this phenomenal world and are in charge of its temporal regulation in a semi-conscious manner. The semi-conscious nature of the ruling functions of Brahma and Siva makes them the prototypes of the conditioned soul. They are the ideals of personality conceivable by the mind of man, possessed of the super-human powers of creation and destruction of all phenomena. The nature of this power itself is not intelligible to its wielders although they know that they are really endowed with the same by some unknown superior agency in an unknown manner. There are other “powers” of this class who wield similar but lesser powers over the phenomenal world than Brahma and Siva. These super-human beings possessed of specific powers over physical nature in different measures, are the highest order of souls in the conditioned state.

The Will of Vishnu in the Forms of the three Purushas is ultimately derived from Nityananda. The source of the material cause of creation is also Vishnu in the Form of the first Purusha or Maha-Vishnu in whom the Material cause and creating Will of the Divinity by reference to this mundane world are incorporated and reconciled.

The word ‘Advaita’ means ‘non-duality’. Matter and Will are not categorically different from one another at their source. Neither are they, as regards their source, different from Godhead. But matter as it appears to the conditioned

soul as well as the operative will of Godhead as viewed by the same agency, appear to be altogether dissociated from and incompatible with the spiritual essence which is the Nature proper of the Divinity. The solution of this difficulty that besets all speculative inquiry is to be sought in the actual knowledge of the substantive Reality in His graduated Manifestations and not in the hypotheses of inevitable ignorance of fundamental conditions.

The Appearance of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya so far as the Event has a reference to the deliverance of conditioned souls, was effected by the agencies of Nityananda and Advaita. The functions of Nityananda and Advaita should, however, be neither over-estimated nor underestimated as regards Their respective bearings on the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya. Those functions are of primary importance. to the conditioned soul who, however, need not, therefore, remain confined to the contemplation of these plenary Manifestations of the Divinity. Neither need the conditioned soul suppose himself to be above all help from Advaita and Nityananda either at the initial or the advanced stages of spiritual endeavour and realisation.

The Real Purpose of the Appearance of Sree KrishnaChaitanva is not the deliverance of the conditioned souls. The Real Purpose is one that exclusively concerns the Divinity as He is. It is that which was meant when we observed above that the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, as Those of Sree Krishna, are grounded in His Divinity. The Knowledge of those Deeds is identical with the Deeds Themselves. It is for this reason that it is necessary to approach this Narrative with the reverence and confidence that is due to the Person of Godhead Himself. Such reverence and confidence are also necessarily complete. There must be no reservation. The least reservation will lead the hearer or reader of this Narrative to a certain face of the limited energy and not even to the level of the Purusha Avatars Who are related to this world without being of it.

But the mercy of Sree Krishna:Chaitanya enables all conditioned souls to pass

through an these graded stages of spiritual progress, by appearing to us in the form of this Divine Narrative of His Deeds. This Narrative has been made available by the mercy of Sree Advaita and Sree Nityananda Who are the eternal Divine Intermediaries between ourselves and the Supreme Lord.

The function of making our prostrated obeisance to Hari, Guru and the Vaishnavas is not an idle or symbolic ceremony. It is exercise of the function of devotion to Godhead made possible by the causeless grace of Sree Advaita who is the source of the material as well as the sanction of all spiritual, functions of us, conditioned souls, under all circumstances. Obeisance to Sree Advaita is obeisance to the Vaishnavas. Obeisance to Nityananda is obeisance to Sree Guru. Obeisance to Sree Krishna-Chaitanva is obeisance to Godhead Himself as He is. Obeisance to Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is obeisance both to Sree Krishna and His Divine Counter-Whole Sree Radhika in One.

The relationship of Sree Radhika to Sree Krishna must not be confounded with the mundane sexual relationship between male and female of this world. The service of Sree Radhika is not an amorous function in the disruptive specific unwholesome sense of the analogous mundane activity. That supposition, which is due to the mundane import of the term used in describing the Divine Function, may lead the ignorant critic to presume to find the defects of the mundane passion in even the Divine Activity as He is, i.e., in His Fullest and Most Perfect Manifestation. It is, therefore, necessary to implore our readers not to approach the study of this Narrative in such unnecessarily irreverent and superficial temper which will necessarily prevent his regarding the subject from the only genuine point of view, viz., that of the Scriptures. It is only by loyally following the method of submitting to look at the subject unreservedly from the point of view of the Narrative itself that it will be possible for the impartial reader, after he has gone through his self-imposed task with the patience that is due to the right understanding of a subject which is likely to be radically different, at any rate to many of our European readers, from most current standards in its outlook on and valuation of the activities of this world, to attempt to form a comparative estimate of the view of the Absolute that is presented to him in the following pages.

Vaishnavism stands alone among the revealed Religions of the world in providing a specific account of the Name, Form, Qualities, Activities and the individual personalities of the Servitors of Godhead Himself. The silence of the other Religions on this subject should not be misunderstood as implying the non-existence of any or all specification in the Absolute. There is also no rational ground for supposing that Godhead is unwilling or unable to disclose His Own Specific Self and Divine Paraphernalia to the serving impulse of pure souls.

All Glory to Sree Guru and Gauranga

SREE KRISHNA-CHAITANYA

Chapter I

—Country and Society—

The historical significance of the term Gauda, the name that is borne by the country of Sree Chaitanya's Nativity is obscure. It occurs in the works of the famous Grammarian Panini as the name of a well-known city 'of the East'. The geographical location of the regions bearing the name, referred to in ancient literature, presents a bewildering variety, being applied to tracts and towns scattered in all directions and attaining an extent that is sometimes equivalent to the greater part of Northern India. It supplies the designation to a wide division of the Brahmanas, a well known style of the Sanskrit rhetoricians and a technical term, connected with the metal 'silver', to the industrialists, of Old India. The name of the spiritual preceptor of Sree Sankaracharya is Gaudapada, While Sreeman Madhvacharya, an inhabitant of the extreme south of the country, bears the interesting name of "Gaudapurnananda". No theory regarding the historical origin or application of the word is yet forthcoming that

offers any satisfactory clue to the copious use of the word by the ancients in such diverse connections.

There is evidence to prove that there were similar grades in the geographical denotation of the word 'Gauda' also at the period of the Advent of Sree Chaitanya. It was then applied to (1) the country under the rule of the Muhammedan King of Bengal, (2) to his Capital situated in the modern district of Malda, (3) to the tract adjoining the old town of Nabadwip to which the Capital of the country had been transferred from Gauda in Malda by Lakshmana Sena, the last independent Hindu King of Bengal; (4) while the compound 'pancha-Gauda' 'the five Gaudas' meant practically the whole of Northern India and, specifically, (5) the five countries of Kurukshetra, Kanauj, Utkal, Mithila and Gauda (Bengal), (6) the Brahmana residents of which regions were also designated as 'pancha-Gauda' The terms 'Gauda' and 'Gaudamandala' (Circle of Gauda) used by the associates and followers of Sree Chaitanyadeva, as a designation of themselves and their country, mean the greater part of the modern province of Bengal with old Nabadwip 'the city of the Nine Islands,' as centre; and for the purpose of this Narrative we shall accordingly accept this external regional denotation of the word, without losing sight of its true spiritual import.

But it is well at the very outset to remind our readers of the historical fact that neither the Land nor the Activities of Sree Chaitanya are regarded by the authors of the works that form the original sources of this account, as historical, geographical, or any other entities in the mundane sense. The Gaudamandala, or Circle of Gauda is to them the spiritual realm of the Appearance of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya and. His eternally associated devotees. The spiritual significance of their attitude may be thus indicated. Godhead is All-powerful. There is a transcendental world in which He dwells with His Own. The only business of all inhabitants of that world is to serve Godhead directly. That world is the spiritual world. It is free from all limitations and defects of this mundane world. When Godhead chooses to come down into this world, He never does so only by Himself. Just as a high and mighty Sovereign of this mundane world, when he chooses to favour a

remote part of his dominions with his Royal visit, goes there with his attendants and other paraphernalia of sovereignty, in like manner Godhead also descends into this world with His Own, His Servitors, all His Divine Paraphernalia, and His Eternal Spiritual Realm. It is not possible for any earthly sovereign, even if he is so minded, to move out with all the circumstances and pomp of his Royal Magnificence, for sheer want of power and for other obvious reasons. But Godhead is not troubled by such difficulties. He is here in this world with His realm and complete followings and is present at one and the same time in His fully manifest realm of the spiritual world. That is to say, Divinity and His Realm without being duplicated, is capable of revealing Himself according to the serving aptitude of mundane beholders.

It is this which happens when the Supreme Lord manifests His Auspicious Appearance in this world. The realm of Gauda in which Sree Krishna-Chaitanya appears with His kindred, associates and eternal devotees, is not the mundane region that is visible to the eyes of conditioned souls. The Spiritual Circle of Gauda that appears to bound jivas in the figure of a definite tract of land of this physical world, is, in reality, in its own manifest nature, no other than the “White Island” (Svetadveepa) of the Scriptures, the eternal realm of the Divinity in His Own Most Beneficent Form. This principle of spiritual identity of periodic manifestation also applies to other parts of the sacred land of Bharata (India). This sacredness of the land is not a figment of the human imagination nor due to any association of any mundane country with the Appearances of the Divinity by way of fortuitous concurrences. The Holy Realm of Godhead, in all its infinite vastness and diversity, appears also in this world being identical with spiritual Bharata (India) as its centre. But spiritual Bharata is not always manifest to the view of fettered souls. When the Divinity chooses to come down into this world, the spiritual realm is also unveiled to the unobstructed gaze of mortals. ‘But unbelievers do not see what is then really opened to their view, just as the owl does not see the light of the Sun when he shines in all his mid-day splendour.’

It would not also be in strict conformity with historical judgment to regard the view just sketched as an exaggeration of patriotic partiality for the land of one’s

mundane birth. The Vaishnava point of view is that everything of this world is to be used in the service of Godhead, and it is only by such use of the most beautiful and valued things of this world that man is enabled to earn the position of the highest distinction that is open to him on this condition. This level of view regarding human life and this world, which marks the highest achievement of human civilization, has, of all countries of the world, been most nearly realized by the spiritual community of Vaishnavas in India. Indeed, Godhead Himself comes into this world only for the sake of the Vaisnavas who follow faithfully His highest teaching by desiring, instead of piety (dharma), wealth, sensuous pleasure, relief from worldly misery, etc., which are universally coveted by all mortals, only the unconditional service of the Divinity. In all parts of the world less spiritual people have always been engaged in a perpetual strife for the fulfillment of their mundane aspirations. Godhead has sometimes sent His agents to teach the peoples of other countries the transitory and miserable end of all worldly pursuits and thereby win them to desire for liberation and moral living. But such mere improvement of the procedure of earthly pursuits effected thereby, the summum bonum, in the shape of the unalloyed spiritual service of the Supreme Lord, is never attained. The quasi spiritual ideals help at best to establish a certain apparently moral order amidst the unrestrained pursuit of sensuous activities.

These facts offer the undisputed evidence that is historically available to all of us, which establishes the spiritual superiority of the theistic civilization in India and its premier claim to the Mercy of the Divinity by the sole right of His unalloyed service. The patriotic or any other worldly sentiment, has no place in such views.

As India is thus the most sacred country of the world, the land of Gauda is the most sacred of all parts of India. This is so because it corresponds to 'Svetadveep' wherein the Divinity abides eternally as Embodiment of Perfect Magnanimity. The land Braja, full of the most exquisite bliss, is the realm of the most delicious Rasa^[ii]1 Amorous dance of Krishna in the circle of the spiritual milkmaids.

1 pastimes of Youthful Krishna Who is identical with Sree Chaitanya. The land

of Gauda is most liberal, as it is only here that Godhead manifests the Leela^[iii]2 of bestowing on all the unalloyed love for Himself which alone confers on the emancipated jiva^[iv]3 the right of entry into the happy realm of Braja and join there in the eternal pastimes of Sree Sree Radha-Govinda. Therefore, for the same reason which makes the Svetadveepa in Sree Brindavana more magnanimous, the land of Gauda is more liberal than the enchanting realm of Braja overflowing with every bliss. There is also a corresponding mellowness in the subdued charms, reminiscent of the chastened mood of faithful lovers temporarily parted, of this land of Gauda, which can be utilised by any one who cares to enter its wide portals ever open to receive, with the unspeakable welcome of Divine love in its most unreserved and indiscriminate generosity, all those who want to receive the summum bonum free gift from the Hands of Godhead Himself .

The reader will now be in a position to understand why, the Vaishnava authors expatiate on the minutest features of the holy Circle of Gauda with such intense devotional fervour and why we can perfectly rely on any information of a historical or geographical nature, that they may have cared to record, as being free from all sectarian bias in its ordinary narrow worldly sense; as the genuine Vaishnava authors have nothing to do that is worldly either in their life or in their faith for which alone they live Most of these Acharayas lived by themselves a secluded life far from home and family on scanty alms procured by short rounds of day-to-day begging or given unsolicited by well wishers, and in the humblest styles conceivable even in India. Many of the them discarded inherited worldly affluence for greater convenience of devoting themselves to the practice of the religion which forms the subject of this work and for recording and expounding its principles for the benefit of all animate beings. Such is the spiritual Circle of Gauda and all truly pure souls are the denizens of the Eternal Realm of the Divinity.

The remains of old Nabadwip, the city of the 'Nine Islands' are situated at the junction of the Bhagirathi and Jalangi rivers about sixty-five miles above Calcutta. The present town of Nabadwip one of the 'Nine Islands' of old

Nabadwip. The name Nabadwip at the time of Sree Chaitanya was applied to the actual conglomerate of nine separate islands cut up by the channels of the Bhagirathi, which had their different individual designations also. The main part of the old city was situated on the eastern bank of the Bhagirathi which split up Nabadwip into two groups of 'Islands' of which four bearing respectively the names of Antardwip, Simantadwip, Godrumadwip and Madhyadwip were to the east, and the remaining five, viz. , Koladwip (modern town of Nadia), Rtudwip, Jahnudwip, Modadrumadwip and Rudradwip were located to the west, of the main channel of the Bhagirathi. These details are given clearly in several of the old books and they are supplemented by bits of topographical notices of old Nabadwip that have been recorded by later writers who treated the subject in pursuance of the traditional description.

Antardwip, as its name implies, was the central 'island', or the heart of the old town. Sree Mayapur, the quarter of Nabadwip which contained the house of Sree Jagannatha Misra, the father of Sree Chaitanya, was located in the centre of ,Antardwip. Accordingly, the old chroniclers, in describing Nabadwip, always compare it to a full-blown lotus afloat on the stream of the Bhagirathi. The eight islands surrounding Antardwip, which is the core of the Lotus, are described as forming its eight extended petals. Holy Mayapur, with the Yogapeetha or the House of God, is described as the central part of the core. The House of God thus forms the central point of an immense circle of which the circumference is stated to be thirty-two miles. This is the Circle of the Nine Islands. The Circle of Gauda is stated these writers to be 168 miles in circumference.

The Vaishnava authors are tireless in reminding their readers that these place appearing to mortal eyes as the divisions of an ordinary tract of land of this earth, must never be regarded as the real Nabadwip and Should not be revered as such. Such reverence would constitute an offense against the Abode of the Divinity which is transcendental. They lend no countenance to the practice, so prevalent in all parts of the world, of putting the seal and label of mundane history. and geography on spiritual sites and occurrences, a practice that has been the parent of much misery and of the worst superstitions

that abound in all the ancient creeds. The Divine cannot be pinned down to any place, time or event of this world. There cannot be a greater offense against Godhead than to suppose that His Body or anything pertaining to Him can at all be of the nature of the things of this world.

So 'Nabaddwip' of Vaishnavas is not a geographical town bearing the name situated in the geographical country known to the historians and geographers of this world under the name of Gauda. Such a place is not only not Nabadwip but if it is ever considered as real Nabadwip, the latter refuses to manifest her proper form to the view of an offender who chooses to think in this unspiritual way. Real or spiritual Navadwip, real or spiritual Sree Mayapur and real Yogapeetha, are open only to the view of the Vaishnavas, or uneclipsed serving souls, and whatever they say about the Divine Realm is also, therefore, necessarily true. What other people designate as Nabadwip or Sree Mayapur or the Circle of Gauda or Bharatavarsha, in as much as it happens to be the mundane view, is entitled to no hearing from a Vaishnava and the very notion that the realm of the Divinity can possibly be any other than spiritual should be most carefully discarded once for all by those who want to understand what the Vaishnavas have really to say.

The reader, who complains that such a procedure will block the way of impartial scientific enquiry, would not also be quite reasonable; because it is he who, under this unscientific pretext, really, wants to block the way of the only true inquiry. What the Vaishnava wants the empiric scientist to admit is that he should allow the devotee to deliver the tidings of the Spiritual Realm and not to insist on identifying the geography and history of this world with the Geography and History of the Spiritual Realm. The empiricist is also not entitled to exclude spiritual Geography and History from the account of the spiritual events if his purpose really be to represent a thing, as it actually is, by available evidence and not as he thinks it ought to be. The two categories are quite distinct from one another; and it would be fair to the spiritual subject to admit unreservedly its transcendental nature, not merely in theory but in practice as well.

If the career of Sree Chaitanya is written in accordance with the rules laid down

by empiric biographers, the narrative would be worse than a parody: it would be a blasphemy. Such a performance is not the purpose of the writer. His object is to faithfully record the events as he finds them in the original sources, offering no opinion of his own except only such as help the elucidation of the subject in its spiritual sense which is foreign to ordinary mundane experience. This method leads to frequent digressions to caution both the writer as well as the readers at every step not to misunderstand the subject. These digressions, which are offered as the real explanation of the subject, have been gathered from the monumental works of the Acharyas, who quote text and verse of the Scriptures to prove by scriptural evidence the absolute truth of every word they write and take no credit for originality, and in conformity with the personal experience of the transcendental teaching and activities the writer's most revered Gurudeva and his associates.

The geographical site of the Yogapeetha, the Abode of Godhead, passed out of the memory of most people due to the misfortune reflected by tradition of havoc wrought by the shiftings of the course of the Bhagirathi. The religion taught By Sree Chaitanya was not properly grasped by posterity and suffered from misrepresentation in the hands of pseudo-teachers who soon abounded at Nabadwip and in other parts of the country. There have, indeed, been a small number of persons forming the inner following of the Acharyas, in all these generations, who have kept up the real tradition. But these have failed to win, for the purely spiritual religion up till now, any appreciable measure of general The pseudo-Vaishnavas themselves also divided into an increasing number of hostile groups, each of which followed a novel inspiration, some of them taking to grossly immoral practices which they were not ashamed to give out as the religion taught by Sree Chaitanya. The history of these tragic occurrence will be told in the concluding chapters of this narrative. The preponderance of the pseudo-forms of the religion has, however, secured their deserved banishment from the society of the cultured classes, and in consequence of this, the real tradition itself has tended to fall into utter neglect and is regarded with mistrust even by the orthodox Hindu society at the instigation of the Smarta priests.

The pseudo-cults, that usurped the name of the religion of love, were invaded

by all those evils of the older atheistical creeds which Sree Chaitanya wishes to put down. The descendants of the old associates and followers of Sree Chaitanya set themselves up as hereditary teachers of the pseudo-religion which proved to them the means of eking out a miserable livelihood by exploitation of the credulity of the lowest classes and the most immoral sections of the people. The reader may for the present accept this as a moderate statement of the evils that have made us forget the teaching of Sree Chaitanya, in order to be able to understand why His Religion in course of time ceased to prevail in the upper ranks of society and was allowed to be substituted by wretched counterfeits to suit the whims and wickedness of designing quacks and knaves who earned their living by pandering to the worst vices of the dregs of society claiming exemption from even the ordinary salutary checks of communities obeying the rules of the old civilization of the country.

It is this which has made the identification of the old geographical sites a matter of hostile interest to the professional Goswamis even of this day and their misguided followers. When the old town was being deserted the shrines and the holy Forms (Vigrahas) were taken by their migrating proprietors to the new sites. And, as the cultured society took little interest in the matter, the old sites quickly passed out of the memory of the nation. But with the revival of interest in the religion of Sree Chaitanya among the cultured classes within the last fifty years or so, there also arose a natural desire to find out the old sites connected with Sree Chaitanya.

Neither has it been really difficult to discover them with the help of the old books. The actual site of the home of Sree Jagannath Misra which had escaped the general havoc wrought by the Bhagirathi, has been settled on the testimony of Vaishnava authors supplemented by the help of the actual knowledge of the most revered Vaishnava saints. The process by which the old sites have been identified is the same as that by which at the time of Sree Chaitanya the holy sites of Sree Brindavan were identified and made known. For the proper identification of a spiritual site the testimony of the pure Vaishnavas is, spiritually speaking, the one thing needful, as they alone are privileged to recognize the site. Geographical and historical considerations by themselves are

extraneous and can only be ancillary to the spiritual method.

Sree Mayapurdham, so identified, is situated geographically to the east of the river Bhagirathi, nearly opposite the present town of Nadia which is located on the western bank of the river identifiable with old Koladwip one of the “Nine Islands” forming old Nabadwip.

The name Antardwip, changed into Atopur (vide Bhakti Ratnakar), persists to the present day and includes Sree Mayapur which still maintains its name unchanged. The river has constantly shifted its course, up to quite recent times. The oldest maps enable us to follow the changes only as far back as 1763 A.D. We have to rely exclusively on the testimony of the old writers for avoiding mistaken identification that is being attempted by interested parties by availing the shiftings of the location of the places during the two hundred and seventy six years that elapsed between the Appearance of Sree Chaitanya and the publication of Major Rennel’s Atlas. But tradition had always pointed to those deserted parts as the site of the old city. Of this fact we possess reliable and continuous testimony.

The method, that appears to us on the whole to be best for the purpose of describing the place, is to follow the old writers, taking help of such light as is afforded by recent investigations for the purpose of understanding their statements. It is not our purpose to enter at this place into the details of any recent evidence for which the reader is referred to the investigations of Thakur Bhaktivinode which have been summarized in different publications and which have formed the basis of subsequent inquiries regarding the real position of the old sites.

Sree Mayapur which has escaped the widespread destruction that was apparently caused by sudden changes of the course of the Bhagirathi from a very early period is distinguishable from the adjoining lower alluvial plain by its elevation and older soil of adhesive clay. A modern village occupying a part of

the site of Mayapur is inhabited by a number of Muhammedan families who began to settle on this old site, which appears in course of time to have been totally deserted, from the year 1785. This is traceable

The actual site of the Yogapeetha, the Home of Sree Jagannatha Misra, was identified by the famous saint Chaitanyadas Babaji about eighty years ago. It appears that the actual site was known as such to the few Vaishnavas who cared to be informed about it and had also been visited by them for their devotional purposes. The place was noted by the inhabitants of adjoining villages for alleged peculiarities. They maintain to this day that the place used to be always overgrown with sacred tulasi, for which reason people had instinctively desisted from any act of defilement or occupation for the purpose of erecting any private dwelling. This reverence towards the site which is displayed by the Muhammedan residents in occupation of the adjoining plots, indeed, point to a definite conclusion. The row of high mounds, that are now crowned by a number of substantial buildings erected by the piety of Vaishnavas since the re-discovery of the old sites, had never before been occupied by the villagers on their own account who had always regarded with a sort of sacred awe those sites which were collectively known as the 'Vaisnava settlement' (Vairagi danga).

There are many current stories of miraculous occurrences connected with the sites. But the most startling miracle of all is the fact that the persistent local tales are now found to be confirmed in their details by the topographical description of the old writers. For example, we read in the Bhakti Ratnakar that the court-yard of Sribas Pandit, where Sree Chaitanya inaugurated His own distinctive form of worship viz., the congregational Kirtan of Hari and where, in the early days of His Preaching, Sree Chaitanya used to chant daily the Kirtan all through the nights in the company of His close associates, was situated one hundred dhanus (two hundred yards) to the north of the 'House of God'. A plot of land, adjoining the site of the House of Jagannath Misra, finally and definitely identified by Sree Jagannath Das Babaji and easily recognizable by the evidence of local tradition, still bears the name of 'khola bhangar danga,' i.e., the mound where the 'khol' i.e. mridanga was broken, which event, according to Sree Chaitanya Bhagavata, the biography of Sree Chaitanya by a contemporary,

took place in a locality close to the 'yard of Sribas'. The site is found to have continued to bear this name from the time when the 'khol' of the offending townsman, who persisted in playing on the mridanga for accompanying the chant, was broken by Chand Kazi for arresting the further progress of the movement, as described in that work.

The tomb of Chand Kazi himself, who afterwards turned into a staunch supporter of Sree Chaitanya, still exists at a place, the situation of which perfectly, tallies with the topography of the books. It has, therefore, been possible on the testimony of such excellent corroborative evidence to identify many of the old sites and even the actual location of the houses of the prominent persons connected with the Activities of Sree Chaitanya in old Nabadwip.

Antardwip which formed the heart of the old straggling city was situated at the time of Sree Chaitanya on the eastern bank of the Bhagirathi whose current then flowed under the city. The old bank of the river is identifiable with the help of the old topography. The following old sites have been traced up until now in the above manner—(1) The House of God (Bhagavadgriham), i.e., the Yogapeetha or House of Sree Jagannath Misra, father of Sree Chaitanya; (2) the house of Sreebas Pandit in whose 'yard' the Kirtana was first regularly sung in company; (3) the house of Sree Advaitacharya, the meeting-place of the Vaishnavas in the early days of the movement; (4) the house of Sree Chandrasekhar Acharya in which Sree Chaitanya acted the part of Sree Rukmini in a dramatic performance staged by His associates; (5) the tomb of Chand Kazi which is shaded by a marvelous champaka tree reputed to be over four hundred years old; (6) the old bank of the Bhagirathi marked by its four prominent bathing ghats, viz., (a) the ghat of old Siva, (b) Gauranga's own ghat, (c) Madhai's ghat, and (d) Barakona ghat, all of which possess famous associations; (7) the shrines of old Siva and of praura Maya. All these, with the exception of (5) belong to the village that still bears the name of Mayapur.

Close to the tomb of Chand Kazi is the site of Sridhar's house. The house of Chandrasekhar is situated on 'Ballal's Tank' which bears the name of the

famous independent Hindu king of Bengal, whose successor Lakshmana Sena permanently removed the capital from Gauda near Malda to the old town of Nabadwip. 'The Mound of Ballal' situate within a short distance of Sree Chaitanya Math is regarded locally as marking the site of the palace of the Sena kings which was shunned by all persons after its desecration by the first Muhammedan conquerors of Bengal. The residence of Sree Nilambar Chakravarti, father of Sree Chaitanya's mother Sree Sachi Devi, was in the quarter of the town where the Kazi lived, which is the same as present Bamanpukur (identical with Belpukur of the chroniclers).

We shall, therefore, follow the order of the sites that was observed by pious devotees who performed the circumambulation of the holy Nabadwipdham as described by the old writers, in offering a brief account of the surroundings of Sree Mayapur that are associated with the early career of Sree Chaitanya.

Antardwip (literally, the central island), within which Sree Mayapur is situated, forms the first of the 'Nine Islands' and the starting point of the circumambulators. The more famous of the recognizable old sites of Antardwip (Atopur) have already been noticed above.

Simantadwip is the next 'Island' that is reached by the pilgrim. Its present name is Simulia situated to the north of Sree Mayapur. Sardanga close to Simulia contains an old shrine of Sree Jagannathadeva. Sondanga, Villvapushkarini, the tract known as megharchar, etc., lie close together. The house of Sachi Devi's father, as already stated, was situated near Belpukur.

The third of the 'Islands' is Godrumadwip (modern Gadigachha) to the south and east of Sree Mayapur. Close to it is Suvarna-bihar with very ancient associations. Other old places of this locality are Harihara-kshetra, which contains the mounds Surya, Brahma, Indra and other gods, and . Devapalli with an old temple of Sree Nrisingha. This 'Island' contains the bhajan kutir (cottage of devotional practice) and samadhi (resting place) of Thakur Bhaktivinode.

The fourth 'Island' is Madhyadwip (Majida) situated to the south of Sree

Mayapur. It contains the Mounds of the Seven Rishis, a channel bearing the name of Gomati, the adjoining wooded tract being known as Naimisharanya, Sree Brahmanpuskaras (Baman-paukhera), Uchchahatta (Hatdanga) and other sites of pious association.

The fifth of the 'Islands' is Koladwip (the modern town of Nadia) to the west-south-west of .Sree Mayapur. At the time of Sree Chaitanya Koladwip or Kulia was separated from Nadia, the Home of Sree Chaitanya, only by the intervening main channel of the Bhagirathi. It is called 'the place of expiation' in reference to the incidents connected with Gopal-Chapal and Devananda Pandit, whose offenses were forgiven by Sree Chaitanya at Kulia. it is sometimes designated as 'the high bank of Kulia,' and is connected by old writers with very ancient events. Close to it is Samudragarh.

The sixth 'Island' is Rtudwip south-west of Koladwip. In it is situated the village of Champahati which was formerly a grove of champaka trees. The old shrine of Sree Gaur-Gadadhar erected by Dvija Baninath, one of the principal associates of Sree Chaitanya, still exists at Champahati. It was also the residence of the famous poet Jayadeva of the time of King Lakshmana Sena.

The seventh 'Island' was anciently called Jahnudwip (modern Jahnnagar) to the north of Rutdwip. Close to it is Vidyanagar where the Academy of the famous Vasudeva Sarbahhauma was situated .

Modadrumadwip is the eighth 'Island' to the north of Jahnudwip. Here is the village of Mamgachhi, the birth-place of Thakur Brindabandas, author of Sree Chaitanya-Bhagavat, the contemporary, systematic account of the career of Sree Chaitanya written in Bengali verse. At Mamgachhi was located the paternal residence of Sree Malini Devi, spouse of Sribas Pandit. Close to the birthsite of Thakur Brindabandas is the shrine of Sree Madan Gopala installed by Sree Vasudeva Datta Thakur, brother of Sree Mukunda Datta Thakur of Chattagram, the close associate of Sree Chaitanya. This shrine contains also the holy Form

(Vigraha) installed by Saranga Murari Thakur, the associate of Sree Chaitanya.

The ninth 'Island' is Rudradwip north-east of .Modadrumadwip.

These 'Nine Islands' constitute the Circle of Sridham Nabadwip the circumference of which is given as thirty-two miles.

Sree Mayapur and the adjoining places are at the present day, in their outward appearance, very different from the old town of Nabadwip at the time of Sree Chaitanya. The present town of Nadia, which is not a very- beautiful place except its shrines, is now the only part of the 'City of the Nine Islands' that bears anything approaching an urban appearance, judged even by the modest standard of a Bengal town. The other parts are almost purely rural and are mostly overgrown with jungle. The numerous small channels of the Bhagirathi, which abound about this point, impart a charming openness to the landscape and salubrious freshness to the soft rural breezes that love to haunt the silent places of practices of the only absolute pure faith. The main stream of the sacred Bhagirathi, which is here swelled to noble proportion by the tribute of the great body of sweet and pure water that is poured into it just below Sree Mayapur by the Jalangi, forms now, as it did also at the time of Sree Chaitanya, the central feature of the countryside. But the main current of the Bhagirathi in old time flowed past the landing places of the old populous city. The riverside of the old city is partly traceable. The bank was washed away probably by a sudden shifting of the course of the river due to a great earthquake that fearfully damaged the place in 1515 A.D. shortly after Sree Chaitanya had renounced home and family

But the splendours of the old city lingered long in the memory of the inhabitants. Thakur Brindabandas who wrote his Divine Narrative, Sree Chaitanya Bhagavat, not long after the disappearance of the Supreme Lord, gives the following description of the old town to his contemporaries who could also confirm his eulogies. "There was not another town in the world", says Thakur Brindabandas, "like Nabadwip where Sree Chaitanya was born. The divine architect must have known beforehand His impending Advent and had accordingly lavished with a prodigal hand all his bounty to make of

Nabadwip the ideal place that it was. Who could describe the opulence of Nabadwip? Every single bathing-ghat was thronged by a hundred thousand bathers. Each caste resident in Nabadwip had lakhs of members of every age. All the people were highly skilled in their respective occupations by the grace of the goddess of learning. All of them boasted of being masters in their line and mere boys contended with the Brahmana teachers in scholastic disputations. People from various countries flocked to Nabadwip. One could obtain the real taste of learning only by studying at Nabadwip. The great fame of its learning drew countless students who were taught by an incredibly large number of the most erudite teachers. This atmosphere of learning was also one of great happiness by the kind glance of the goddess of wealth.

But the spiritual condition of the town, in which we are specially interested, was not encouraging. This is what the same competent observer has to say on the subject. "The people were blessed with the choicest favours of the goddesses of learning and wealth. In these respects they had attained the summit of their desire. There was only one drawback. The time of all people was wholly wasted in the enjoyments of secular pursuits. The world was destitute of devotion for Krishna and Rama (Baladeva). At this earliest stage of the Iron Age there came to prevail prematurely those worst practices that have been predicted by the Scriptures about the far-off future of this Age of Evil. The people sat up whole nights at the songs of Mangalchandi (goddess of worldly blessing) . This was the only practice of religion known to the people. There were a few who in their vanity worshipped the goddess Bishahari (healer of poison). Some lavished immense wealth on the making of grand idols. Wealth was squandered on the marriages of sons and daughters. The time of the people was passed in such vanities. The great Chakravartis and Bhattacharyas were wholly unaware of the significance of the great Shastras. By their teaching of the Scriptures they earned for themselves and their hearers only entanglement in the toils spread by the pitiless hand of Death. They never expounded the Divine Dispensation of the Age in the shape of the kirtana of Krishna. They spoke only of faults, and never of the good qualities, of anyone. There was a great number of arrogant recluses and ascetics whose mouths never uttered such a sound as the Names of Hari. Those persons, who were most reputed for

their piety, used to utter the Names of Govinda and Pundarikaksha only at their baths. Even those who professed to teach the Geeta and the Bhagavatam, never employed their tongues to the task of explaining the principles of devotion to Godhead. No one could be persuaded even by entreaty to take the Name of Krishna. Every one harped ad nauseum on the merits of learning and social rank.'

There was one notable exception to the above rule. 'Sree Advaita Acharya who lived at Nadia was most highly respected for his unrivaled learning, his high birth and honoured position in society. He was an eminent professor of the Scriptures and excelled in expounding the true spiritual practice and principle. He was equal to the great Sankara (Siva) himself in expounding the subject of devotion to Krishna. He was equally well versed in all branches of the Scriptures; and, in teaching them, he was always careful to explain that devotion to the Feet of Krishna was the essence of all the Scriptures. He was always engaged in worshipping Krishna with the greatest ardour, in the simplest and purest manner, by the offering of sprays of the holy tulasi, dearly loved of Krishna, steeped in the sacred water of the Ganges. He often gave vent to deep ejaculations of sorrow, resembling the rumbling of thunder and impregnated with the fiery energy of Krishna, which, passing beyond the limits of this universe, reverberated in the Holy Realm of Vaikuntha.

Sree Advaita Acharya was the leader of a small band of sincere devotees who were at this time settled in Nabadwip. These Vaishnavas were opposed by atheists, specially on account of their practice of frequently uttering the Name of Hari with a loud voice. This practice together with their theistic views was sufficient to mark them out as the legitimate objects of their invectives and ridicule, from which they could not be effectively shielded even by the great influence of Sree Advaita Acharya himself who was regarded with respect and awe all over Nadia.

The reason for such hostility were many: the foremost being that the Vaishnavas eschewed all worldly pleasures and enjoyments, which was regarded as a deprecation of the life of epicurean ease that was fashionable in all

ranks of the then society. There was no want of aggressive epicureans in that Age also who openly condemned all pretensions to a life that was in every way above animality. They wrote scurrilous ballads against the Vaishnavas and sang them in the streets. 'The ascetic, the chaste woman, no less than others,' so ran these effusions, 'will go the way of all the flesh. He alone can be said to have done good deeds in his previous birth who rides the dola and the horse and is preceded and followed by scores of running footmen. Much as your Holiness cries in the mood of devotion, yet it does not cancel your Holiness's sorrows of poverty. Your Holiness never ceases to call upon the Name of Hari with a very loud voice. It may surely anger the Lord to be addressed by shouts.' The frank realism of these fifteenth century Bengali followers of Charvaka cannot be outdone by their most up-to-date successors of the present day. This was almost the general attitude of the citizens of a profligate town devoid of all taste for anything higher than bodily enjoyments of a refined character engendered by their engrossing secular studies and urban pursuits.

There was another class of objectors who also ridiculed the mode of kirtana with a loud voice. The ground for their objection was, however, different from that of the refined epicureans. 'I myself,' such were the ideas of these people, 'am the Brahman Who is devoid of all the qualities. Why then do they make any such distinction as that between servant and Master?' These men were the worst enemies of the Vaishnavas. There were also many persons who looked upon the Vaishnavas as designing worldly people who took to begging to earn their livelihood by that easy method, for sheer idleness.

We frequently hear the complaint that religion suffers degradation by scarcity of people who really lead the religious life. It is supposed that if religion is freed from the clutches of these people who have so long monopolized it for their profit and pleasure and have degraded it by their foul lives, people in general would voluntarily follow the lead of truly devout persons. If only the preachers of religion, say these open atheists, lead truly spiritual lives themselves, their example would prove irresistible in winning everybody to spiritual living. But the opposite of this is what almost invariably happens in this world. The sincere devotees are always ridiculed and persecuted by the people. This is also

exactly as was likely in the circumstances. Those who are steeped in worldliness have a spontaneous dislike for persons who openly profess principles and follow a mode of life that are in essential contradiction to theirs. The conduct of the devotees is always regarded by worldly people, who have no inclination for listening to the unpalatable truth, as both foolish and mischievous. Therefore, instead of following the example of such persons the worldlings always look upon the pure souls as enemies of every useful institution and set themselves in vindictive opposition to their activities. To what ferocious persecution the bona fide Vaishnavas have been subjected at the hands of their opponents from time to time, is not sufficiently well known, although it forms the most pathetic and the most shameful chapter of the history of India. Sree Chaitanya says, "It is our only duty always to chant the kirtana of Hari with humility greater than that of the blade of grass, with greater endurance than that of the tree, giving all due honour to others without desiring any honour for ourselves." But nothing can make amends, in the eyes of worldly people, for the crime of chanting the Name of Hari or proclaiming the unvarnished Truth in and out of season and at all time with body, mind and speech as required by the teaching of all the Scripture embodied in the institution of the whole-time kirtana of the Absolute.

We have already described in a preceding chapter the state of religious opinion in the country of the time of Sree Chaitanya. There was no lack of unspiritual doctrines and practices upheld by ancient philosophical systems most of which were mere apologies, or even justifications, of the ordinary ungodly practices of the misguided jivas of this world. The system that was in most vogue among the Pandits of Nabadwip at this period and has been fashionable ever since, is the atheistical system of Nabya Nyaya. The other atheistical systems of philosophy were also assiduously taught in the schools of Nabadwip. We learn that scholars even from Mithila (Tirhoot) came to Nabadwip to study the New Logic. Sannyasins and learned Professors from Benares and all parts of North India came to Nabadwip for the study of Vedanta. We also read of students coming to Nabadwip even from distant Kanchi and the southernmost part of the country.

These materialistic studies had acquired such preponderance at that period that

scholarship and ungodliness came to be regarded as necessarily identical. The masses sang the songs of Mangalchandi and considered the endeavour for increasing the means of worldly enjoyment as the ideal of religion. The common people, and especially the wealthy trading communities, performed with great eclat the worship of Mangalchandi and, by subsidizing the Brahmana Pandits with liberal pecuniary gifts, were enabled to buy their subservient approval of those unscriptural practices. Much money was recklessly squandered on the short-lived idols and no less on the exhibition of pantomime dolls, which was an invariable and costly item of expense on all festive occasions. There were very few permanent Holy Vighrahas in Bengal at that time. The worship of the permanent Holy Vighraha became a tradition in Bengal only subsequent to the Advent of Sree Chaitanya and as the effect of His Teachings. Temporary images were the only objects of worship. Those images were immersed in water after the festivity in their honour was concluded, on the wrong assumption that the Form of Godhead is a material and temporary entity.

This posture of affairs filled the devotees with grief and despair. No one served Godhead, no one ever talked about Him, or took His Holy Name, or could be persuaded to listen to any discourse about Him. This was the blighted waste glutted with every form of luxury aggravated by the strenuous pursuit of worldly knowledge, which evoked the tenderest solicitude, of that small band of pure souls and impelled them to adopt every method that could be devised for rousing the deluded people to a sense of their eternal duty and thereby saving them from their impending terrible doom. But all their efforts for the amelioration of the spiritual condition of the people were misunderstood and responded to by the bitterest invectives, ridicule and cruel persecution! Yet those servants of Godhead did not lose their faith nor relax their efforts, although their very food did not taste in their mouths at the sight of the miseries of their kindred. The Bhagavatas applied themselves to their devotions in the forms of the worship of Krishna, discourse about Krishna, and bathing in the holy stream of the Ganges. And all of them incessantly blessed the world, 'May Krishna soon bestow His mercy on all!'

Chapter II

—Family and Elders—

The Advent of Sree Chaitanya was preceded by the appearance of a numerous body of pure devotees in different parts of the country who joined Him at Nabadwip in due course and became incorporated in His Activities. This galaxy of the stars of the first magnitude occupies the foreground of the picture that it is our purpose to offer. Sree Chaitanya is unintelligible without intimate knowledge of the doings of His associates. He is expressed in the only intelligible form in the lives of His associates. He is expressed in the only intelligible form in the lives of His bona fide devotees. These devotees were not so many imitators of Sree Chaitanya. Each of them has a great, living, individual personality; each serves Sree Chaitanya in his own way and helps to demonstrate the quality of unbounded catholicity and endless variety of manifestation in individual personalities of our only eternal function. The conduct of these devotees is even more instructive than the Transcendental Activities of Sree Chaitanya Himself Whom it was the function of these great souls to express by serving the Absolute Truth identical with the Personality of Sree Chaitanya under every form of circumstance and every manner of disposition, by the method of incorporated, subordinate service.

The Vaishnava authors always offer the esoteric view of those events. When Godhead Himself comes down into this world, He does not come un-attended by His eternal associates and Divine paraphernalia. They accompany Him to this world. The transcendental realm of the 'White Island' is the Eternal Divine Abode of Sree Chaitanya Who is identical with Sree Krishna and presents the Divinity's Own Benevolent Nature dominating over all other Divine Qualities.

The Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya dwells in the White Island, as does Krishnachandra in Braja, with all His elders, kindred, associates and complete entourage. When Sree Chaitanya deigns to come down into this world, He comes in His Fullness, with all His elders, associates, servitors and realm. His

advent is, therefore, preceded by the appearance of His elders. All these are a part and parcel of Himself and are in fact the extension of His own Divine Self. It is by their reciprocal means that the Lord manifests His own Full Personality. What the Lord is in His supermanifest Nature cannot and need not be known to any one except Himself. Others need know the Lord only to the fullest extent and in the fullest manner in which He chooses to manifest Himself to them individually. By the manifestation of Godhead to the individual soul, the latter is fully satisfied and, as a matter of fact, such an individual does not desire, nor does he think it necessary to know anything more, not merely for the time being but for all time.

The jiva to whom Godhead reveals Himself sees the same Divine manifestation everywhere and always, in His infinity of aspects. His cherished Divinity is to him verily an endless Ocean of perfect and exquisite bliss, free from every species of unwholesomeness, imperatively requiring his perennial loving service by His perpetual manifestations. The appearance of the Lord is for the purpose of making His devotees happy by affording them the Sight of Himself. The establishment of religion and the destruction of demons who appear as the enemies of Godhead do not require the Personal Appearance of Supreme Godhead Sree Krishna Himself. These functions can be, and as a matter of fact are ordinarily, performed by the Vishnu Avatars, or sometimes even by the favoured among the pure jivas, by His command. The establishment of the samkirtana of Krishna, which is the Divine Dispensation of this Kali Age, is effected by the Avatara for the Age, and it would not be necessary for Godhead to come down into this world for this purpose alone.

But there is a function which cannot be delegated, viz., that of pleasing the devotees. Love for Himself can neither be conferred nor be satisfied by anything short of Himself. It was for the purpose of bestowing, on fallen jivas, love for Himself in the perfect form that is found only in Goloka, that Sree Krishna, wearing the devotional mood and grace of Sree Radhika, appeared in this world in His Eternal Identical Form of Sree Krishna Chaitanya, with all His associates, elders and servitors eternally manifest in the 'White Island', the realm of Krishna's boundless and causeless Mercy.

In Braja Sree Radhika sets the model for the highest service of Krishna. In the 'White Island' it is Sree Krishna Himself who performs the function of teaching all individual souls how Sree Radhika serves Sree Krishna in Braja, by putting on Sree Radhika's grace and devotion in order to enable Himself to serve Sree Krishna after the manner of Sree Radhika in Her highest Mood, viz., during Her separation from Sree Krishna. The service that is rendered by Sree Radhika manifests itself in this world in Braja at the close of the Dvapara Age. But in its direct manifestation it is not at all understood by mortals. It is only the Lord Himself Who can bestow this perfect loving devotion to Himself even on souls that are averse to Him on principle and thereby enable them to realize the true meaning of such pure devotion.

This explanation of the real purpose of the advent of Sree Chaitanya is fully corroborated by the Scriptures and by the Activities of Sree Chaitanya Himself. When godhead Himself appears in this world, all His secondary Manifestations automatically merge in Him. It was in this wise that there were born among men, by the command of Godhead, in advance of His own Appearance, the kindreds, associates and servitors of the Lord.

Sree Ananta, Siva, Brahma, the Rishis and all the relations and associates of every divine Avatara were born and their prototypes. some of them appeared in Nabadwip, some in Chattagram, Srihatta, some were born in Rahr, in Odra, and the West. the devotees descending into this world from their transcendental realm appeared in various places, and, coming up subsequently to Nabadwip, were there joined together around the Person of the Lord. All the Vaishnavas were born in Nabadwip, except a few who appeared elsewhere.

The Elders who were first to appear were Sree Sachi, Sree Jagannath, Sree Madhabendra Puri, Sree Keshava Bharati, Sree Isvara Puri, Sree Advaita Acharya, Sree Pundarik Vidyanidhi, Sree Thakur Haridas, Sree Upendra Misra, father of Sree Jagannath Misra, with his seven sons, Sree Nilambar Chakravarti,

father of Sree Sachi Devi, Sree Sree Prabhu Nityananda, Sree Gangadas Pandit, Sree Murari Gupta, Sree Mukunda and others.

Our records show that a certain Brahmana of Western India, bearing the name of Sree Madhukar Misra, a devotee of Sree Sree Narayana, for some unknown reason, came to Sylhet and settled there. Sree Upendra Misra was the second son of Sree Madhukar Misra. Sree Upendra Misra was a Vaishnava, a great scholar, wealthy and possessed of an abundance of good qualities. Sree Upendra Misra was the father of seven sons,—(1) Kamsari, (2) Paramananda, (3) Jagannath, (4) Sarbeswar, (5) Padmanabh, (6) Janardan, and (7) Trilokanath. Sree Jagannath Misra, one of the seven sons of Sree Upendra Misra, migrated from Sylhet to Nabadwip, the emporium of all learning of the Age. The title of Sree Jagannath Misra, earned by his shastric scholarship, was Purandara.

At Nabadwip Sree Purandara Misra espoused Sree Sachi Devi, the eldest daughter of Sree Nilambar Chakravarti. With the intention of dwelling in the neighbourhood of the sacred stream of the Bhagirathi, that has issued from the Feet of Vishnu, in the company of high-born Sree Sachi Devi, who was the embodiment of devotion to Vishnu, pure-hearted magnanimous Purandara Misra settled in Sree Mayapur in the central 'Island' of the City of Nine Islands. Sree Chandrasekhar Acharya was the maternal uncle (mother's sister's husband) of Sree Chaitanya. Sree Murari Gupta, the author of Sree Chaitanya Charit, belonging to a Vaidya family of Sylhet, had migrated to Nabadwip. He was senior in years to Sree Chaitanya. Sree Pundarik Vidyanidhi, also known as 'Premanidhi, and 'Acharyanidhi,, had his paternal home in the village of Mekhala about fourteen miles to the north of the town of Chittagong, where his sacred 'seat' still exists. His partner's name was Ratnavati. His father was Vaneswar (or Suklambar) Bhatta and his mother's name was Ganga Devi. He was the disciple of Sree Madhabendra Puri and was himself accepted as his Guru by Sree Gadadhar Pandit Goswami. Sree Chaitanya called Pundarik Vidyanidhi 'father' and bestowed on him the name of 'Premanidhi' indicative of servitorship of Godhead. Sribas and his younger brother Sree Rama left their home at Sree Mayapur and removed to Kumarhatta after Sree Chaitanya's renunciation of the world.

Sree Nityananda Prabhu, the Associated Facsimile of Sree Chaitanya, made His appearance in the village of Ekchakra in the country of Rahr, not far from Mollarpur station of the E.I. Railway, within the modern district of Birbhum. Hadai Pandit or Hadai Ojha, the father of Nityananda, was a good Brahmana from Mithila, resembling Vasudeva in the immaculate purity of his nature. The name of the wife of Hadai Pandit was Padmavati. Nityananda made His appearance in this world on the tithi which is ever hallowed by His birth, that corresponds to the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Magh. As a child, Nityananda startled all the neighbours by being constantly occupied in the company of His associates in rehearsing the events of the Avatars of Vishnu. The details of these childish pastime have been reverentially preserved. Their nature may be briefly indicated.

He made His playmates form themselves into the assembly of gods. One of the boys, representing the Earth, having complained to it of her unbearable sufferings under the crushing weight of iniquities, those children who acted as members of the assembly of gods repaired to the bank of the adjoining river and there prayed to the Lord Who rests in the Ocean of Milk. One of the boys, hid behind the tree, gives this reply of Godhead to their prayer, 'I will soon be born in the Home of Vasudeva at Mathura'. Sometimes personating the Divine Avatara of the Dwarf, Nityananda affected to deliver Bali. On another occasion He would fall into a swoon acting the part of Lakshmana in the Leela of Godhead's Avatara as Sree Ramachandra hit by the powerful dart of Indrajit. Then one of the boys, acting the part of Hanuman, hastened to procure the required curative herb from the Gandhamadana Mount and by that means effected His recovery. Such pastimes of the little Boy amazed all beholders who could not account for this extraordinary conduct of the little Child. Twelve years were passed in these pleasant activities under the roof of His parents.

Nityananda set out on His long travel to all places of pilgrimage at the age of twelve. The incident that immediately led to this long pilgrimage is thus stated. A certain sannyasin became a chance-guest at the house of Hadai Pandit. He begged of Hadai Pandit to give Nityananda to him; and, in order not to transgress against the rule laid down by the Shastras, Hadai Pandit found himself obliged, against his own wish, to hand to the sannyasin the Darling of

his heart Who was much more to him than even his own life. The grief of the parents, in being thus parted for good from their Child of twelve, knew no bounds. The nature of the renunciation of the world for the sake of Godhead must on no account be confounded with renunciation for any other purpose, which latter is an unpardonable and clear dereliction of one's duty. The renunciation exhibited by Godhead and His devotees redounds to the good of the whole world, and, most of all, of those very persons who appear, to the superficial observer, to be the greatest sufferers by their abandonment.

Lord Nityananda, after thus leaving His parental home, traveled to all the tirthas. in company of the sannyasin, till the twentieth year of His age. The places He thus visited include Bakreswar, Vaidyanath, Gaya, Kasi, Prayag, Mathura, Brindabana, Hastinapur, Dwaraka, Siddhapura, Matsyatirtha, Siva-Kanchi, Vishnu-Kanchi, Kurukshetra, Bindu Sarobar, Pravaasa, Sudarsantirtha, Tritakup, Vishala, Brahmattirtha, Chakratirtha, Prati-Srota, Naimisharanya, Ayodhya, Sringaharpur, Kausiki, Pulastasrama, Gomati, Gandaki, Mahendragiri, Haridwar, Godavari, Benvattirtha, Sree Parbata, Sree Ranganatha, Hari-kshetra, Rishabha-Parbata, Kritamala, Madura, Tamraparni, Malay-aparbata, Badarikasrama, Gokarna, Surparaka, Kanyakanagara, Nirbindha and all the countless holy sites. He journeyed to all those places in order to sanctify them by His visit.

At the conclusion of this long pilgrimage Nityananda enacted the Leela of obtaining the only reward of pilgrimage in the shape of attainment of the privilege of the companionship of the true devotee, in as much as He now Joined Sree Madhabendra Puri, 'the first shoot of the Purpose Tree of Loving Devotion' from whom He accepted His initiation into spiritual life (or, according to some, He accepted His initiation from Sree Lakshmiapati, the Guru of Sree Madhabendra Puri). The meeting with His Guru is thus described by Sree Ghanasyam Thakur, the writer of Bhakti Ratnakar: 'Lakshmiapati, so famous in the school of Madhya, the owner of all good qualities, most dear to the Lord of Sree Lakshmi Devi, partook of his meal obtained by begging, interspersed with Krishna-talk, at the house of that Brahmana. Nityananda in the Form of BalaRama showed Himself to Lakshmiapati under the guise of a dream: 'A

certain Brahmana boy has come to this village in the garb of a super-ascetic; He will be your disciple; make Him your disciple by means of this mantram, and He spoke the mantram into his ear.' Nityananda on meeting him repeatedly said to the sanyasin: 'Do thou deliver Me by initiation by the mantram.' After initiation Nityananda was given the Brahmachari's name of 'Svarup' and has accordingly been sometimes called 'Nityananda-Svarup' both by Sree Brindabandas Thakur as well as by Srila Kaviraj Goswami. Sree Nityananda subsequently made His way to Nabadwip where He joined Sree Chaitanya.

Thakur Haridas made his appearance in this world in about the year 1451 A.D. (1372 Sh.), thirty-five years before the Advent of Sree Chaitanya, in the village of Budhan in the district of Jessore. He came of a Muhammedan family and in some manner, of which we do not possess any trustworthy record, obtained very early in life the mercy of a Vaishnava who initiated him into the religion of all souls. He, thereupon, left his parent's house and his kin, and came to Benapole where he made a small hut and lived therein. His method of worship consisted in repeating, constantly and with a loud voice, the holy maha-mantram of the sixteen Names of Godhead. He recited the maha-mantram three lakhs of times every day. For this purpose he cut himself off completely from every form of worldly association. It was not long, however, before his practice found a malicious opponent in a local landholder of a most villainous character, of the name of Ramachandra Khan. Ramachandra Khan was as foolish as he was wicked and was incited to adopt the infamous method, described below, by the representations of a fanatical section of the Hindu residents of the locality who felt themselves scandalized by a Muhammedan presuming to adopt their language in taking the name of Godhead in the manner that could pierce even the ear-holes of such a great personage as Ramachandra Khan ! !

Ramachandra Khan did not believe that a person in the full bloom of early youth could have really no attachment for woman. He accordingly deputed a shameless harlot of great beauty, whom he subsidised for the purpose, to employ her seductive arts to compass the ruin of the young devotee.

This abandoned woman continued to offer herself regularly at the solitary hut of devotion of Thakur Haridas for three successive nights. She was kept waiting for the whole night by Thakur Haridas by the assurance that he would attend to

her request after the utterance of the quota of the Names that he was under obligation to take daily, was completed. Towards the close of the third night that harlot, whose mind had been completely changed by listening to the Holy Name of Godhead from the lips of the great saint who was so completely unmindful of those irresistible charms of a young woman that are the cause of ruin of so many so-called Rishis of all ages and conditions, fell prostrate at the feet of Thakur Haridas and, with a contrite and chastened heart, implored him to enable her to worship Godhead in the pure manner that he himself did. The woman opened her heart frankly to Thakur Haridas and told him all about the infernal conspiracy and also of her own past life which had been utterly sinful. Haridas said to her that she was fit to take the Holy Name of Godhead, and he accordingly initiated her into the life of the pure service of Krishna. Haridas then advised her to give away all her treasure to the pious Brahmanas and devote herself to the worship of Krishna by constantly uttering His Name living apart from all other people in the solitary hut which he had built for his own worship. Thereupon, bestowing his own hut on that woman, Thakur Haridas left Benapole for good. That harlot became thenceforward a most renowned devotee of Krishna.

From Benapole Thakur Haridas proceeded to Chandpur eastward of Saptagrama, the residence of the father of the future Raghunathdas Goswami who was at this time a little boy. The name of Raghunath's father was Gobardhan Mazumdar. Hiranya was the elder brother of Gobardhan. They were employed under Sultan Hussain Shah to collect the revenues of Saptagrama, which totaled twenty lakhs of rupees of which twelve had to be remitted to the Royal Treasury, the collectors being entitled to retain for themselves the balance of eight lakhs. They were consequently among the richest persons of that time. Thakur Haridas put up with Balaram Acharya of Chandpur who was the priest of Hiranya and Gobardhan. The boy Raghunath Das frequently visited Thakur Haridas. This was the cause of his obtaining the mercy of Sree Chaitanya later on.

At the request of Balaram Acharya, Thakur Haridas once presented himself at the gathering of Brahmanas in the halls of Hiranya and Gobardhan who were

patrons of Brahmanas and pious persons. The Thakur was well received by both brothers. Presently, evidently in view of the practice of the Thakur, the assembly began to praise the taking of the Holy Name, some maintaining that the Name destroys sin, others contending that the Name confers deliverance from the bondage of the world. Thakur Haridas said that those secondary results are effected by the dim reflection of the Name. The effect of the Name Himself is to arouse love to the Feet of Krishna. Emancipation is the trivial effect of the dim reflection of the Name.

A Brahmana by the name of Gopal Chakravarti, who was employed by Hiranya Mazumdar in connection with the remittance of revenues to Gauda and who happened to be present, felt greatly chagrined to hear these statements of Thakur Haridas and asked the assembly not to be led away by the ridiculous effusions of an impostor, acting the part of a sadhu to deceive ignorant people, by endorsing the view that emancipation, which is not attainable in crores of births on the path of knowledge of the Brahman, is gained by the mere dim glow of the Name. This, he said, was impossible and intolerable.

When Thakur Haridas, with great calmness, quoted the Scriptures to show that emancipation, resulting from the dim glow of the Name, is trivial and is not accepted by devotees even when it becomes available to them, the Brahmana's anger was so much inflamed by this exhibition of firmness that he shouted to Thakur Haridas that if he failed to prove from the Scriptures that emancipation results from the dim glow of the Name, was he prepared to have his nose cut off? The Thakur intimated his readiness to submit to the bet proposed, whereupon all the assembled people and especially Balaram Acharya strongly condemned the outrageous conduct of Gopal, and all of them, including Hiranya and Gobardhan, begged the forgiveness of the Thakur for the insult that had been openly offered to him in their presence. Thakur Haridas observed that Gopal's anger was due to his ignorance of the Scriptures and he was, therefore, not to blame; and saying this, he left the place, resuming the loud chant of the Name of Krishna. It is recorded that for this offense Gopal Chakravarti was afflicted with the worst form of leprosy in the course of three days and his nose fell off in consequence, and that although the Thakur so

readily forgave him, his offense was not pardoned by Godhead.

From Chandpur Thakur Haridas made his way to Santipur and presented himself at the house of Sree Advaita Acharya. The latter was very much encouraged by the appearance of Haridas and provided him with a suitable place for his devotional practices by finding out a cave in a retired part of the bank of the Ganges.

Thakur Haridas lived in this cell and had his daily meal at the house of Advaita with whom he could talk about Krishna. Haridas expressed his fear that the conduct of Advaita in feeding him daily with the most unreserved hospitality might bring social troubles to him, he being a Muhammedan by birth. Sree Advaita Acharya, in answer to this, formally offered to Thakur Haridas the meal cooked for the occasion of the anniversary of the sradha ceremony of his departed father, that had to be given to the Brahmanas according to custom, with the remark that 'by feeding you, crores of Brahmanas are truly fed'.

It is said that the Thakur Haridas was tempted a second time by a woman while he was staying at the cave at Santipur, and that this time the woman was no less than Maya herself, the deluding power of Godhead, whose solicitation, which no jiva, from Brahma downwards, can resist, produced on Haridas the only effect of increasing still further his ardent devotion to the Feet of Krishna. Mayadevi sought and obtained the gift of the Name of Krishna from Thakur Haridas in lieu of her effort to test the sincerity of the devotion of Haridas.

From Santipur Thakur Haridas made his way to the village of Fulia which was the residence of a strong community of Brahmanas. Fulia is situated three miles to the east of Santipur. Thakur Haridas lived here in a cell on the bank of the Bhagirathi as at Santipur and chanted aloud the maha-mantram of sixteen Names of godhead three lakhs of times every day. The Muhammedans who lived in the neighbourhood were incited by the Brahmanas of Fulia to complain to the Kazi about the behaviour of Haridas, which, they pointed out, was bound to produce a most undesirable effect on the prestige of the Muhammedan community and religion.

The Kazi took this seriously and had Haridas brought to the presence of the Governor for trial. He was at first treated with great respect and allowed to visit the prison as he desired to converse with the prisoners. The prisoners, who did not expect in their midst a saint who was treated with respect by the keepers, thought he might obtain their release from captivity. They accordingly pressed round him and begged him to intercede with the Governor for their liberation. The Thakur in reply congratulated them on their captivity and wished that their state of bondage might be prolonged. This filled the prisoners with dismay. Haridas hastened to remove their mistake by explaining what he meant. He said that they were forcibly kept away from the pursuit of worldly objects in their state of captivity. This gave them a respite for the worship of Godhead. Because Godhead cannot be worshipped when one's mind is engrossed in the affairs of this world. They should avail themselves of this opportunity, so mercifully placed in their way, of turning their thoughts to Godhead; so that, having acquired the taste for such life, even after they were set free, they might continue to serve Godhead in the midst of the various temptations of the world. He did not really desire the prolongation of their state of captivity in the ordinary sense.

When Thakur Haridas was produced before the Governor for his trial, he was offered a good seat in the court and the Governor pleaded, with every appearance of sincere good will, that he should revert to his own society, its customs and religion. Thakur Haridas replied: 'A man follows the path that appears to him to be the best. This is the dispensation of Providence. Under this law a man born in a high Brahmana family sometimes embraces the Muhammedan religion. And although he was born in a Muhammedan family, God has been merciful to him and has shown him the path of the highest good. This path he intends to follow. If such conduct appears to the Governor to be deserving of punishment, he is prepared to undergo any consequences that it may involve.'

The Governor then began to revile Vishnu and threatened to punish Thakur Haridas with severe whipping till he would be forced to give up the heinous course. Thakur Haridas simply replied: 'Even if he is actually cut to pieces he

would never for a moment cease to utter the Name of Hari with his mouth.'

The Governor, at the instance of the Kazi, now carried out his threat by ordering Thakur Haridas to be whipped in twenty-two market-places of amua Mulk. This barbarous order was duly executed. When Thakur Haridas appeared to be dead, the ruffians who had been employed to cudgel him, tried to throw his body into the Ganges. It is said that they failed to lift the body with all their efforts. This frightened the Governor and his aiders and abettors in this horrible sin.

The Governor now spoke kind words to Haridas. He was convinced that Haridas was a real Pir (holy man) and not a cheat as he had taken him to be. He was sorry for what he had done and even begged his forgiveness. He then ordered his men to liberate Haridas and assured him of immunity from all further molestation on his part, desiring him to do as he liked. Thakur Haridas returned to his cell at Fulia, undaunted by this terrible proof of the implacable vindictiveness of his opponents.

On another day a snake-charmer was giving a display of his art at the house of a wealthy resident of Fulia to the accompaniment of dance and music. Thakur Haridas happened to arrive on the spot and taking his stand on one side watched the performance which was a representation of a Feat of Sree Krishna, viz., the quelling of the serpent Kaliya.

Overpowered by the associations awakened in him by the sacred theme, Thakur Haridas fainted away, and, when he was helped to regain his consciousness, himself joined in the dance, exhibiting all the external signs of the eight satvika perturbations. The snake-charmer stopped his performance, and, with palms joined in the attitude of reverence standing motionless on one side, gazed with awe on the devotional activities of Thakur. This mood of Haridas was, however, soon over; and, after he had stopped, the snake-charmer resumed his musical performance. Those present were so moved by the occurrence that they devoutly took the dust of the feet of Thakur.

A Brahmana, who happened to be in the crowd and had watched the whole affair, thought of acquiring a cheap reputation for sanctity by imitating the satvika perturbations of Haridas that he had witnessed. He accordingly affected to swoon away and forthwith began to sing, dance, laugh and shiver, in imitation of Thakur Haridas.

The snake-charmer now behaved in a most strange manner. He, who had been so quiet and respectful towards Thakur Haridas, suddenly fell upon the unlucky Brahmana with great fury and began to belabor him, with a cudgel that he snatched from one of his men, in a most merciless fashion. That Brahmana, unable to bear the severe thrashing, took to his heels in a very short time. On being asked by the spectators the reason of his strange and violent conduct towards the Brahmana, the snake-charmer replied that he had beat the Brahmana, because by his hypocritical exhibitions he was trying to bring into contempt the conduct of the revered Thakur Haridas.

Another Brahmana of Fulia opposed the practice of chanting loudly the Name of Hari by Haridas on the ground that it was against the Scriptures. He denied that Haridas, who was born of a Muhammedan family, had any right to dabble in the philosophy and religion of the Hindus; that this very fact of a Muhammedan posing as a teacher of the Scriptures of the Hindus, portended the appearance, long before its appointed time, of the worst period of the Age of evil. "This impostor has the effrontery of procuring the best food by begging from door to door, presuming to teach the Shastras to respectable people! If his explanation regarding chanting of the Name of Hari with a loud voice, is not found in the Scriptures, his nose ought to be cut off., Accosted by the infuriated Brahmana in the above fashion Thakur Haridas with a smile left the place to chant loudly the Name of Hari. That Brahmana also met with the condign punishment of his offense by being smitten with the small-pox in the course of a few days, that cost him his nose.

Thakur Haridas now made his way to Nabadwip and there joined the congregation of the small group of Vaishnavas that was gradually forming round the figures of Sree Advaita acharya, who had settled there as a teacher

with his own Academy (tol) and Sribas Pandit who lived close to the Academy of Sree Advaita Acharya. At this time Thakur Haridas constantly traveled to different parts of the country with the object of preaching the kirtana of Hari to the people. Shortly after his arrival at Nabadwip, he joined Sree Chaitanya as one of His most devoted associates.

Sree Advaita Acharya, who was the acknowledged leader of the small Vaishnava community of Nabadwip at the time of the Appearance of Sree Chaitanya, was a person of vast erudition, possessed of great wealth and occupied a position of the highest respect in the society of Nabadwip. He appears to have been originally a native of the village of Nabagram in some as yet unidentified part of Bengal. He subsequently settled at Santipur, whither he had come in course of a pilgrimage that he had undertaken after the departure of his parents from this world. At Santipur he married Sree Sita Devi. Sree Advaita Acharya met Thakur Haridas for the first time at Santipur where he offered him the meal on the occasion of the annual funeral ceremony of his departed father, instead of giving the same to the Brahmanas by seminal birth as is the custom of the smartas.

Advaita built a small house at Nabadwip where he set up his Academy (tol) in which he taught different branches of the Shastras. Advaita Acharya soon acquired the reputation of being one of the most eminent Professors of Nabadwip who upheld in all his teachings the pre-eminence of the principle of unalloyed devotion to Krishna, which he conclusively established by the evidence of the whole body of the Scriptures. This marked him out from among the host of the other Brahmanas who also taught the Scriptures at Nabadwip.

Sree Advaita Acharya, in conformity with his teaching, was a devout worshipper of Krishna. He did not perform his worship with the elaborate ceremonials that characterized its development in the Dvapara Age. He worshipped Krishna with the offerings of the spray of tulasi, most beloved of Krishna, and the sacred water of the Ganges which issued from His Feet. This simplicity of worship a concomitant of the philosophy of pure, transcendental devotion which he expounded in his Academy. He wanted to keep the pure

devotion to Krishna distinct from the lifeless rituals of the elevationists and liberationists. Advaita worshipped Krishna with the pure devotion of unclouded cognition and with the specific purpose of moving Krishna to come down into the world to re-establish the Eternal Religion. The Advent of Sree Chaitanya is attributed by all His devotees to the sincere and ardent invocations of Sree Advaita Acharya. That Advaita Acharya's prayers and worship brought about the appearance of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya in this world, has been repeatedly declared by Sree Chaitanya Himself.

The Academy of Sree Advaita Acharya was the regular meeting place of all the Vaishnavas of whom the foremost was Sribas Pandit who lived close to Advaita, not far from the House of Sree Jagannatha Misra.

Sree Advaita Acharya belonged to the community of Sree MadhvAcharya which is one of the four authorized Vaishnava communities. He was the disciple of the famous Madhabendra Puri, the spiritual preceptor of Sree Nityananda, Sree Iswara Puri and several other elders of Sree Chaitanya.

Madhabendra Puri is regarded by the most illustrious followers of Sree Chaitanya as 'the first tender shoot of the mighty Tree of Transcendental Love represented by Sree Chaitanya Himself in its full growth'. There is to be found no trace of the amorous love for Krishna in the School of Madhva prior to Madhabendra Puri. The disciplic succession of the followers of Sree Chaitanya, through Madhabendra Puri, is to be found in Sree Gauraganoddesa, Sree Prameyaratnavali, the works of Sree Gopalguru Goswami, and also in the Bhaktiratnakar. The line of succession is as follows:

KRSHNA

Brahma

Narada

Vyasa

Suka Madhva

Padmanabha Nrihari

Madhaba

Akshobhya

Jaya Teertha
Jnanasindhu
Dayanidhi
Vidyanidhi
Rajendra
Jayadharmā
Purusottama
Brahmanya
Vyasa Teertha
Lakshmi pati
Madhabendra Puri
Nityananda Iswara Puri Advaita
SREE CHAITANYA

We reserve the detailed discussion of the esoteric implication of the spiritual disciplic succession for a future chapter in connection with the doctrine of Sree Chaitanya.

The following particulars regarding Sree Madhabendra Puri are found in Sree Chaitanyacharitamrita. He went, unattended by any other person, to Sree Brindavana. on his arrival there, as he was seated under a tree on the bank of the pool (kunda) of Govinda, Sree Krishna appeared to Madhabendra as a cow-boy under the guise of offering him milk for appeasing his hunger. Led by a dream Madhabendra then installed the Divine Form of Gopala on the Gobardhana Mount. His sojourn to Puri to fetch camphor and sandal for Gopala and the episode of Kshira-chora Gopinath will be described later. At Mathura, Madhabendra Puri accepted the alms of cooked food from a Sanoria Brahmana, whose touched water is not accepted by high class Smartas, in violation of the smarta practice which errs by applying caste rules to the devotee of Godhead and its notions of ceremonial cleanliness to food accepted by Krishna (maha-prasad).

Madhabendra Puri rebuked Ramachandra Puri for his disrespect to himself, his spiritual preceptor, and blessed Iswara Puri for his whole-hearted devotion to

his preceptor by expressing the hope that he might attain to love for Krishna. Sree Madhabendra Puri's utterance at his disappearance is cherished by all pure devotees. 'It runs thus: 'Thou Lord, Who art ever melted to kindness towards the humble, when wilt Thou, O Lord of Mathura, be seen by me? My heart, Dearest, sad for not beholding Thee, grows delirious. Oh! What shall I do now?'

Sree Iswara Puri came of a Brahmana family belonging to the village of Kumarahatta (near Hrishahar Station of the E. B. Railway) and was the most beloved disciple of Sree Madhabendra Puri. Sree Madhabendra Puri, being satisfied with his devotion, blessed him saying, 'May you attain loving devotion for Krishna.' Sree Chaitanya did him the favour of receiving initiation in the ten-lettered mantra from him at Gaya. Govinda and Kashiswara Brahmachari, disciples of Sree Iswara Puri, joined Sree Chaitanya at Puri on the disappearance of Sree Iswara Puri.

The attitude, which the reader is expected to take up towards the associates of Sree Chaitanya, is put tersely in the opening verse of Sree Chaitanyacharitamrita. "Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is Godhead Himself as is indicated by His Name Who means the Self-conscious Principle, Krishna. Godhead sports in six Divine Forms, viz., as (1) Krishna, (2) the Two Preceptors, (3) the Devotees, (4) the Avatars (5) the Manifestations, and (6) the Powers. In other words, the Spiritual Preceptors are Chaitanyadeva; the devotees such as Sribas, etc., are also Chaitanyadeva; the Avatars are Chaitanyadeva; and the Powers are also Chaitanyadeva Who is himself Krishna's Own Cognitive Self, the Subjective Divine Personality Whose Essence is Pure Cognition. We shall discuss these truths in greater detail in the succeeding chapters.

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

I cannot do better than conclude this chapter with the cautious words of

Thakur Brindabandas, 'Know for certain that the Activities of Chaitanyachandra, by listening to which the heart is purified, manifest themselves only by the grace of the devotees of Godhead. Who can know the Deeds of Chaitanya that are the hidden secret of the Vedas I write only what I have heard from the lips of the devotees. I make my obeisance at the feet of all the Vaishnavas. May there be no offense committed by me by such an attempt.'

Chapter III —Birth and Infancy—

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

It was this apparently hopeless state of affairs that led Advaita to the conclusion that the universal and stubborn godlessness that prevailed everywhere could only be relieved by Krishnachandra Himself. Advaita believed in the efficacy of prayer that is offered by one who knows nothing except Godhead. He believed that the intolerable anguish, of those sincere devotees who daily gathered under his roof, caused by the extreme misery of the worldly people due to their bitter aversion to Krishna, must appeal to the Lord and have power to draw Him in no long time from His Eternal Seat of Goloka into this world, for the

consolation of His own beloved ones. Advaita, who was well versed in the Scriptures, noticed all these favourable indications. He was so convinced of the impending Appearance of Krishna that in his prayers he began to call upon Him most ardently night and day to save the world by His speedy Appearance.

That Advaita felt sure about the Appearance of Sree Krishna and worshipped Him for this specific purpose with tulasi and the holy water of the Ganges, which are most acceptable to Krishna,

With the single-hearted desire for His Appearance, was known to all the Vaishnavas. He, in fact, actually assured them most clearly and emphatically about the expected Advent of Krishna into their midst within a short time. I have stated already that Sree Chaitanya Himself repeatedly declared that His Advent was solely due to the whole-hearted prayers of Advaita.

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

The Appearance of Sree Chaitanya came about in the following way. In Nabadwip there dwelt a most generous and pure hearted Brahmana devoted to the zealous performance of all religious duties, resembling in his immaculate piety Vasudeva, the father of Sree Krishna. The name of this ideal Brahmana was Sree Jagannath Misra. we have stated his ancestry in another place. His revered consort's name was Sree Sachi Devi. Sree Sachi Devi was the most loyal of matrons, the very embodiment of the pure devotion to Vishnu and mother of the whole world. Eight daughters were born to Sachi Devi one after another; all of them leaving this world in their infancy. The ninth issue was a son whom his parents obtained in response to their prayer to Vishnu for a male offspring. The name of this boy was Bisvarupa, the elder brother of Sree Chaitanya.

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

Sree Krishna-Chaitanya made His auspicious Appearance in this world on the 23rd day. of Falgun of the Saka Year 1407, which corresponds to the 18th of February of 1486 A. D. He was born in the evening just with the rising of the full-moon, which was then in eclipse, in the midst of the loud chant of the

Name of Hari by the people of Nadia, as is the custom on the occasion of an eclipse. Nature joined with man and the gods to pay homage to the Moon of Nadia risen on the Eastern Hills. The spotted lunar disc hid its face in shame, under the guise of eclipse, on the Appearance of the Perfect Moon absolutely free from all spots. On that blessed Moment of Nativity of the exquisitely beautiful Baby were shed in unstinted profusion all the most auspicious influences of all the favouring constellations, that blended together to greet the Advent of the Lord. Strange forms were observed to crowd into the yard of Sachi, lying prostrate on the bare earth in the act of adoration, waving the whisk, holding aloft the umbrella, singing, dancing and beating the drum or playing on the flute, in an ecstasy of unbounded joy

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

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

Sree Chandrasekhar Acharya and Sribas Pandit duly performed the purificatory

Birth Rites of the Son of Jagannath Misra. Sree Purandar Misra made suitable gifts to all those who brought presents for his Boy on this auspicious occasion. Sree Sita Thakurani, the consort of Advaita Acharya, made her way to Sree Mayapur from her residence at Santipur to see the Prince of Boys. Sree Malini Devi, pure-hearted consort of Sribas Pandit, accompanied Sita Thakurani with various presents and afforded her eyes the opportunity, that they longed for like the bird chakora, of feasting on the nectar flowing from the moonlike Face of the Transcendental Baby. Misra distributed whatever he had, with an open hand, to the Brahmanas, having first offered the same to Godhead. He kept back nothing of the rich variety of presents for himself. Sree Nilambar Chakravarti, father of Sachi Devi, taking Misra aside, informed him in a whisper that the signs on the Person of the Child prognosticated a very great Transcendental Personage Who would deliver the world.

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

'The realm of Nabadwip where Krishna makes His Appearance is no mundane region.' The transcendental realm of Sree Krishna is identical with the power of Godhead known as Neela or Leela and is an object of worship of His devotees. The Yoga peetha, i.e., the Abode of Sachi-Jagannath, situate in the center of Sree Mayapur, is the Plane of the Appearance of the Lord and is identical with Brindavana or the mind of the devotee constituted of the pure cognitive essence. Sree Nabadwip is replete with the ninefold devotion, being of the nature of the heart of those pure devotees who have found the Refuge of the Lotus-Foot of Sree Gurudeva. Such is the language of realization that is used by

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

who object to the transcendental on the ground that it is not conformable by the worldly experience of men, do not thereby disprove either the reality or the necessity of such history.

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

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

materialist, who are thus punished for trying to make the Absolute submit to their deluded speculations.

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

The glad tidings quickly brought together all the relations and friends who dwelt in the neighbourhood. We have already related the communication of Sree Nilambar Chakravarti, father of Sachi Devi, to Misra regarding the marvellous signs that he noticed on the Person of the new-born Babe. Nilambar Chakravarti was a very great astrologer. After considering the positions of the planets and the constellations at the Birth of the Child, he declared that the Boy would be far greater than a 'King', greater than Brihaspati, the celestial sage, in learning and would without effort come to possess all good qualities. Presently there arrived by accident a certain Brahmana, also an astrologer, who applied himself to the casting of the horoscope of the Newborn. That Brahmana declared as the result of his calculations that the Boy is no other than Narayana Himself. 'He will re-establish the Religion. He will be the extraordinary Preacher of the Religion. He will deliver the whole world. All persons will obtain from Him what is constantly coveted by the greatest devotees, such as Brahma, Siva, Suka, etc. At the sight of Him all the people of the world will be melted to pity for all jivas, become indifferent to pain and pleasure alike, and attain to love for Him the Embodiment of love for Krishna. Not to speak of others, even the Yavanas, who are declared enemies of Vishnu, will worship the Feet of this Child. All the countless worlds will sing His praise. All people, from the Brahmanas downwards, will do obeisance to Him. His Form is the very

Embodiment of the religion of the greatest devotees, the Embodiment of patience and of respect for the gods, Brahmanas, preceptors and parents. Just as Vishnu appearing in this world persuades all jivas to religion, exactly same will be all the Doings of this Child. How fortunate indeed am I to be called to calculate such a horoscope! His name will be Sree Vishwambhar.' The astrologer purposely omitted to mention the Renunciation of Sree Chaitanya, lest it would mar the unmixed happiness of the occasion.

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

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

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

The Baby had to remain for a full month in the lying-in chamber according to custom. The small hut, that was made for the occasion for the temporary

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

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

Orthodox smarta Hindus are likely to read in the above account an apparent justification of their customary practices as being confirmed, by having been duly observed by Sree Jagannath Misra and Sree Sachi Devi whose minds are free from all impurities and errors. Those, on the other hand, who look upon such local Hindu practices as being due to ignorance of the Shastras, superstition or historical circumstances, will also naturally experience a certain measure of the qualms of an outraged conscience if they have to prepare to swallow these descriptions, with the best of grace that they can call to their help, through sheer good-will for an otherwise untenable cause. Historians will feel scandalized by this attempt to chronicle the unnecessary details of such

petty domestic matters that are perfectly known to everybody. Those, who look for the account of the Absolute as a philosophical realization, will regard it as puerile sentimentalism. Those, who believe in the Personal God but expect a narrative in keeping with the supreme dignity of the Subject, may also be disposed to scratch their heads. And the atheists will pooh pooh what they will at once recognize as a brazen, ridiculous, insipid, and silly attempt of passing off the minutiae of Bengali superstitious usages upon credulous religionists in the name of the latest Divine Dispensation, etc., etc.

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

But Krishna is declared by the Scriptures to be identical with the Absolute Truth Whose Activities admit of no such offensive classifications. Good and bad, great and small, are notions that only belong to the realm of the relative, limited, divisible and fragmentary knowledge. The Reality is Only One, in spite of the fact that only a perverted view of Him happens to be the sole, undoubted birthright of all conditioned souls. No event is really good or bad, small or great. All events are of infinite dimensions and instinct with the cognitive potency. They appear to be limited, inert, cramped and possessed of unwholesome qualities to those jivas whose own natures seem to their deluded judgment to be limited, inert, cramped and gross for the time being. The vision of the devotee is free from all defects, and when they describe to us what they see, we, conditioned souls, pretend to feel in duty bound to disagree with them on the strength of our own unreliable but actual experience of those very same

events.

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

The paternal affection of Sree Jagannath Misra and Sree Sachi Devi for Sree Gaursundar is also likewise different from the apparently similar affection of mundane parents for their mundane child. In the former case, the Parents, Son and Affection are real and free from all worldly grossness, while the latter is a perverted mimicry of the same event reflected on the screen of the physical plane. But this qualitative difference between the two cannot be grasped by those who have not the patience to give an unbiased hearing to the words of the devotees describing the Reality Who alone possesses an unclouded vision, even though they may appear to hasty, prejudiced or superficial observers to be in no

way unlike ordinary bound jivas. The devotees alone can teach us the real meaning of the Scriptures, and our duty, as will appear from what has been said already, consists in listening to their words with faith in order to be able to understand what they have got to deliver.

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

Sree Jagannath Misra and Sree Sachi Devi, by reason of their perfect purity of heart, when they desired to have a Son born to them, could only mean to serve Godhead thereby. This exclusive and real reference to Him in every act is innate in the only function of the pure cognitive principle. A really pure heart is not satisfied with the mundane relationship, neither does it want to lose the faculty for contracting all relationship. It wants to realize all relationships in their true forms. This is its very nature who finds himself thwarted at every step in the conditioned state by undesirable factors. The ascetic's heart is not really pure, if it stands merely for the negation of all attachments for the reason that they happen to be always of a mixed character in this world. Such a view errs by seeking the ease of its deluded self by the self-contradictory process of suicide. This is the strange aspiration of all negativist thinkers. Those, whose hearts are somewhat purer, try to adjust themselves to existing conditions to the best of their power. They also err in as much as they vainly try to deal with the shadow by gratuitously assuming it to be the substance. This wild goose-chase goes in our Shastras under the name of fruitive work (Karma). Those, whose hearts are purest, begin to see the impossibility and unwholesomeness of the task that is attempted by fruitive workers and the suicidal policy of nihilistic thinkers and ascetics. It is at this stage that the Reality manifests Himself of His own accord to the absolutely pure vision. And as soon as such favoured persons have thus a vision of the Truth, they want to communicate the tidings of Him to their suffering brethren; but they soon find that the hearts of the latter are not sufficiently pure either to grasp or even tolerate the real Truth Whom they also profess with their lips to be willing to serve. Such perverse people can

hardly be expected to understand the nature of the longing for a Son of Sree Jagannath Misra and Sree Sachi Devi, nor the reason of their causeless and holy joy on beholding the beautiful Face of New-born Gaursundar.

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

It will appear, therefore, that the only condition of the service of the Lord is a perfectly pure heart. No opposition to form is admissible. Therefore, those who look only to the form, may suppose that the customs of Bengal or India should be adopted, if the Lord is to be properly served. This is the national or smarta point of view.

The perfectly pure heart is neither wedded, nor opposed, to the form of the mundane customs of any Age or country. What he wants to do is to serve the Lord. Any real method is legitimate that actually enables him to do this one thing needful. If he appears thereby to put himself even under specific restraints, he does so for all the greater facility of such unconditional service. Why the devotee behaves in a particular way is known only to himself and to Krishna. It is not something external and capable of external regulation or

explanation. It is perfectly free. It cannot be squeezed into the four corners of a social or a tentative religious code. Whatever the devotee does is right and proper by reason of his exclusive devotion to Sree Krishna. Sree Jagannath Misra and Sree Sachi Devi really belong to this superior plane. Their conduct should not be supposed to come under any class of activities capable of being regulated by a conventional and rigid code of rules. Rules are intended for those who are disinclined to serve, i.e., for restraining those who are disposed to worldliness, for the purpose, if possible, of preventing a conduct that is incompatible with real freedom. But the rules themselves are not identical with freedom. The strict observance of any rules cannot produce the purity of heart that is necessarily free. Therefore, one must not allow himself to be unduly obsessed by these rules, when one has to consider the transcendental conduct of the real devotee. We should rather try to understand the limits of the rules from the conduct of the devotee. It is only the underlying principle of devotion to Godhead that can impart any value to such rules.

The worship of the Ganges and of the goddess 'Sasthi' by Sree Sachi Devi are such concrete processes. In her case they were rendered of universal significance fit for the service of the Lord by reason of her devotion to Sree Gaursundar. This led the Lord Himself to directly accept any service, whatever its form, that was rendered by her pure heart. Whatever method is adopted for the service of the Lord forthwith loses its mundane character by reason of its being so employed and becomes spiritual on being accepted by Krishna. All those, who watched the Baby and recited invocatory verses calling upon Devi and Nrisimha for the protection of the Baby, also served the Lord in the perfect manner, because they served Him spontaneously. Whenever any efforts are directed towards the Divinity without reservation, they automatically lose all their unwholesomeness for the reason that God is pleased to accept our wholehearted service. This causeless Divine mercy towards all souls prompted the Appearance of Sree Gaursundar in this world.

It will thus appear that any and all exercise of the senses, when it is really directed towards the Lord of our senses, is perfect, while apparently the same activity, when it is practiced towards any other object, is not only not perfect

but is positively harmful being obstructive of the possibility of attainment of the natural function. In the language of the Vaishnavas, “Serving Sree Krishna with all our spiritual senses, is ‘love’; while similarly serving any other object is ‘lust’.” Or to put it in another way, ‘the desire to gratify. the senses of Krishna is love, while the wish to satisfy one’s own senses is lust. The proposition is liable to be misunderstood and, as a matter of fact, has actually been misunderstood, in different ways. The philanthropists have supposed that it is mundane relationship with Krishna that is recommended. But as Krishna is not available in a bodily form in this world, they accordingly want to devise a method of serving themselves by personating Krishna and the milk-maids, or trying to imagine that they are spiritually occupied in every act of their gross sensuality. They choose to think gratuitously that Krishna is a being of this world like themselves. There is another class of philanthropists who proceed in the negative way, being repelled by the debaucheries of the first group. These suppose that it is a sin to believe that the Absolute can at all be served in a concrete manner. The Absolute is accordingly supposed to be capable of being served only on the mental plane by the homage of thought. These philanthropists keep their life in its concrete acts strictly separate from the Absolute reserving it for the gratification of their own sensuous desires excusing themselves by imagining that this is unavoidable as long as they continue in the state of mundane existence. They supplement their disregard of the virtuous activities of this life by an endeavour to rise above them (?) by meditation (?) on the Activities (?) of Krishna, or by fictitious avoidance of all thinking.

In these ways the people of this world delude themselves by the pernicious practice of actual debauchery or by hypocritical and impracticable abstention into supposing that their method is higher than that of professed sensualists. But in both cases the root of the error is the same, viz., the belief that Krishna, when He chooses to appear to us in the Human Form, puts on a body of flesh like ourselves and that, therefore, those, who served Him at the time of His Appearance in different ways as servants, friends, parents, sweet-hearts, practiced activities that are in no way different from those with which we ourselves are so familiar in this world and from the grossness of which we have

no desire of seeking to escape. The one class directly swallows the mud, the other group pretends to live on nectar while actually deriving their sustenance from the same polluted source but with great labour and through a longer pipe. None of them suspect that it is the mud, nor that it is capable of being transformed into nectar by the real Touch of the Divinity, or, in other words, that there is a third alternative to enjoyment and hypocritical show of abstention which has the form of spiritual service that transcends both and reconciles those opposites on a higher plane. What is really necessary is not to wrangle over the sharing of the mud, but to be lifted out of such necessity for feasting on the manna. The idealist's position is a mere travesty by which the love of gross matter is attempted to be disguised from the observation of dull persons. But it only mocks the thirsty soul by the offer of the masked bowl of the dregs of the noxious preparation, in place of the ostentatiously filled cup of poison, to the thirsty soul who has need of only the life-giving drink.

Chapter IV **—Infancy and Boyhood—**

But although Sree Gaursundar submitted to be served by the unconscious perfect love of Braja by His parents, relatives, friends and servants, His Divinity was manifested in every Act of His Infancy, unnoticed by anyone. This is the hidden Leela. of Sree Chaitanya. He can never be really known except through His Grace which is available to all jivas who sincerely seek to obtain it.

The Baby continued to keep everybody occupied by His peculiar Ways. The most noticeable of these was that He would begin to cry if He did not hear the loud chant of the Name of Hari. So He was always surrounded by a group of ladies who sang constantly the kirtan in order to keep Him in countenance. The moment they would begin to perform kirtan, the Boy showed every mode of delight and would laugh in the most enchanting manner. They clapped their hands, sang and considered themselves amply repaid by His Sweet Smiles. This

was noticed and advertised by everybody as a most extraordinary circumstance. The conduct of the Baby and the devoted attachment of the ladies, who were so loath to leave His Presence form a most striking episode on which all narratives of His Infancy love to dwell with great tenderness.

The Lord used always to lie on His Back surrounded by the ladies, except while He slept. One day Sachi was brought to the room, where the Baby slept, by His waking cry. As she entered the apartment, she was surprised to find the floor of the room littered with all different substances. Oil, ghee, milk, curd, pulse, etc., with broken earthen pots, were all jumbled together in every part of the room. Sachi Devi chanted the Name of Hari in order to pacify the Baby of barely four months, who lay crying in His little bed. She noticed the presence of no other person in the room. Other members of the family presently came to the spot, but no one could discover any trace of an intruder. Some opined that a demon must have found his way into the room but failed to do any harm to the Child by reason of His protective amulet. His failure to harm the Baby had made him angry and commit all the mischief before he fled back to his place. Jagannath Misra on beholding the scene of havoc said nothing, regarding it as an act of the gods. The parents thought in this wise in their joy that no harm had befallen the Baby.

There was some funny incident or other like this every day, to afford an opportunity of service to the parents and others. Their service must not be supposed to be on a level with the activities of worldly people who are always very much attached to their own children. The affection of worldly people for their children, is purely an attachment of the flesh for the flesh that serves to gratify their sensuous instincts. Such affection only rivets the chain of bondage to the thing of this world, all of which are the contrivances of the deluding Energy or non-God. It was not so in this case. The paternal affection, that serves Godhead, is not only altogether different from the apparently similar worldly sentiment, but, on the contrary, is so much opposed in its nature to the latter that the two cannot co-exist in the same heart. One who loves his worldly son, as son, can never realize the nature of the affection of Sree Sachi Devi and Sree Jagannath Misra for Sree Gaursundar, because the worldly passion itself

stands in the way of such realization.

The time passed in such pastimes till at last the day of naming the Baby made its appearance. For this purpose there assembled a number of friends versed in the Scriptures, chief of whom was Sree Nilambar Chakravarti. There was also a corresponding gathering of the matrons. The latter declared that the Baby should be called 'Nimai' after the 'Neem' tree, for the reason that the bitter taste characteristic of the said tree would repel the god of death who had taken away so many children of His parents, and would also serve to scare away ghosts, demons and other evil spirits. The learned headed by Nilambar Chakravarti agreed to accept the Name 'Nimai' as a secondary one, and proposed 'Viswambhar' as the primary Name of the Baby. The reason given for their choice of this Name was that the fear of famine, which had threatened the whole country, had been dissipated by the Birth of the Child, which had brought in its train copious showers of rain after a prolonged drought. As the Birth of the Child had saved the world from famine, the Name Viswambhar was appropriate for Him as it means 'One Who maintains the world'. Another reason for the selection of the Name was that in His horoscope the Boy was described as 'the Source-light' which meant that 'all other lights (of the family) were derived from this One'. The ceremony was performed at an auspicious moment Amidst the holy chant of the Name of Hari, the sound of conches and bells, by men and gods, while the Brahmanas read the Geeta and the Bhagavatam.

Naming a baby is one of the ten purificatory rites that are enjoined by the Shastras and are performed by the smartas to free a new-born child from sin due to the impurities of seminal birth from the mother's womb. The sin as well as its expiatory rite, as contemplated by the smartas, are conceived in terms of material well-being. There is no question in it of the soul, or spiritual consideration. The birth of a bound jiva is no doubt a material circumstance and the smarta rites are also admittedly a material device to ward off certain worldly results of such birth. The material world being the limit of the smarta outlook, a smarta family adheres to those ceremonies in the hope of the mundane reward promised by the sections of the Scriptures that treat of fruitive works and ceremonies. But a Vaishnava has nothing to do with any so-called

mundane well-being that has no connection with the soul. Moreover Sree Gaursundar's Birth, or the birth of any devotee of Godhead, as we have seen already, is never to be considered, for very good reasons, as a temporal affair at all. What, therefore, it may be asked, is the significance of the parents of Sree Gaursundar following the smarta practice that has led the Vaishnava narrators of the Career of Sree Chaitanya to write of it as a praise-worthy performance?

We have already considered a similar objection in connection with the worship of the goddess Sasthi by Sree Sachi Devi. The Vaishnavas regard the presiding deities of this mundane world as servants of Krishna and honour them as such. They do not regard them as independent divinities. They never worship these gods for securing any worldly advantages which are bestowed by them in accordance with the Will of Godhead. The Vaishnavas hold that those gods are not fully-pleased if they are worshipped for worldly favours; and, as servants of Godhead, they are also not entitled to be worshipped on their own account. They are fully and truly served by the worship of Godhead. and, therefore, the Vaishnavas worship only Vishnu. The worship of the goddess Sasthi, who is protectress of new-born babies, in the case of Sree Sachi Devi, did not, however, degenerate into poly theism or atheism for the reason that it happened to be performed for the sake of God Himself. Any act that possesses this characteristic is essentially spiritual. The conduct of Sachi cannot, therefore, serve as a precedent to justify the similar materialistic smarta practices which have nothing to do with Godhead.

The above argument applies to the performance by Sachi of all other Shastric rites also. Those acts being performed for the sake of Godhead Himself are thereby converted into spiritual service of Godhead. Instead of being a cause of further bondage, which is the desired result of the smarta practices, the apparently similar activities of Sree Jagannath Misra and Sree Sachi Devi add new variety of exquisiteness to the service of Godhead, in the shape of parental affection.

The Name Viswambhar should not also be supposed to be on a level with the ordinary names that are bestowed on babies on this occasion by the smarta

priests. The reason for the choice of the Name, as given out by Sree Nilambar Chakravarti, the great astrologer of Nabadwip of his day, has been already reproduced. That statement deliberately conceals, under metaphorical garb, the Truth that revealed Himself clearly to him. The Name 'Viswambhar' is a well-known Shastric Name of the Divinity. The Name refers specifically to the Acts of two Avatars of Vishnu, vis., the Varaha (Boar) and the Hayagriba (Horse-headed) . The Former lifted with His Tusk the world submerged by the Deluge, while the Latter rescued the Vedas when they were on the point of being suppressed by materialistic learning. Anyone with a slight acquaintance with the Scriptures would, in thinking of Godhead, connect these events with the Name 'Viswambhar'. The Name 'Nimai', intended to scare away premature death and all fear, is also perfectly applicable to Godhead. But this is not all. Gargacharya, who calculated the Name of Sree Krishna, is described in the Bhagavatam as being the greatest of those who know the Brahman and was selected for this reason by King Nanda to choose the Name of his New-born Son. In fact no one who has not access to the spiritual realm, can know the Name of the Divinity.

The Holy Name of Godhead is eternal and is identical with Godhead Himself. In the case of Godhead there is no difference between Name, Form, Quality, Acts and Associates, as we find on the finite plane in the case of conditioned souls. The eternal Name of God, who manifested Himself to the pure consciousness of Sree Gargacharya, made Himself known to the people of this world under the guise of the ceremony of Naming the Divine Baby, for the highest benefit of the conditioned souls. The Names Visambhar and Nimai similarly made Themselves known through Sree Nilambar Chakravarti and the pure-hearted matrons, not to cleanse the so-called impurities of birth of the material body of a new-born child which is the object of the smarta ceremony, but in order to bless the whole world by making it possible for all conditioned souls to take the Holy Names of Godhead, identical with Godhead Himself and having the specific power, if taken without offense, i.e., with the object of realizing one's eternally loving relationship with God, to deliver all fallen jivas from the bondage of this world.

Sree Gargacharya disclosed the Names Rama and Krishna, the most cherished Treasures of his heart that was eternally illuminated with Their Divine Radiance, confidentially to a few devotees only, lest They came to the ears of atheists like Kamsa who might be betrayed into the offense of confounding Them with ordinary appellations of things of this world. The shloka of the Bhagavata embodying the statement of Garga on this subject, also contains one of the few direct explicit references to the Appearance of Krishna in the Kali Age. The shloka may be quoted at this place: 'This Son of yours, O Nanda, assumes different Colours in the different Ages. His Colour is White in the Satya Age, Red in the Treta, and Gaura, i.e., Yellow tingured with Red, in the Kali Age. His Colour in this present Age (Dvapara) is Black as you see.'

On the occasion of naming a baby there is an old custom of putting to the new-born child a variety of articles to induce him to choose any of them, in order to ascertain the natural bent of the infant. In pursuance of this time-honoured custom a number of objects were held out to Nimai, such as unhusked rice, books, fried rice, cowrie, gold, silver, etc. Sree Jagannath Misra then called upon the Child to choose whichever of them He liked. Nimai clasped the Bhagavatam tightly to His Bosom. Some said that it was a very good augury and prognosticated that the Child would be a great Pandit. Others said He would be a Vaishnava and would easily understand the meaning of the Scriptures. The preference shown for the Bhagavatam by Nimai may be explained as meaning that the acquisition of the riches of this world and even the maintenance of the body should not be valued for their own sake and that the unalloyed service of the Lord, which is expounded in the Bhagavata, is the one thing needful and includes all the rest.

This old custom may be interpreted as supplying a clue to another matter of importance. Why was it necessary for the father, the natural guardian of the infant, to try to ascertain the tendency of his new-born Child? If the boy had chosen gold and silver, or fried rice, what inference would be drawn? Would such inference have any effect on the future of the Boy? If the son of a Brahmana is supposed to possess the nature of a Brahmana by reason of seminal birth, why should he be again subjected to a further test based on a different

principle? How was the varna (disposition) of a Brahmana really settled in very old times? In the case of Nimai it was comparatively easy by the above test to arrive at a favourable conclusion. The Bhagavatam has been declared to be the exposition of the holy Gayatri, the mantram, the knowledge of which is essential for the Brahmana. The choice of the Bhagavatam by Nimai, therefore, clearly would mark Him out as possessing the natural disposition of a Brahmana.

If seminal birth had been sufficient by itself to confer the varna of a Brahmana, there would have been no meaning of the ceremony of spiritual purification by Gayatri; nor would the latter process be significantly styled the second birth. The texts support the view that the varna of a Brahmana has to be fixed by natural disposition. There is also no text that attaches exclusive value to the seminal birth for the ascertainment of natural disposition. There are also many actual cases of the condition (varna) of a Brahmana having been acquired by persons who were not born in Brahmana families. Conversely we find that all the sons of a Brahmana did not necessarily become Brahmanas in every case. The varna of the one hundred sons of Rshabha Deva was settled by their respective dispositions. Some of them were found to be Kshatriyas, some were recognized as Brahmanas, while many were declared to be Vaishyas. The status of each was settled by the Father Who is Avatara of the Divinity. The bad effects and futility of trying to fix the spiritual status (varna) of a Brahmana by birth alone are most vividly brought out in the career of Prahlada on whom his father Hiranyakashipu tried forcibly to impose his own creed and occupation with the help of 'hereditary' preceptors.

The effects of heredity and education in forming one's disposition are overvalued by those who try to deduce everything from them. Heredity itself is a complex matter and runs backward in an endless ramification of ancestry through father and mother. No empiric pronouncement on the basis of heredity can be made, unless the nature of the whole of these two series is definitely known. Education, in so far as it tries to artificially widen our worldly experience, is also most uncertain in its operation on disposition. Seminal birth has been considered by the most ambitious of its modern empiric protagonists

as decisive in settling one's physical and mental disposition that are closely interconnected. In our old Scriptures seminal birth as well as secular and even empiric knowledge of the Scriptures are categorically differentiated from the Gayatri birth and the transcendental knowledge respectively. The latter is nowhere declared as capable of being derived, or even helped in any way, by the former. The natural disposition of a Brahmana, that is conferred by the purificatory ceremony of the Gayatri mantram, and the transcendental knowledge, that is the result of initiation by the spiritual preceptor, refer to the soul and have nothing to do with the secondary enveloping disposition that manifests itself, when the soul is engrossed in, i.e., incompatibly associated with, matter. Brahmanahood, according to the Mahabharatam, means the condition of a person possessing the disposition that seeks to realize the nature of the soul and accordingly the status of a Brahmana should be conferred only on those persons in whom such disposition manifests itself, and by no other consideration.

The spiritual status of the Brahmana cannot be tested and settled By any one who does not himself possess the realized Brahmana disposition, that is to say, by no one except the spiritual preceptor. The purificatory rite is the authoritative recognition by the Guru of the possession of such disposition by the disciple. The recognition by the Guru also serves to bring into play the spiritual disposition. By mechanically mimicking the external rite, only confusion is caused, as it has been caused in the past, and is being still caused, by the unprincipled ambitions of men who are inordinately proud of their high lineage and worldly qualities. Unless the superior status corresponds to the internal disposition there can be no proper subordination of the worldly to the spiritual interest which is sought to be effected by the varnashrama organization under the lead of the Brahmanas. This settlement of the status (varna) of a person was made soon after the birth of a child with the help of competent persons in order to provide specific training suited to the particular nature of the new-born child, for inclining him towards the spiritual life from the very beginning of his worldly sojourn. This may sound far too advanced an arrangement to be achieved in such remote antiquity which modern history teaches us, on no conclusive evidence, to regard as having been universally

utterly backward and benighted. Spiritual enlightenment is an eternal affair and has always possessed the inclination as well as capacity of organizing the spiritual community in its minutest details for helping the realization of the theistic ideal. The weakness, that is nowadays noticeable in the historical organization of caste which is regarded as the residual legatee of the varnashrama organization, is due to atheistical preponderance. As the spiritual life slackened its manifestation in this world, the varnashrama organization was increasingly neglected and was replaced by the meaningless, cumbrous and effete cast system. The pseudo-spiritual organization, viz., caste, failed to withstand the persevering onslaughts of organized materialism by means of its proper agents in the shape of the utterly barbarous tribes possessing no spiritual tradition, that dwelt beyond the Indian borderland, who banded together for the purpose of overthrowing a decayed spiritual society. The morale of the Indian people had been completely undermined by the rise of the pseudo-religious systems and practices and by the atheistic speculations of the philosophers, that have already been noticed briefly in a previous chapter.

After India had been subjugated by the brute force of these foreign invaders, attempts were made from time to time by the Vaishnava Acharyas to revive the theistic life in this country, against very great odds, in which they were not, however, permanently successful. This theistic reaction reached its culmination in the Activities of Sree Chaitanya Who propounded the comprehensive system, that provides the true remedy for all the ills of the world, resting on the broad base of the whole body of the spiritual Scriptures. The world is, however, not yet prepared to accept His Teaching in its entirety, although the leading scholars of all the centres of culture in India of His day were decisively vanquished in a series of open controversies. A great literature embodying the true scriptural doctrines was produced and the rejuvenated worship of Godhead was organized and provided with a considerable number of establishments in the form of the noblest shrines. The world was externally shaken by the mighty impulse, but failed to recover from its inner stupor and continued to drift aimlessly under the pilotage of professors of open and concealed atheism who quickly recovered their lead and even exploited the elaborate form of the caste organization that professes to represent the

varnashrama institution of the Scriptures, for the propagation of atheism. After the arrival of the Europeans, through the agencies of the newly-established secular universities and an organized industrial and commercial system, the people have been further inoculated with the secular outlook of materialistic civilization of a most thorough-going type. This new outlook is unhesitatingly distrustful of existing social and religious systems of the country and is desirous of real reform but is far too materialistic in itself not to hesitate to welcome the Teaching of Sree Chaitanya, which is based on the Scriptures and which favours the rejuvenation of the theistic varnashrama organization of society.

This digression, if such it may perchance appear to be to the patient reader, from the regular track of our narrative, is necessary in order to prevent misconceptions regarding the Activities of the Infant Chaitanya which are quoted by His pseudo-followers of the present day in justification of their adoption of the current atheistical practices of the smarta caste organization. The associates of Sree Chaitanya, however, arrived at a very different conclusion, that has been stated above, from the Acts of the Lord Himself as the Supreme Teacher by His Own Conduct.

Nimai retained His habit of indulging in frequent fits of crying and would not be consoled by any of the methods that are usually effective in the case of ordinary children. He did not cry for having anything of this world. He used to cry in order to make those around Him chant constantly the Name of Hari. Nimai would laugh and dance in the mother's lap at the sound of the kirtan of Hari with such extraordinary Grace of Expression and Movement of His Limbs that those, who chanted the Name of Hari to please Him, did so for their own pleasure. Those who are obstinately incredulous about the authenticity of the facts of religious history, need not reject these on the plea of want of contemporary evidence. They were faithfully put into writing by the eternal companions of Sree Chaitanya and none of the numerous enemies and opponents of Sree Chaitanya of that or subsequent Age ever thought of contradicting them on the ground that they were the concoctions of the imagination which should be impossible in the case of a series of great writers,

unless they deliberately conspired for stating and accepting as facts the products of their mesmerized imaginations.

Neither can we altogether admire the judgment of those secular historians who may be disposed to regard them as trivial and the explanations of them offered by the associates and followers of Sree Chaitanya, as laboured after-thoughts. To the candid reader the least of these so-called trifles and laboured after-thoughts may perchance possess more value for the real weal and woe of mankind in a proportion that is inversely proportional to the cumulative blighting influence of all the empirical accounts that have ever been written of the authentic deeds of the mighty heroes of this world.

Godhead, when He chooses to sport as Infant, is more fully Divine than when He plays the open role of the Supreme Ruler by His Omnipotence of all these countless worlds. His Activities in either case are, however, alike incomprehensible to the perverted understanding of the conditioned soul who is averse to His service. No Tittle of such Activities has also the least chance of suffering any exaggeration by any amount of our poor and misdirected human praise that may be wrongly lavished upon it. The praise of them that is practiced by the devotees is the only method of enabling us to realize their most wonderful and exclusive fitness for all true praise. This is the kirtan of Krishna and it was this Truth Whom Infant Nimai constantly tried to impress on His attendants through their realized experience of Him, by making them sing constantly the kirtan of Hari without offense, i.e., in order to please the Lord Himself. This is the central subject of the Teaching of Sree Gaurasundar, and its importance and early manifestation have accordingly been noted with reverent admiration by those who had been enabled by the Grace of Sree Chaitanya to realize the Highest Truth to Whose service the jiva can aspire to attain by the loving service of the Truth Himself.

Lord Visvambhar now exhibited the Pastime of moving about on His Knees in the yard of Sachi. He sped about on His Knees with the most enchanting art, while the tiny bells on His Waistband made a most delicious music. He roved over the yard most fearlessly and grasped at everything that He saw, whether it was the fire or the venomous serpent.

One day while thus roaming the yard, Nimai actually caught hold of a huge serpent that had found its way into the house. At the touch of the Child's Hand, the brute immediately coiled up. Viswambhar then quietly laid Himself down on the soft cushion of its coils. The sight of this sent a thrill of horror into the hearts of all who beheld it. In their utter dismay and helplessness they called upon Garuda to save the Child. The parents with many others set up a wail of great agony. Nimai laughed as He lay couched on the coils of the monster. The lamentations of the onlookers at last induced the serpent to move off of its own accord. The Son of Sree Sachi pursued the retreating brute with the intent of catching it again. They dashed at the Child and brought Him away and pressed Him tightly to their bosoms. All the ladies blessed the Child saying, 'May Thou live for ever'. Some tied protective amulets, some recited texts of benediction, while some fetched the Feet-wash of Vishnu and sprinkled His body therewith. Some said that the Boy was born a second time. Some said that the serpent happened to be of the particular species that did no harm, which was the reason why His life was saved. Gaursundar only went on laughing and frequently essayed to make after the track of the serpent and was as often anxiously brought back by all the people.

The relation of all fearful objects to the Lord is the exact opposite of their relation to the jiva: Godhead is the Source of all fear. He is fear Himself. Mahakala, the Destroyer of all things, is afraid of Him. Those who love the Lord are not, therefore, afraid of anything. Those, who do not trust the Lord and think that the various dreadful objects are not afraid of Him, are necessarily afraid of them. All such fear is condemnable for the reason that it has no reference to Godhead and is, therefore, due to the anxiety for one's worldly safety. This looking away from Godhead to one's false self is the cause of all fear and is the reason why such fear is also sordid. The fear of Sachi and Jagannath and of the assembled people for the safety of Nimai does not belong to the category of such sordid fear and is, therefore, an event that deserves to be recorded and was also exhibited by them, by the beneficent contrivance of the Spiritual Power of the Lord, to teach the proper use of the instinct of fear to all ungodly conditioned souls.

Besides providing the opportunity of service to those devotees who did not know, by the force of the beneficent spiritual Power, that He was Godhead Himself, Sree Gaursundar also contrived to receive by this method the perfect homage of the most highly beloved of His fully conscious transcendental servitors whom He wanted to specially favour. Fire and the serpent, that were the causes of the consternation of friends and relatives, were respectively the god who identifies himself with the element of fire and Sree Ananta Deva Who is the Plenary Form of Sree Samkarsana and Who serves as the Couch of the Supreme Lord. Sree Gaursundar chose to receive their service for the purpose of His Pastime on this occasion. The pervert yogi only deludes the people by his display of seeming immunity from mundane fire and serpent in juggling imitation of these Acts of the Lord. Their exhibitions tempt other atheistical people like themselves to follow the method of the astanga yoga for the profane attainment of powers of apparent mastery over Nature. There are also people who are disposed to class Sree Chaitanya and His devotees with these pseudo-yogis and explain also Their Performances by the possession of improper yogic powers. But as a matter of fact the display of the pseudo-yogic power is no part of the function of the pure soul taught and practiced by Sree Chaitanya and His associates. The power which the pervert yogi imagines as belonging to himself being acquired by his own meritorious endeavours, is a penal delusion which is as condemnable as the attempt of acquiring any other form of worldly power. It happens to possess the appearance of a superhuman entity in degree and measure, but is, as a matter of fact, only a still more objectionable form of selfish material enjoyment and only a potent means of self-deception or godlessness. For this reason, those, who try to understand the Doings of Sree Gaursundar and His devotees from the point of view of the astanga yoga, obtain, as the due punishment of their selfish labours, a further increase of aversion to Godhead.

Chapter V —Boyhood—

And now the Son of Sree Sachi Devi began to toddle on His tender legs. These pedestrian performances with uncertain steps were confined to the yard of Sree Sachi. The Child constantly moved about in the yard. Every limb of the Boy was most exquisitely beautiful. His Face was the envy of the Moon. His Head was beautifully rounded. A profusion of fine curls gracefully clustered round the Forehead. His Eyes were remarkably wide, resembling the petals of the lotus-flower. These reminded one of the Appearance of Boy-Krishna His long Hands hang down to the Knees. The Lips were crimson. His Bosom was wide and possessed of every auspicious feature. The whole Form of Gaura had a most pleasing yellowish tint that matched Him to perfection. His Fingers, Hands and Feet were particularly beautiful. While the Lord tripped about in the haphazard fashion of children, the mother used to get alarmed, as it seemed to her that blood came out of the delicate Feet of the Boy as They pressed lightly on the ground.

The parents were unspeakably happy. They felt and whispered to each other that a great Personage was born in the family, which ensured deliverance of themselves and the family from the bondage of this world. These high hopes of the parents were confirmed by the peculiarity that the Child fell to crying if He did not hear the sound of the Name of Hari. He was the very Embodiment of Joy, whenever the Name of Hari was chanted to Him by clap of hand, and would express His gladness by unceasing laughter and dancing as long as the Name of Hari continued to be sung. This circumstance drew all the ladies of the neighbourhood into the house from early dawn, who formed themselves into a merry ring round Gaurasundar and performed the samkirtan with clap of hand. The attentive Boy danced, rolled on the ground gray with dust, and, climbing into the lap of mother, burst into merry peals of laughter. He danced with such charming poses of the limbs that it filled all the onlookers with inexpressible delight. The Lord in this artless manner of childhood made all of them perform the kirtan of Hari: but they did not understand it.

As the Boy grew up He began to manifest great restlessness of disposition and constantly sped in and out of the house. He would frequently leave the house

unattended and would beg from the passers-by fried rice, plantain, sweetmeats, and, in fact, whatever eatables they happened to be carrying. The extraordinary Beauty of the Boy softened everybody towards Him, and perfect strangers gave Him, as soon as they saw Him, whatever He asked. No sooner did He obtain any gift than He ran into the house with the greatest joy and gave it to those ladies who chanted the Name of Hari. Such precocity of the Child made all persons laugh with great delight, and they would continue to chant the Name of Hari with clap of hand. The Lord often left the house in this manner at all hours of the day and even in the evenings.

That the Holy Name of Godhead should be sung constantly, to the exclusion of every other activity, is a proposition that is repeatedly enjoined by the Scriptures, although it may appear at first sight to be impracticable. The mercenary preacher accepts a pecuniary remuneration for his exertions in delivering the Word of God on the ground that he must have something to live upon. How can the Name of Godhead be taken night and day without exposing oneself to sure starvation? The physical needs of the body compel every mortal to devote a part of his time to activities of this world. It may be urged with apparent reasonableness that the worldly activity for earning a livelihood is imperative and cannot be neglected by anybody in this world, whether he is a prince or a peasant, an atheist or a preacher of the Word of God. Therefore, the declaration of the Scriptures, that the chanting of the Name of Godhead at all time is the only function of every soul, requires to be liberally interpreted in its application to the people of this world. The impracticability is perfectly clear and simple and can be understood even by a child. It is not possible that this obvious difficulty should have been overlooked and overruled by the numerous Scriptural declarations, unless for a very good reason. That reason is also quite plain and may be briefly stated as follows. Godhead Himself has the Power and the Will to provide for the maintenance of those who devote themselves wholeheartedly, night and day, to the performance of the kirtan of Himself. Wherefore, it is expressly forbidden in the Scriptures to sell the Word of God in exchange for anything. If a person, who sets up as a preacher of the Word of God, makes of it a trade for the maintenance of himself and his family, for lacking the necessary faith in the promise of Godhead that he need not think

for his own maintenance, he thereby commits an act of disobedience against Godhead and by reason of such sinfulness becomes unfit to receive or still less convey to others the Holy Word of the Lord.

Sree Chaitanya taught that the Name of Godhead should be taken at all time with patience and humility. The patience consists in practicing perfect reliance on the Word of God. The humility consists in giving up all thought of selfish enjoyment and accepting the desire to please and obey Godhead as the only object of one's serving activity. These considerations supply the real explanation of the otherwise mysterious Behaviour of the Divine Child. Godhead Himself procures the necessaries for the maintenance of every one who devotes himself to the chanting of the Name of God,—declare the Scriptures. The level of conduct of all preachers should come up to this cardinal fact of spiritual practice, if they expect to make their hearers believe, or make themselves believe, in the Truth of the Scriptures. Dancing and singing are forbidden to the Brahmanas, i.e., to those who know Godhead, except to serve the pleasure of Godhead and His devotees. The Brahmanas alone, who abstain from singing and dancing for any worldly purpose, are not only fit, but it is their duty to dance and sing the kirtan of Hari for pleasing Godhead and His devotees.

Nimai now set Himself to carrying out in a systematic manner a series of reckless depredations in the households of the friends of the family who resided in the neighbourhood. He took to thieving and it was His daily pastime to steal something or other. He would stealthily drink the milk of one household, eat the cooked rice of another without notice, or, if He could obtain nothing to eat, He would break the earthen cooking pots, of a third home. He would poke the babies put to sleep and make them cry, beating a hasty retreat the moment He was detected. If anybody chanced to catch Him at His tricks, He would fall at his feet and express repentance. 'Let Me go this time. I won't come again. I give My Word to you that I won't steal again., Every one was astonished at such precocity of the little Child. No one was ever angered by these freaks; on the contrary, they all loved Him. Nay, they loved Him far more tenderly than they loved their own children. He stole away every faculty of the heart at the very

first sight. The Divine Child took His pleasure in such extreme naughtinesses.

The Favour of God bears no resemblance to the favour that is expected from or conferred by worldly persons. We desire, by everything we do, only the gratification of our own senses in a gross or subtle form. When, therefore, we want to favour anybody, we naturally suppose that the only means of doing this is by providing him with the means of his sensuous gratification. 'All the ills that flesh is heir to, are traceable to this inveterate self-indulging principle of our conditioned nature. The elaborate social machinery, with its so-called ethical codes, has been devised for the express purpose of augmenting each man's average share of worldly enjoyment.

But we are all of us more or less conscious of the wild-goose chase character of the pursuit of all worldly enjoyments. The causes of disappointment are many. Our hopes are never fully realized. The bliss, that we promise ourselves, invariably palls on its seeming attainment. We are perpetually oppressed with the sense of some besetting evil that poisons everything we desire to taste in the very act of tasting. We may be temporarily dazzled by worldly performances; but the inevitable dross is sure to discover itself in the long run in the most promising deeds of our lives. There is always this skeleton in the cupboard. The tragedies and comedies of worldly life alike repel us in the end by their grossness and triviality. Those, who consider it heroic to put a good face on the inevitable, thereby only display their disinclination to honestly tackle the issue that confronts them all the same. The attitude of patience for the inevitable, which appeals so strongly to the so-called practical temperament, is tantamount to an avoidance to think on the solution a besetting problem under the tacit plea that one's duty is done by simply shutting one's eye to the inexplicable side of one's conduct.

But it is only a display of thoughtless egotism that imagines the presence of adverse circumstances and their abundance in this world for which the person himself is not in any way responsible. This attitude is both dishonest and shallow. It means only that one should consider it his duty to move heaven and earth for securing his own enjoyment and, after having secured a fair share

of it, when he finds that it does not answer his purpose, must still go on advocating The wisdom of such course and shut his eyes to the real worthlessness of such policy. This attitude is possible only when a person is too much enamoured of the sensuous life despite its utterly disappointing quality. The faculties of the mind of such a person are viciously attracted towards hollow worldly advantages. He is so completely engrossed in his contemplation that he has neither time nor inclination to look to the other side.

To such people the conduct of the Boy Nimai would appear to be not at all different from that of ordinary naughty children who often turn into moral men and women on attaining the age of discretion and whose childish vices, therefore, are a mere result of the exuberance of their animal spirit and should not be put in the same category with the objectionable vices of grown-up people. Even this sort of moral condonation of childish vices seems unnecessary to a school of thinkers who are disposed to give every child a long rope in order to enable him to develop freely all sides of his nature. According to this school, a virile and aggressive personality in the worldly sense is better than a regulated and cramped one. The conduct of Gaursundar and His parents may, therefore, meet with the worldly approval of people of this stamp.

But the attitude that the associates of Sree Gaursundar want us to realize in regard to these Activities of the Lord is different from what are recommended by both the above views. The depredations that are committed against our worldly 'possessions' by Godhead are of the nature of His Special Favour. This becomes self-evident, as soon as they are understood as proceeding directly from the Will of the Lord. In the cases we are considering just now, this latter condition was supplied automatically by the fact that the mischievous Acts of the Child were actually liked by those persons against whom they were committed by the Lord Himself and were liked because of their connection with the Lord. If we love a frail mortal child, the imperfections of the object of our passion prevent the sentiment from acquiring the permanence that is its due and without which its full requirement is not satisfied. Hence the love of average worldly people for their children is unsure and shallow and cannot, by the very nature of its imperfection, extend to other

children or even to all acts of one's own child. If one sets himself deliberately to love all little children without reservation, he will be rightly charged with trying to do something that is unnatural and fictitious. Such affection has no real basis to stand upon. We want to love our children from a natural impulse which is balked of its satisfaction by the unworthiness of the object to which it is directed. There was no cause of any such disappointment in the case of their love for Sree Gaursundar, as He is, indeed, Godhead Himself. Hence, says the Bhagavatam, 'all the faculties really succeed in obtaining what they seek only when they are directed towards Godhead.' This overwhelming attractiveness also supplies an indirect proof of the Perfect Personality of the Supreme Lord.

An incident of these Infant days is thus recorded by Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami. One day Sachi brought a vessel full of fried rice and sweetmeats and gave it to Nimai, asking Him to sit down and eat the same. Sachi then left Him to attend to household work. The Boy, however, began to eat raw earth by avoiding any notice. Sachi, however, perceived this and came running to the Child with expostulations of disapproval, snatched the earth from the Boy and asked Him why He preferred it to the other eatables. The Child burst into tears. 'Why are you angry?' He said, 'How am I to blame? It is you who gave Me the earth to eat. Fried rice, sweetmeats, cooked rice, etc., are all transformations of earth. This, which I am eating, is earth; those are also earth. Why do you consider them to be different? This body is of earth; its food is also earth. Consider this well. I am helpless, if you blame without reflection.' Sachi was very much surprised in her heart at such reply. 'Who taught you,' she said, 'to eat earth by the barren policy of intellectualists? The body is nourished only by eating cooked rice which is a transformation of earth. If raw earth is eaten, disease is produced and the body is destroyed thereby. We fetch water in a pitcher which is a transformation of earth. If we put water on a lump of clay, it soaks and dries up., The Child said, 'Why did you not tell Me this before? I shall no more eat earth now that I know. When I feel hungry, I shall suck your breast.' And, saying this, the Boy smiled and climbed to the lap of mother and began to suck. These revelations of Supreme Power were constant and various. They were secured against recognition by the display of childishness that

followed and served to blind everybody's judgment.

Sree Sachi Devi did not evidently belong to the school of empiric abstractionists who deny Godhead the power of real manifestation and real creation, regarding the latter as temporary, unwholesome and illusive and, therefore, impossible of being in any way related to perfect Godhead. Sachi Devi, on the contrary, believed in the relationship of simultaneous unity and diversity of Power with Possessor of Power and was not prepared to ignore qualitative differences that really exist between the fried rice and raw earth, after the manner of the Buddhists or believers in the Undifferentiated Abstract Negation as Brahman. Child Nimai was more easily converted to the, creed of His mother by her effective protest than falls to the lot of the average Mayavadin.

One day as the Child was roaming in the town as usual by Himself and with ornaments on all parts of His Body, He attracted the attention of two thieves who thought on a plan of robbing His ornaments. Accordingly, one of them with sweet words took up the Lord into his arms, saying that they had been searching for Him and would take Him home. The Lord at once consented to their proposal and was carried on their shoulders a long distance through intricate lanes towards the place where the nefarious deed was to be perpetrated with safety and secrecy. Those thieves endeavoured all this time to keep Nimai in humour by sweet words and the offer of prospective sweetmeats. While the Lord was being thus hurried off to their rendezvous, the members of His family missed Him and began to search in all directions, but could find the Boy nowhere. A great fear gradually took possession of their minds. Meanwhile the thieves had been led by the Deluding Power of Vishnu into taking the road to the Home of Jagannath Misra, under the impression that it led to their own place and, on their arrival at Misra's house, felt quite sure that they had successfully reached their destination.

They accordingly made the Boy descend from their shoulders just where Jagannath Misra and the friends and relations of the family were sitting in silent grief, apprehending a great calamity. Nimai at once ran into the arms of His father and all present shouted 'Hari, Hari' in the joy of a great relief, as if Life

Himself was restored to their bodies. The thieves looked foolish and perplexed and were very much frightened when they found out that it was not their own place. Thereupon availing of the confusion caused by the arrival of Nimai they made good their escape.

They did not stop till they felt that they were out of the reach of any possible pursuers. They were amazed by the nature of their adventure and thought that they had been under the spell of a black magician and had been saved only by the grace of goddess Chandi whom they worshipped. They hugged each other in a close embrace in their ecstasy of joy at their Providential escape. As a matter of fact, it was also no ordinary good luck that had provided them an opportunity of carrying Nimai on their shoulders.

Here, at the house of Jagannath Misra, after the first outburst of joy had subsided, they began to look about for the person who had brought Nimai home with the object of rewarding him by the present of a head-dress. This was a piece of cloth which they wanted to tie round his head with their own hands. But although it transpired that two men had actually brought the Child on their shoulders, no one came forward to claim the reward. Nimai was questioned and declared that He had gone to the bank of the Bhagirathi and had been brought on the shoulders of two strangers by paths that were unknown to Him. The people arrived at the conclusion that it was an instance of what the Scriptures declare, viz., that children, old men and those who have nobody to look after them, are protected by the gods in the shape of luck. Thus thought they in their ignorance, unable to realize the significance of the occurrence by reason of the sportive intervention of the Power of Vishnu. Those, concludes Thakur Brindabandas, who listen to this story, which is one of the hidden narratives of the Scriptures, attain to firm devotion to the Feet of Sree Chaitanya.

Vishnu's Power possesses at one and the same time a double face. One of these confers the knowledge of the Divinity on one disposed to serve, the other obscures the spiritual vision and makes the jiva, who is averse to the service of

Godhead, hanker for sensuous enjoyment. The jiva falls into the clutches of the latter, also called Maya if he makes the attempt to understand the Divinity by the resources of his own paltry intellect. In this instance the thieves were prevented by the Spiritual Energy to act in the wrong way, in spite of their bad intentions. The members of the family of Jagannath Misra were also prevented by the Spiritual Power, who supplies the conjunction of events forming the Leela of Godhead, from realizing the whole truth of the incident. The jiva possesses freedom of will but is lacking in the power of taking the effective initiative which belongs exclusively to Godhead. The jivas are made conscious of the Purpose of Godhead in what they are enabled to do, just in the proportion that is necessary for the Divine Purpose. Those, who rely on their own judgment for finding out the Divine Purpose, without desiring to receive the knowledge of it from Himself, are guided by the Deluding Energy into wrong conclusions; but they are not themselves aware that their conclusions are wrong.

This is, however, really opaque delusion. Those, who submit to receive their enlightenment from Godhead, are not thus deprived of the service of Godhead by the Deluding Power. In this instance it is not the Deluding Energy but the preventing Spiritual Power that relieved the thieves from their thievish propensity and sowed the seed for future service of the Divinity. Herein the thieves were really most fortunate. It could not be otherwise, as Godhead Himself is directly concerned. When thieves steal the property of worldly people, they are under the deluding Power who punishes those who desire to serve themselves instead of God by helping them to gain their object in the shape of the attainment of their selfish enjoyment. But stealth, which is contrived by the Spiritual Power to be directed apparently against God Himself for enhancing the charm of the Divine Leela, produces the best results in spite of the apparently evil intention of the person who attempts to rob Him, if the thief is not really anxious to go consciously against Godhead. In the case even of demon Ravana, who apparently succeeded in robbing Sita Devi, the illusion of his apparent success operated for his benefit by his death at the Hands of Godhead Himself.

From these instances we should be careful, however, not to draw the wrong conclusion and suppose that Godhead is apt to reward those who cherish evil intentions towards Himself for such offensive conduct. God rewards everybody impartially and fully. But the reward takes different forms according to the different antecedents of the recipients. In the case of the thieves, the stealth of God's property was prevented; but of this they were not conscious and God was also served unconsciously by allowing Himself to be carried on their shoulders to His Own Home. In the case of Ravana, he was deluded by the Spiritual Power into the belief that he was successful in stealing Sita. He, however, stole only the delusive form of Sita. This proved a means of correction for Ravana, although he had planned his offense against good advice. He was punished by the Spiritual Power by the slaughter of himself with all his kindred and followers. Ravana was well aware that he was going against Godhead. He was more fortunate than the two thieves, because he was enabled to realize that he was punished for his offense and also the utter wickedness of opposing the Divine Will. The Power of Godhead is really One but acts consistently in opposite ways, accordingly as He is served or opposed. Her external face, which alone is open to the view of those who are opposed to Godhead, seems to be terrible and incalculable as long as they continue to be averse to God. Her benign face is seen only by those who are disposed to serve Godhead. The delusion of Jagannath Misra and his kindred and friends was absolutely wholesome, being of the nature of the benign operation of the Spiritual Power of Godhead in furtherance of the joy of His Divine Activities.

One day Jagannath Misra called to his Son and asked Him to fetch his book from the inner apartment. As the Boy entered the room running, Misra and Sachi distinctly heard exquisitely sweet sounds as of jingling of bells of anklets that were produced by the quick movements of the Child. Presently Nimai came out with the required book and, making it over to His father, ran off for play. The parents were very much perplexed. There were no jingling anklets on the Feet of their Boy. Whence could the sound come? Their astonishment was changed to conviction as they went into the room. There they found, all over the room, prints of Feet marked with the signs of the banner, the bolt and the goad. They at once recognized the Foot-prints of Vishnu, and both of them

instinctively exclaimed that there would be no more birth for them as they had a sight of those well-known Wonderful Divine Feet never seen by them before. They reverentially bowed to the foot-prints of Godhead. Misra naturally enough concluded that it was the act of Damodar Sila, i.e., the Salagram Sila who was the tutelary? Deity of the family and was regularly worshipped in the home. He thought that Gopala (Cow-boy Krishna) Who dwelt in the Salagram Sila walked about in the room, and the prints were of the Feet of Gopala. Misra decided to undertake personally the worship of Damodar Sila from that day and asked Sachi Devi to cook rice boiled in sweet milk mixed with ghee as a special offering to Damodar Sila next morning. Misra with his own hands bathed the Salagram Sila with the five holy products of the cow and, in the company of his pious consort, reverentially worshipped the Deity of the family. The Lord laughed in His mind at the conduct of His parents.

Thereafter occurred a most wonderful event. A pilgrim Brahmana, who had done many pious deeds in his previous lives, was wont to wander all over the country in quest of Krishna. He worshipped the six-letter mantram of Gopala (Cow-boy Krishna) and ate nothing except such food as had already been offered to Gopala. By good fortune it so chanced that he arrived at the Lord's House in course of his wanderings. The pilgrim Brahmana wore, as his cherished ornaments, the Holy Forms of Gopala and the Salagram Sila suspended from his neck. The whole person of the pilgrim was aglow with the spiritual radiance of the ideal Brahmana which can never be properly described in words. The mouth of the Brahmana constantly recited the Name of Krishna. His eyes were listless by the influence of the sweet quality of Govinda That possessed his heart. At the sight of the newly-arrived stranger-guest, Jagannath Misra, struck by the visible force of his personality, rising from his seat with respect, made obeisance to him. Misra then welcomed his guest with all due formality. He himself washed the feet of his guest and offered him his best seat. After the pilgrim was refreshed and properly seated, the good Misra inquired the place of his residence. To this the Brahmana replied that he was a recluse and wandered about through sheer restlessness of mind. Misra, bowing low, observed that the wanderings of such as he testified to the good fortune of the world which good fortune belonged to him that day, and, if commanded, he

would make the necessary arrangements for his cooking of the meal for Krishna.

The Brahmana, signifying his assent to the proposal of Misra, the latter with great pleasure proceeded to make all necessary preparations. He made ready the place of cooking by cleansing it with great care and brought thither all the articles required for cooking. The Brahmana, having cooked the meal with great satisfaction, sat down to make its offering to Krishna.

No sooner did the Brahmana engage in the meditation of Krishna, than Sree Gaursundar appeared before him. The Body of the Child was full of dust and perfectly nude. His beautiful Eyes, Hands, and Feet were red. Smilingly He took up the food offered by the Brahmana with His beautiful Hand and, in the view of the worthy Brahmana, ate a mouthful. The fortunate Bipra shrieked in an agony of grief: 'That restless Boy has stolen my cooked rice.' His cry quickly brought Jagannath Misra to the spot who found Sree Gaursundar in the very Act of eating the cooked rice with a smiling Countenance.

Misra was greatly enraged and ran to administer his Son a sound thrashing. The pilgrim Brahmana got up in great fear and caught hold of the hand of Misra. He said that the Child had no knowledge of right and wrong. A wise man should never hurt such a one. He accordingly importuned Misra to do no violence to the Boy. Misra was very much dejected. The Brahmana said that there was no cause for grief; Godhead alone knows what is to happen on any day. 'I would dine on any fruits, roots or such other food that may be in the house. Be pleased to give the same to me.' But Misra would not hear. 'If you indeed regard me as your servant', he said, 'be pleased to cook the meal once again. Allow me to make ready the place. I have got everything necessary for your cooking in the house. I shall, indeed, be very glad, if you cook once more.' Other relatives and well-wishers of Misra joined in the entreaty. The importunity of so many persons had its effect and induced the pilgrim to agree to cook again.

This time, in order to keep the Child out of harm's way, Sachi Devi took Him to a neighbour's house. The ladies did not forego such an excellent opportunity of

reading a good lesson to the Child. 'Well, Nimai', they said, 'You are so foolish that you ate the rice that was cooked by a stranger. You will be an outcast for this. What will you do now?' The Boy laughed and made this strange answer, 'I am a cow-boy. I eat the rice cooked by Brahmanas at all time.' He looked at them with an arch smile. The reply had its effect. They all burst into uproarious laughter and pressed the Child to their bosom. The Benign Spiritual Power of God prevented them from understanding the actual meaning of His words.

That pilgrim Brahmana after cooking a second time sat down to make the offering to Krishna. He meditated on the Cow-boy Nimai again appeared before the pilgrim, having eluded the vigilance of all watchers, and ate a handful of the cooked rice which was duly perceived only by the Brahmana who at once shouted out with grief. This gave the alarm to Misra who detected the Boy as He ran away after eating the rice. Misra took up a stick and gave chase. But the Boy took refuge inside one of the rooms in great fear. Misra was not to be pacified by the entreaties of anybody. The pilgrim Brahmana himself again interposed. 'Krishna', he said, 'has not allotted cooked rice for me to-day. This is the real truth, I tell you. The Boy is not to blame at all.' This did not allay the poignant grief of Misra who remained silent and thoughtful.

At this point Viswarup appeared on the scene. The beauty of His person was only equaled by His knowledge of all the Scriptures and His unbounded devotion to Krishna. The very sight of Viswarup was a revelation to the pilgrim who regarded His appearance with great attention and frequently looked at Him with unconcealed admiration. He inquired His parentage and warmly congratulated Misra on the possession of such a son.

Viswarup made obeisance to the Brahmana. His words were extraordinarily sweet. He said that it was, indeed, very great good fortune that had brought a person who finds all his delight in his own soul as guest to their house. There could be no greater calamity than if this guest had to fast in the house against His will. He felt it a great grief, although He was very glad by seeing him. The Brahmana said that he lived in the forest and was habituated to a diet of roots and fruits. He felt amply rewarded by having the sight of Viswarup. He would

take any article of food that had been offered to Krishna. Viswarup said that a person like the pilgrim Brahmana naturally cared only for the happiness of others, in preference to his own. Viswarup was, therefore, emboldened to make the request that he would be pleased to cook a third time. The Brahmana said that the Will of Krishna in the matter was supreme and it had been very clearly declared. It was also almost midnight. He had already cooked twice. As it was not clearly the Will of Krishna that he should eat cooked rice that day, he entreated to be excused any further useless exertion and would accept fruits and roots as his repast for that night.

But Viswarup fell at the feet of the Brahmana and repeated the entreaty of Himself and of the whole family that he would cook once again for the sake of Krishna. The pilgrim had been thoroughly bewitched by the Beauty and Grace of Viswarup. He willingly consented to cook a third time amidst the shouts of 'Hari, Hari' that were raised by all present. The place was quickly cleansed and everything was made ready for his cooking.

This time very special care was taken to prevent further mischief by Nimai. He had already hidden Himself inside one of the rooms. On the advice of those present, Misra had the door of the room securely bound from outside. Misra himself guarded the entrance of the room. The ladies at last announced that there was no further cause for anxiety, as the Child had fallen asleep. But they did not relax their vigilance.

At last the cooking of the Brahmana was finished, and, having arranged the meal, that Brahmana of excellent deeds, offered the same to Krishna in meditation. All the people had by this time fallen into a deep slumber. The Son of Sachi Devi again appeared on the spot where the Brahmana was making his offering of food to Gopala. On catching sight of the Boy the Brahmana made a great noise, but no one heard his cries. The Lord said, 'Bipra! You are so generous! You ask Me to come. Is it My fault? Repeating My mantram you call upon Me. Finding it impossible to stay away, I have thus come to you. You always long for My Sight. Wherefore, I show Myself to you.'

The Brahmana forthwith had a vision of the Wonderful Divine Form. The Figure had eight Arms which held the Conch, Disc, Club and the Lotus. There was butter in one of His Hands, which He ate with another. And the Lord played on the Murali (flute) with the other two Hands. A garland of jewels and the Gem Kaustuva adorned His Breast which was marked with footprints of Bhrigu. The Brahmana saw that precious ornaments decorated all parts of His Body. The tail of the peacock, set in the fresh twigs of gunja, adorned His Head. His red Lips added to the Beauty of His moonlike Face. He moved His Lotus Eyes smiling. The Vaijayanti Garland waved to and fro as also the Makara pendent hanging from His Ears. The charming Anklet (Nupura) of jewels adorned the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Darkness was flung back afar by the sheen of His gemlike Toe-nails. On the self-same spot the Brahmana also saw the wonderful Kadamba tree in Brindabana, alive with the sounds of birds. He saw the cowherds and milkmaids and cows on all sides. He had direct vision of everything on which he was wont to meditate. That Brahmana of pious deeds swooned away with excess of joy on beholding splendours never seen before.

Sree Gaur Sundar touched the body of the Brahmana with His Hand. The Touch of Divine Hand restored external consciousness to the Brahmana. He was rendered passive by joy, and no words came out of his mouth. He swooned away and fell on the ground repeatedly, but, recovering quickly, stood up as often as he fell. No part of his body could be composed by reason of shivering, sweat, horripilation; and tears from his eyes flowed in a stream like the sacred current of the Ganges. Presently the Brahmana clasped the Feet of the Lord and began to cry with a loud voice.

On beholding the restlessness of the Brahmana, Sree Gaur Sundar smiled as He spoke to him briefly. The Lord said that 'the Brahmana is His servant in every birth and always thinks of having the Sight of Him. Therefore He had shown him His Form. He had formerly shown His same Form to the Brahmana in the

home of Nanda, in another birth. The Brahmana had forgot it. On that previous occasion also when Sree Gauranga had been born in the village of the cowherds, the same Brahmana, pursuing his pilgrim-journeys as now, had accidentally become the guest in the home of Nanda, and the Lord then showed him the same Form by stealthily eating his cooked food while in the act of offering it to Krishna. Those, who are His servants like the Brahmana, are privileged to have the Sight of His Divine Form. He then told the Brahmana not to divulge those secrets to any one as long as He remained Manifest in this world. He also told the Brahmana that His Advent takes place at the beginning of the congregational chanting (samkirtan) and that He will spread the samkirtan to all countries. He will give away to every household the Holy Love which is coveted by the gods including Brahma. The Brahmana will live to see many of those Activities.' With these words and assuring the Brahmana not to have any fears, the Lord returned to His own apartment, and there lay in His little bed as before, in the likeness of a child. By reason of deep slumber no one could know anything.

The Brahmana was filled with supreme bliss on beholding the wonderful Divine manifestation. He besmeared his body with the cooked rice, cried as he ate, danced, sang, laughed and roared with delight. He repeatedly ejaculated 'jais' to the Boy-Krishna (Gopala). The noise made by the Brahmana at last woke ;up everybody, when he restrained himself and finished his meal by the customary performance (achaman).

The first impulse of the Brahmana was to make a clean breast of everything to all the people, so that they might be delivered by recognizing the Lord Whom they all believed to be but a mere mortal child. But he desisted from this rashness on remembering his promise made to the Lord not to divulge anything. This fortunate Brahmana thereupon took up his permanent abode in Nabadwip and daily visited his cherished Divinity at the home of Jagannath Misra on the conclusion of his day's begging.

The Beatific vision is different from ordinary seeing. The Brahmana thought that if only he proclaimed what he had actually seen to all the people, they

would implicitly believe in his words and be saved by knowing the Infant Son of Jagannath Misra as the Lord of the world. This had been forbidden by Sree Gaursundar Himself in anticipation. Why did He forbid such disclosure ? The Lord had Himself told the Brahmana that His servants alone are privileged to have the Sight of the Divine Form. Those who are not the servants of Krishna do not see Him. Knowing Him is identical with seeing Him. Those that are not willing to serve Krishna see only a mortal child in the Son of Jagannath Misra. This hallucination can be removed only by the Lord Himself, because it is His Power that obscures their vision. Unless He allows them to see, they cannot see or know Him as He really is. But the Lord is not unkind to them. He is full of mercy for even those who do not want to serve Him. He does not show Himself to them, lest they are forced to serve Him through fear. He wants their willing service which alone can satisfy also themselves, because that is the really natural relationship between Krishna and jivas.

This freedom of will conferred by Krishna on jivas, which, Therefore, forms a part and parcel of their nature, is allowed free scope by the Lord in order to enable jivas to attain the eternal, natural function of their souls by the process of free rational choice. He does not compel their choice to serve even Himself, against their freedom of will. But the jiva cannot sit idly. He must always serve to exist at all. Those, who do not like to serve Krishna, have to be made to serve their own deluded fancies. They hope to be able to avoid the service of Krishna by following their own selfish inclinations. Krishna freely allows them to make this experiment by providing the means for the seeming realization of their desire.

His Deluding Energy creates this world for the purpose by His Will. Those jivas, who are averse to serve Krishna, find this world to contain more than an endless abundance of what they can conceivably want in such circumstance, viz., all varieties of means of their own selfish enjoyment. In the process of undergoing such enjoyment, they have nothing to do with Krishna as the only Master to be served. They are thus offered, in fulfillment of their own choice, the vision of that Potency of Krishna whose apparent function is to minister to their selfish pleasures. This is the deluding manifestation or non-Krishna which

can alone be available to those who want to lord it over the Divinity.

The Potency of Krishna, who thus appears to serve the erring fancies of disloyal souls, is the Deluding Power or Maya. When Krishna Himself comes down in His own proper Form into this world which is built for the above penal purpose by His Deluding Power, those jivas, who happen to be undergoing corrective enjoyment in this lower region, naturally take Him to be an object of this world like the other mundane entities that they know, which are of value to them solely because they minister to their trivial selfish enjoyment. All so-called service, that is so loudly advertised in this world, is only a method of procuring the good, i.e., enjoyable things of this world for oneself and other ungodly persons, for pleasing oneself. There is no place for the service of Krishna in the scheme of the selfish people of this world. The service of Krishna, the only Master, is not desired at all in this world. We want to be ourselves masters of everything including Krishna Himself if possible. Our lip-homage to Krishna is only a piece of pious hypocrisy. God does not perpetrate the anomaly of offering us a Master, Who can be no other than Himself, when we want to be served. This aversion is not due to ignorance, but is an innate disposition which is the result of the abuse of our freedom of will. It is only when the will of the jiva chooses to serve the Truth, i.e., Krishna, that Krishna shows His Form to him in order to receive his offered service.

The Vision Beatific is, therefore, possible only for those who have attained the highest rung of the ladder of spiritual endeavour towards the unadulterated service of the Divinity. There are hypocritical visions of so-called Divinity which are an ordinary device of the pseudo-yogis for deluding those worldly people who desire to see (?) Krishna for the gratification of their senses.

These pseudo-visions and miracles are by no means any infringement of the law of physical Nature. They come under the law of physical Nature or Deluding Energy as much as the ordinary events of mundane life. They are events of the mental plane. These mental powers can be obtained by the processes of pseudo-yoga and are coveted by persons who are inordinately anxious to extend their scope of selfish enjoyment. These bad people naturally fall a victim to the pervert yogis who lead them to deeper depths of perdition by producing in their

minds such impious hallucinations of mastery over the Divinity. Krishna has His Eternal Divine Form. But His Form is not like those images of God that are set up in the shrines of worldlings for the gratification of fallen jivas. The True Form of Krishna is All-pure and Spiritual and can, by His Nature, be seen only by those who are themselves free from all worldly taint. This caution of the Scriptures should serve as a much-needed warning to all educated and high-born people who are specially liable to accept the assurances of pseudo-yogis and pseudo-sadhus to be enabled to obtain the Sight (?) of the Divinity even in their sinful state.

The process of spiritual progress has its strict gradations which bear a close analogy to those of mental progress. The really moral state is the natural condition of the jiva. An immoral or non-moral person is far worse than a brute. This moral condition is the highest ideal of his position conceivable by man as attainable by his empiric thinking and activities based thereon. The spiritual, indeed, transcends the ideal moral, but not in The sense that it transgresses against the so-called moral law, because by such transgression man is only degraded to the condition which is worse than even that of the brute. The spiritual life enables us to realize the moral as a secondary result. The spiritual fulfills the moral ideal by transcending it.

Morality can neither be understood nor perfected in practice by. the empiric efforts of man. Its ideal is attainment of perfect purity (?) of body and mind. This ideal, the Scriptures tell us, can be automatically attained, only if it is made a secondary, and not the primary, object of life, as it happens to be the case with all really immoral people. The perfection of morality is realized as a secondary consequence of serving Krishna and not as a reward of endeavours for the satisfaction of our senses in our temporary worldly sojourn. Those who serve Krishna are alone necessarily and perfectly moral or free from the evils of the flesh. Those, who are not perfectly moral in this real sense, are not spiritual at all and have no right of entry into Sree Brindavana the Transcendental Abode of the Divinity. But the Deluding Power of God misleads immoral people, through the agency of immoral yogis by showing them a false form resembling that of Godhead, as a means of punishing them for such

impious desire of making God an object of the gratification of their senses.

This punishment is a real mercy to such people and is intended to cure them of their rank atheism. It is, therefore, necessary to confront one's so-called spiritual experiences with the authority of the Scriptures and the corroboration of real sadhus who do not desire to aggrandize themselves at our expense before they are admitted by our serving disposition as genuine. The unambiguous advice on such matters is obtainable only from Sreemad Bhagavatam and in the only intelligible form from the career of Sree Chaitanya as described by His associates, Who is the Living Embodiment of the Eternal Religion described in the Bhagavatam. The other Scriptures avoid the concrete presentation of the Truth, lest He be condemned or disbelieved by those who are deliberately averse to Him.

The rationale of theism is furnished by the Vaishnava philosophy, which is unique in the world, in its positive aspect. The associates and loyal followers of Sree Chaitanya have left an ample exposition of the philosophy of the religion of the Bhagavata in the clearest possible language. But even so it is suicidal to attempt to understand the highest spiritual principles without availing ourselves of the aid that has been so mercifully placed within our reach by Godhead Himself. The attitude of neglect of the transcendental subject is often due to ignorance, prejudice and irreverence. The two former obstacles can be overcome only by one's own endeavours; but the last is incurable except by Grace. There cannot well be a greater hypocrite than one who professes the desire of seeing Krishna but has no absolute regard for those perfectly loyal souls who admit no other legitimate function except the service of Godhead. It is for this sufficient reason that Godhead Himself has ordained that by submitting to His devotees, not once nor twice but constantly and eternally with body, mind and speech, that any one can have real access to His Presence. It is, however, this very dictum of the Scriptures, intended for ensuring devotion to Godhead, that is exploited by the knaves and atheists under the external garb of sadhus for passing off the different forms of pseudo-service on willing worldly people for the gratification of their diabolical atheistical purposes which are destructive of even ordinary morality.

Chapter VI —Growing Boy—

The Lord occupied Himself with these Juvenile Pastimes after the manner of Gopala (Cow-Boy Krishna). Meanwhile the proper time for the performance of the ceremony of making the Boy begin His studies, having arrived, Jagannath Misra chose an auspicious day and moment for 'putting the writing-chalk into the Hands of his Boy' to initiate Him into the art of reading, writing and arithmetic. This is one of the ten purificatory ceremonies enjoined by the Scriptures as necessary to be observed by the Brahmanas.

Some time after the ceremony, all friends of the family gathered together to perform the next purificatory rites, viz., perforation of the ears and tonsure. The perforation of the ears is to make possible hearing of the Word of Godhead or the attainment of the fitness of listening to words regarding the highest good, as distinct from ordinary non-spiritual utterances. The making of the tuft known as 'the tongue of fire' in the Vedas or subsequently as 'teaching of Sree Chaitanya' (Sree Chaitanya siksha), is another of the ten lustrations. Mayavadins (illusionist-Monists), who believe in non-activity, admit the value of the tuft only in the sphere of work which is illusory and, accordingly, in the long run, shave off the tuft on renouncing all activity. But the Vedic theistic renunciation of the triple staff (tridanda) does not dispense with the tuft which, in this case, is emblematic of progress in the sphere of the service of Godhead, even in the stage of sannyasa.

Sree Chaitanya read all the letters of the Alphabet at the first sight, to the amazement of everybody. He finished all the compound-letters in two or three days and began to write constantly the series of the Names of Krishna. He wrote and read aloud, night and day, with the greatest ardour, the Holy Names of Rama, Krishna, Murari, Mukunda, Vanamali, etc. The fortunate people of

Nadia actually saw the Lord of Vaikuntha reading in the company of their children. The sweetness with which the Lord articulates the letters has power to steal the hearts of all jiuas, if they have only a chance of listening to Him.

Sree Gaursundar engaged in diverse kinds of strange frolics, and His demands were always most difficult to satisfy. He would ask to have the bird which flew across the sky and the moon and stars of the firmament, and would cry violently, rolling in the dust and dashing His hands and legs against the ground, if His wishes were not fulfilled. All present would take Him up into their arms to console Him, but Viswambhar always proved intractable and went on crying, 'I must have it'. There was only one sovereign remedy to stop Him. He was hushed the moment He heard the Name of Hari. All of them recited aloud the Name of Hari by clap of hand. This at once quieted the Child Who forgot all His turbulence. They chanted the Name of Hari to please the Boy and the home of Jagannath was turned into the realm of Vaikuntha.

It is necessary to guard against a possible error. That which is not the Abode of Godhead should not be supposed to be convertible into the same by chanting the Name of Hari. Such speculation, theologically dubbed as 'transubstantiation' applies only to mental and physical phenomena. The non-spiritual is never turned into the spiritual. Godhead dwells eternally in the pure spiritual essence which is the manifestation of His Spiritual Power, eternally distinct from the play of His Deluding Energy. The home of Jagannath Misra, in which the Lord appears, is never within the jurisdiction of the Deluding Power of Godhead.

One day Nimai began to cry violently. The Child was not quieted even by the chant of the Name of Hari, but kept on crying. After even, method of consoling the Boy had failed, they implored Him to tell them the cause of His grief, promising to procure whatever He desired. The Lord replied that He was very ill and lacked the strength to move or be quiet. If they really wanted to save His life, they must hasten; to the house of two Brahmanas, Jagadish Pandit and Hiranya Pandit. Those two had prepared a great variety of offerings for Vishnu on that day, which was the ekadasi tithi or the Lord's Day. If they could get from them all those offerings and give them to Him, He would be cured of His ailment by feeding on those things.

The mother was shocked to hear, thinking it was opposed to custom and the Scriptures for any one to desire to eat offerings intended for Vishnu and that also on the ekadasi day. But the others only burst into merry laughter at these words of the Child and assured Him that they would send for the offerings immediately, so He need have no anxiety on that account any more.

Jagannath Misra himself went down to the house of those two Brahmanas who happened to be his most intimate friends. He told them what the Boy so imperatively wanted. Those two Brahmanas were struck with a sudden wonder on hearing the strange proposal. They thought within themselves, 'This is most wonderful for a little Boy. How could He know at all that this is the Day of Sree Hari? How could He know that we have prepared to-day a great variety of offerings? This makes it perfectly clear to us that Gopala (Cow-boy Krishna) Himself dwells in the Figure of this beautiful Boy. Narayana Himself sports in the Frame of this Child. May be it is He Who makes Him say these words from His seat in the heart of the Child. Thinking in this way those two Brahmanas were filled with supreme joy, and at once with the greatest pleasure they-brought out all their offerings intended for Vishnu and themselves conveyed them to the Home of Jagannath Misra. They offered them with the greatest delight to Nimai and pressed Him to eat everything, giving out that all their preparations were at last really offered to Krishna Himself. The Lord was very much pleased on receiving the offerings and tasted a little of everything. His distemper was completely healed. He became as naughty and restless as ever, scattering the eatables in all directions and throwing bits of them at those who stood in a circle round Him and chanted the Name of Hari as He danced in the midst of the samkirtan of Himself

It is the custom of the Vaishnavas not to eat anything on the day of ekadasi.. This does not apply to the Lord Himself to Whom accordingly the usual offerings of food are made on the ekadasi day also. Those Brahmanas must have offered the food to Nimai in the firm belief that the Boy was no other than Krishna for Whom the offerings had been prepared. Such instinctive good

sense, observes Thakur Brindabandas in this connection, is only possible to one who obtains the special mercy of Krishna. Devotion to the Lord does not make her appearance in the heart as long as the worldly egotistic attitude persists. One, who gives up all reliance upon his own powers and humbly seeks enlightenment from Krishna Himself, or, in other words, becomes His willing servant, obtains the mercy of Krishna in the shape of devotion to the Feet of the Lord. To the worldly egotist all this is utterly incomprehensible. The sudden resolve of the Brahmanas to offer the eatables to Nimai, instinctively believing Him to be Vishnu Himself for Whom they had been prepared, is a circumstance which cannot be properly grasped by any one except the servants of Krishna. The reader may be reminded of the fact already noted that when the Lord appears in this world, He comes down with His eternal Associates, Servitors and Paraphernalia. This Descent of the Lord serves His merciful purpose of bringing the Divine realm within the vision of fallen souls thereby affording them the opportunity of serving Himself. The narrative of such Activities preserved in the language of this world continues to provide the same opportunity for all succeeding generations. But the Abode, Associates, Servitors, Paraphernalia, Narratives, although They appear to us like the things of this earth, are really spiritual entities, being of the Divine Essence. The Lord ever sports with His Own. He is ever manifest in the pure spiritual essence and all His Activities take place on the plane of the pure soul. His Activities manifesting Themselves in this world also possess the same spiritual nature. The Lord in His Real, positive or Spiritual Nature is knowable and servable by pure souls alone.

This material world is the shadow of the spiritual world. If the soul seeks the Lord in this world, he is perpetually deluded and is forced to arrive at the conclusion sooner or later, if he is really sincere in his quest of the Truth, that He is not to be found in this world. Less sincere people think that they can find Him in this world. But when the Lord actually appears in this world, these insincere people either ignore Him, thinking that He is an ordinary mortal, or, even if they are told of His Divinity, miss the real view of Him believing Him to be Godhead in the guise of mortal and subject to the imperfections of the flesh, as by such process of 'incarnation' alone He is wrongly imagined to be able to make Himself visible to the fettered souls.

The first is the frankly sceptical attitude that ignores altogether all possibility of spiritual existence. The second is no less fatal. It supposes that Godhead may be subject to the bondage of Maya, that Godhead may appear in this world as an actually sinful person and may engage in all worldly activities in the same way as we do. That such sinful activities of Godhead are not sinful, that it is the duty of fallen souls to submit to these sinful pastimes of the Lord in his human form; and that by such submission alone they can attain to the highest object of life. This is philanthropism, or the doctrine of prakrita sahajia sects, which is responsible, in some form or other, for all the corruptions of all current spurious creeds that profess to be theistic.

The true view is that the Lord, even when He chooses to be visible to the mortal eye, is nothing less than the Lord in His Fullness, because He is always All-powerful, always All-pure, always All-knowledge. Those alone can join in His Activities who share His Nature Who is Spiritual and incapable-of corruption. That is to say, no sinful person can really see, understand or participate in His Activities. The soul that is averse to Godhead, if by dint of the awakened sincerity of his nature he is convinced that no connection with the Lord can be established so long as the sinful condition itself persists, is enabled to obtain deliverance from the bondage of this world by witnessing with faith, by studying with faith and by listening with faith to the Narratives of these Activities from the lips of the servants of the Lord, by serving with faith those from whom he receives the tidings. the Lord,. His Associates and servitors, His Abode, the Narrative of His Activities, although they choose to be visible in this world from time to time, have nothing in common with anything of this world and are incapable of receiving the least stain of worldliness by their descent into this world.

Those who think otherwise are utterly misguided and are profane atheists, as they imagine that the Lord is only a created being like their false selves and possessing a similar liability to mundane defects and merits. But the Scriptures say that there is no greater slander of the All-pervasive (Vishnu) than to affect to believe that the Body of Vishnu is material. If this point is properly understood, there would be no chance of impostors, full of all the worst vices of humanity, setting up as 'Incarnations' (?) of Godhead and by their sinful activities and

spurious performances bringing about the terrible ruin of themselves and their unfortunate Victims.

Lord Vishwambhar continued to be exceedingly restless and wayward. He became the leader of all the turbulent Brahmana boys of the neighbourhood. He and His company were constantly after some mischief or other and engaged in a campaign of regular raids on different places. No one could check His turbulence. He would cut jokes at other children, whenever He chanced to meet them. They would also retort, till the affair developed into a regular fray. The boys of the Lord's party were always victorious in these quarrels by reason of the superior strength of the Lord, and their opponents found themselves compelled to retire discomfited. At this period Sree Gaursundar had the most charming Appearance. He was always gray with dust and His Body was beautifully adorned with points of writing ink.

After study was over at midday, Sree Gaursundar, in the company of all the children, went daily for His bath in the Ganges. As soon as He got into the water, He engaged in merry sports in the water with the children who splashed water at one another. Nabadwip was a most opulent city, and the number of bathers at each bathing-place baffled all calculation. They included very staid persons, respectable and grave fathers of families, and revered sannyasins, as well as a very large number of urchins. The Lord, sporting in the company of the children, soon attracted the attention of everybody by the extraordinary Beauty of His Person and by His turbulence. As the Lord played with the children, the shower of water from His Feet drenched all bathers. He paid no attention to the expostulations of the aggrieved parties and moved about so quickly from place to place that no one could catch hold of Him. In this manner the Lord made everybody bathe over and over again. He would touch some of the bathers and even spouted the water by His Mouth at them!

The Brahmanas, who were also treated in this unorthodox fashion, unable to catch hold of the turbulent Boy, at last went to Jagannath Misra and laid before him their grievances. 'It was impossible for any one to bathe in the proper manner in the Ganges. Sree Gaursundar disturbed one's meditations by the summary method of deliberately dashing the water at him or by spouting water at a person in the act of meditation for the avowed reason that it was

unnecessary to meditate any more, as one could actually see Him on Whom he meditated, by simply opening his eyes, standing before Him; He Himself being Narayana manifest in the Kali Age.'

The Boy, it was alleged, stole one's phallic symbol of Siva and decamped with the upper cloth of another. He occupied the seat prepared for Vishnu, ate all the offerings and put on His own person the flowers, etc., while the owner of them was engaged in his bath preparatory to worship, and ran away before He could be prevented, and would retort, into the bargain, 'that one need not feel sorry at all as He Himself, for Whom the offering is meant, has eaten the same.' Thereafter, coming forward unobserved by diving under the water, He would drag away a bather by the legs, as he was engaged in performing his sandhya standing up in the water. The flower-basket and loin-cloth of another were always missing. The Geeta of one bather was stolen. He had made the baby-boy of another cry by putting water into the ears of the child. He had climbed one's back to his shoulder and from there jumped back into the water, crying 'I am Mahesha'. He Himself worshipped Vishnu by occupying the seat arranged for worship by another; after having first eaten the intended offering. He threw sand at one's body, after one had finished his bath, and had for the purpose all the naughty boys at His heels. He put the cloths of all male persons in the place of those of females and vice versa, to the utter shame of all who put on the wrong cloths. This was done every day. He did not get out of the water for half the day. Was it not likely that He might fall ill?

These Brahmanas were not the only complainants. The girls had serious grievances which they duly laid before Sachi Devi. He stole their cloths, abused them and got up a quarrel if they protested. He forcibly took away all the flowers and fruits brought by them for performing their vowed worships (brata) and scattered them in all directions.

As, after bathing in the Ganges, the girls began to worship the gods, Nimai would appear on the spot with the other children and took His seat in the midst of the girls. He asked the maidens to worship Him and told them that He would give them the boon they desired, that Ganga and Durga are His maid-servants

and Mahesha is also only His servant. With His own hands He put the sandal-paste on His Own Person, wore the garlands of flowers, snatched the intended offerings from the girls and ate them. The girls were very indignant and said that 'He was their brother by the relationship of the village. It was not proper for them to say all this against Him. But He should also not take away their articles for the worship of the gods and should not be boisterous in His behaviour.' To this He would only say, 'I give the boon to all of you. The husbands of you all will be most beautiful, learned, adept, youthful and possessing an abundance of grain and other riches. Every one of you will have seven sons a-piece, all of whom will live for ever and be of an excellent understanding.' The girls were much pleased at heart on hearing about the boon, although externally they took up the scolding attitude by the display of false anger. Some of the girls ran away with their offerings. Nimai, however, called out to them and angrily told them that if they proved miserly, and did not give Him their offerings, they would have old husbands with four co-wives. They were extremely frightened on hearing this, lest He might possess some supernatural art or be possessed by any deity. They accordingly brought their offerings back to Him. The Lord ate those offerings and then gave them the boon which they desired. He threw sand at their bodies, after they had finished their bath, and this was done by Him at the head of all the naughty children. Coming up unobserved He shouted into one's ear with a loud voice. He spouted water With His Mouth at one's face. He stuck the prickly seeds of okhra into the hair of a third. He wanted to marry some. He did this every day, as if He was the Son of the King. Nimai, they alleged, acted exactly as the Son of Nanda in old times. If he was not checked, they would be compelled some day to tell their parents, and then there would be serious trouble.

On hearing all this the mother of the Lord smiled and, taking all of them on her lap, spoke kindly to them: 'Let Nimai come Home to-day. I will tie up His Hands and Feet and punish Him, so that He may not again cause any trouble to you.' Then the girls, after taking the dust of Sachi's feet on their heads, made their way once more to the Ganges for their bath.

But, as a matter of fact, all concerned were exceedingly pleased in their minds,

however wayward might be the conduct of the Lord towards them, by the force of the actual benefit dispensed. They came to Misra to acquaint him with those occurrences, only for the fun of it. Misra, however, took their complaints seriously and spoke threateningly and with anger: 'He constantly behaves in this way to all persons and has made it impossible for any one to bathe in the Ganges in a satisfactory manner. I must immediately go there myself and give Him a good thrashing that He may never do this again. If all of you try, you will not prevent me from punishing Him.'

Gauranga, the Lord of all beings, was aware of all this. He knew it all, as soon as Misra was on his way to the Ganges with an angry mind. He was then playing with other children, easily recognizable among them all by His extraordinary, Beauty. The girls were the first to inform Him. They said, 'Be careful, Vishwambhar, Misra will be coming just now, fly at once.' As the Lord, taking all the children with Him, ran to catch hold of them, those Brahmana maidens scattered in a fright.

The Lord now instructed all His companions to tell Misra that his Son had not come to bathe at all. He had gone home from school by the other road. They were waiting for His coming for His bath. After coaching the boys in this manner, the Lord returned home by another path. The good Misra now appeared at the bathing-place of the Ganges. On reaching the spot Misra eagerly looked about in all directions but could not find his Son in the mist of the children, Misra asked them about the whereabouts of Vishwambhar. The children readily replied, 'He has not come to bathe to-day. He went home by the other road after school. We are all waiting here for Him.' Misra, with stick in hand, peered in all directions and stormed and threatened, being unable to find his Boy. Those Brahmanas, who had complained to him for fun, now came forward and informed him that Vishwambhar had fled home for fear; and they entreated Misra to return home but not say any unkind words to the Boy, telling him that they themselves would catch and take the Boy to him, if He again did any mischief. 'What we had told you, was said in fun. There is no one in the three worlds who is more fortunate than yourself. What can hunger, thirst or sorrow do to him in whose home there happens to be such a Child?

You alone have truly served the Feet of the Lord. Most fortunate, indeed, is he who has such a Son. If Vishwambhar commits crores of mischief, hold Him fast to your bosom.' Misra said, 'That Child is the Son of you all. Swear by me that you will never be offended with Him.' And then Misra embraced them all and came back home.

Lord Vishwambhar had gone home by another path, with the beautiful books in His Hands, looking like a second Moon. Points of writing-ink adorned all parts of His Body, as if the champaka flower was besieged on all sides by the black bees. The Lord began to call loudly on His mother asking for oil to rub His Body for going to the Ganges for His bath. The voice of her Son gladdened the heart of Sachi. She could not discover any sign of bath on His Person. She gave Him oil and began to muse. 'I do not understand what those girls and the Brahmanas said just now. His Body is still spotted with the marks of ink and He has the same books and the same cloth!' Presently, Misra also returned home. Vishwambhar ran into the arms of Misra as soon as He caught sight of him. By that embrace Misra lost all faculty of his external activity, having been filled with happiness at the very sight of his Boy. Misra also noticed that His Son's whole body was full of dust and was astonished on finding no sign of bath. Misra said, 'Viswambhar, is this Your good sense? Why don't You allow the people to bathe? Why do You steal the offerings for the worship of Vishnu? Are You not afraid even of Vishnu?', The Lord said, 'I have not gone for my bath today. My companions have gone there before Me. They misbehave to all the people. People blame Me even when I am not really there. If they thus slander Me when I am absent, I say truly that I will really treat them ill.' With these words the Lord ran away laughing to the side of the Ganges to bathe and rejoined those children. As soon as they saw Vishwambhar in their midst, all the children embraced Him and burst into uproarious laughter on hearing of His ruse. They all praised His cleverness and congratulated Him on His narrow escape and resumed their pastimes in the water.

Here at home Sachi and Jagannath cogitated over the affair. 'What all those people said cannot be false. Why then was there no sign of bath on His Person? The same dusty Body, the same Dress, Books, Cloth and Hair !' 'Is it possible

Vishwambhar is no mortal? Has Krishna Himself been born as our Son by His own Power, or some transcendental person?' While they were thinking in this manner, the Crest-jewel of all the twice-born made His Appearance. Their deliberations were ended by joy at the sight of their Son. Both were filled with instinctive gladness and all suspicions, were laid at rest, Half the day, while the Lord was away for His study, seemed to those two as a couple of Ages. In this manner played the Lord of Vaikuntha and by His Own Contrivance not a single person was able to recognize Him.

Those, who put up with the almost intolerable turbulences of this strikingly beautiful Urchin, certainly possessed a more than ordinary share of patience and of the truly aesthetic and tender sentiment. A naughty boy is most liked, if his naughtiness is purely juvenile and the outcome of an abundance of the pure childish energy. It is in this sense that the extraordinary events of the Childhood of Sree Gaurasundar have been affected to be regarded by His empiric admirers.

But the point of view of the associates and narrators of the Transcendental Deeds of the Lord is altogether different and it is their point of view which will give us the attitude of those who were taught the true relation between the religion and His own illustrative Conduct by Sree Chaitanya Himself; and they had also the opportunity of realizing the Absolute Truth of those statements by their actual experience. The sum and substance of their attitude is that these pranks of the Childhood of Sree Gaurasundar, Who was by far the most turbulent of all the naughty children who then abounded at Nabadwip, were not only tolerated but they made all those, who were the victims of His turbulence, have an extraordinary affection for the Child Whom a few fortunate persons also regarded as Transcendental. It is on this historical fact that a momentous generalization in regard to these Activities has been made to rest, viz., that when Godhead Himself appears in this world, He comes here with His Divine Associates and Abode and These alone are the directly incorporated helpers of His Leela in this world.

All those persons, who had anything to do with the Activities of Sree Gaurasundar, are the, eternal associates and servants of the Lord who came into

this world for the purpose of participating in His Activities. But they themselves did not know this fully, as such knowledge would take away the possibility of those Activities. So their knowledge was to that extent modified by the Spiritual Power of Godhead. This apparent obscuration of knowledge, that is thus found in His devotees serves to augment the joy of His Pastimes and is totally different from the effect of the operation of the Deluding Power that shuts out the view of the Divinity from fallen souls of this world by the screen of the material world.

The philanthropists do not understand this vital difference between the apparently similar functions of the two distinct powers and confound the spiritual with the worldly. The result of such ignorance is also most deplorable. A large number of rascals have in all Ages set up as 'Incarnations' (the term is theirs) of the Divinity and have imitated the activities, the real Avatars narrated in the Scriptures. The unbelievable boldness and shamelessness of these 'Incarnations' have captured the credulity of even sensuously disposed cultured people who have fallen easy victims to their own immoral designs. These events in their turn have re-acted on the beliefs of the more moral sections and have unfortunately enough served to shake their belief in spiritual claims of any kind.

This is the psychology of the sceptics and impersonalists whose condition is not otherwise different from their deluded immoral brethren who are actually misled to accept the worst forms of vice as the means of attaining the promised spiritual condition. Both these deluded groups remain necessarily confined to worldly activities which are, by their very nature, offensive to Godhead, the one through undue credulity and the other through undue incredulity, regarding one's imperative spiritual duty.

True belief in Godhead is spontaneous and, in its natural form, is very rare in this world. Those who really believe in God are thereby freed from all worldliness. The conduct of perfectly pure souls cannot be understood, so long as we remain in the condition that is dominated by the sensuous outlook. The only way of getting out of the sad plight is to gradually acquire faith in spiritual existence by listening to the accounts of the Transcendental Activities of the Lord in His different Avatars from the lips of true sadhus who alone can

prevent us from falling into the errors of the misguided philanthropists (prakrita sahajiyas) on the one hand and sceptics and atheists on the other, the plight that would befall us if we try to understand those accounts in the light (which is really obscuring) of our sensuous understanding.

The Boy continued to be a source of trouble to all the neighbours. They complained to Sachi that the Boy stole their things and beat their little children. On hearing this Sachi scolded Nimai and ordered Him to remain always at home and never to go to anyone's house. This so much angered the Lord that He forthwith ran into the house and smashed all the earthen pots that He found there. Then Sachi took Him into her arms and He was pleased and felt ashamed for His naughtiness. One day He struck Sachi gently with His Hands and wept when she fainted away being so struck. The women who nursed Sachi said that if He could get green coconuts, His mother would recover. The Lord immediately went out of the house and returned with two green coconuts. This feat astonished everybody, as the green coconut was a rare fruit at Sree Mayapur and almost impossible to procure at that time of the year.

One day as Sachi lay in her couch with her Son, she beheld that the house was filled with celestial beings. Sachi asked Nimai to call His father. As He was leaving the room to fetch His father, the tinkling sound of anklet (nupura) distinctly proceeded from His Feet. Misra told Sachi that he actually heard the sound of nupura coming from the bare Feet of the Child. Sachi said that she had a most strange experience. She had beheld that the courtyard of the house was thronged by a great crowd of celestial beings. She did not understand the noise that they made, but could infer that they must have been chanting hymns of praise to some One. Misra said that there was no cause for anxiety, whatever happened. He only desired the welfare of Vishwambhar.

Another day, on noticing the wayward nature of the Boy, Misra scolded Him very severely and tried to instill in Him the principles of orderliness enjoined by Religion. that night Misra had a dream in which he beheld that a Brahmana came to him and told him with an angry voice that he did not know at all the real truth regarding his Son, and it was owing to his ignorance that he scolded

and punished Him under the impression that He was, indeed, his son and protégé. Whereupon Misra said that whatever the Child might be in Himself, even if he were a god, a self realized soul (siddha), a contemplative sage (muni), or howsoever great a personage, He was still only his own Boy to him. It was the specific duty of a father to teach and maintain his son. If he did not tell Him about it, how would the Boy know the meaning of Religion? The Brahmana said that if the Child was perfect in all knowledge by the grace of Godhead Himself and possessed spontaneous Omniscience, then his teaching must be perfectly useless. Whereupon Misra said that it was still the duty of the father to teach his Son, even if He happened to be Narayana Himself. They discoursed in this way, Misra ignoring all other considerations in trying to uphold the point of view of the parent. That Brahmana was at last satisfied and took his leave of Misra with great pleasure. Misra told all his friends about his dream and all of them were very much surprised to hear of it.

Chapter VII **—Growing Boy—(Continued)**

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

In this manner Sree Gaurusundar continued to manifest Himself in various ways under the guise of childhood pastimes. He was extremely turbulent and restless and paid no heed to the exhortations of His mother who tried to teach Him to be quiet. The warnings and entreaties of His mother seemed only to increase His waywardness. He used to break whatever article of the house He could lay

His hands on. The parents, for fear of further mischief, gave up all attempt to oppose Him, to the great joy of the Child, Who was thereby afforded an opportunity of unrestrained play. Nimai soon ceased to be afraid of all persons, including His parents. The only person, whom He still feared, was His elder brother, Viswarup, Whose very sight made Him exceedingly meek.

Viswarup had no attachment for the things of this world even from His birth. He devoted all His time to discourses about Krishna. He served Krishna with the ear, mouth, mind and all senses, and served only Krishna at all time. Viswarup was struck by the habits of His younger Brother, which were altogether different from those of ordinary children. He realized the conduct of Nimai as identical with that of Boy-Krishna. He was aware of the Transcendental Divine Nature of the Boy in Whose Form He could detect the Presence of sportive Krishna. Viswarup was, however, careful not to divulge His knowledge regarding His Brother to any one else. He was in fact always intent on His own devotions, was constantly in the company of the Vaishnavas and was wholly occupied with the joy of Krishna-talk, Krishna-devotion and Krishna-worship.

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

Meanwhile He scrupulously avoided all association with the ungodly. He used to bathe in the Ganges very early in the morning and proceeded immediately to the gathering of the Vaishnavas at the house of Advaita. There He explained all the Shastras showing how all Scriptures proclaimed the supreme excellence of

devotion to Krishna. His explanations gave so much pleasure to Advaita that he often broke off abruptly in the midst of his worship with thundering shouts of joy and would clasp Viswarup to his bosom amid the joyous chants of the Name of Hari by all assembled devotees moved to raptures by the edifying spectacle. The devotees, assembled at Advaita's house, spent their time in the greatest happiness and no one was minded to return to his home or leave the company of Viswarup. Neither would Viswarup ever come home from His companions.

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

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

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

King Parikshit desired Sree Sukadeva to explain how this was possible, as it was opposed to all experience of this world. Sree Suka said that there is nothing dearer to our souls than the great Soul of all souls. The Son of Sree Nanda is the

Supreme Soul. Therefore, the milkmaids of Braja had greater love for Krishna, as He is the Supreme Soul himself. But this also holds true only in the case of the devotees; as otherwise, all the world would have loved Krishna. Kamsa and other atheists (asuras) bore malice against Krishna, although Krishna is also the Soul of their souls, by the effect of offenses against Him previously committed by them. Sugar is naturally sweet. But there are some who find its taste bitter by reason of the defect of their own tongues. The fault is of the tongue, not of sugar. Therefore, says Thakur Brindabandas, although Lord Chaitanya is really All-sweet and was visible to everybody in this very town of Nabadwip yet was He unrecognized by any one except the devotees. The Lord ever fascinates the minds of His Own devotees in every manner. This mystery is incomprehensible to the atheists.

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

These events raise a number of important issues. It is necessary to notice one of them at this place. The fascination that the Divinity exercises over the minds of His devotees, should not be confounded with the clouding of the faculty of judgment produced by an excess of worldly joy or sorrow. The exclusive mood of the devotees at the Sight of Sree Gaursundar and the similar moods of Suka and Narada are not to be put into the same category with the outwardly similar exhibitions of ultra-sentimentalism exhibited by the worldlings. The latter is recognized, under the name of moha, by all the Shastras, as one of the six evil passions (ripus) being classed with anger, lust, etc., that have to be carefully got rid of by all persons who are sincerely desirous of spiritual living. The former is the natural impulse of the pure individual soul who always experiences this spontaneous attraction for the Absolute. The genuine spiritual attraction is not a dry, abstract process; neither does it bear any affinity to the sensuous impulse,

to which our body and mind are so wrongly subject, that is exercised by the prospects of worldly enjoyment. Those who have been enabled by their love for the Absolute to overcome the sensuous attraction exercised by the material universe, are thereby enabled to experience the far greater attraction of the service for Krishna. The great Love of Krishna for His servants cannot be consciously realized in the conditioned state. That love for Krishna, which is possible of realization in the fettered state in this world, is somewhat analogous to the attraction that is experienced by the cows, the cane, the flute, etc., for the Lord, in the realm of Braja.

Sree Sankararanya after acceptance of sannyas journeyed to various parts and exhibited the state of realized exclusiveness in the Lord (samadhi) at Pandurangpur or Pandharpur (in the Sholapur District of the Bombay Presidency).

Sachi and Jagannath were most profoundly affected by the sannyas of Viswarup. Sree Gaursundar exhibited the Leela of fainting away at separation from His Brother (devotee). All the people of Nadia, high and low, whoever heard of the sannyas of Viswarup, were filled with a great grief. The home of Jagannath Misra was turned into the abode of mourning. Jagannath and Sachi cried constantly on the name of Viswarup. The friends and relatives of Misra tried their best to compose him. Some of their arguments bear to be repeated here. 'Be quiet, Misra,' said they, 'that great Son has earned the deliverance of all His kindred. If a single member of a family accept sannyas three crores of generations of that family thereby attain to the happy realm of Vaikuntha. Your beloved Son has performed a great meritorious deed. All His learning has at last been crowned with its supreme success. Rejoice greatly at this. All your sorrows will be removed by this other Son of yours. Vishwambhar will be the Support of the family. What are crores of sons to him whose Son is He ?' Misra was inconsolable. He did not feel certain that the other Son will also stay in the family. He could not forget the many good qualities of Viswarup. By slow degrees, however, the worthy Misra picked up patience and regained the equilibrium of his faculties. He was helped in this by his enlightened faith in Krishna. 'Krishna gave me the Child and has now taken Him away. The Will of

Krishna should certainly prevail. The soul of the jiva has no tittle of power of his own. I, therefore, surrender myself, my body and senses, to Thee, O Krishna.'

The devotees experienced a clinging sorrow in the midst of their joy, when they learnt of the sannyas of Viswarup. 'Krishna,' thought they, 'has robbed us of the only place where we might hear the talk about Him. We also will no longer stay among these people but will go into the forest where we shall not have to see the faces of these sinful persons. It is impossible to bear longer the torment of the blasphemies of these atheists. All people are constantly pursuing the evil course. We cannot convince them of their error. If we tell them of it, they only receive the statement with ridicule, saying that we are not happier than they in any way by worshipping Krishna. What is the use associating with such people?'

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

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

Sree Advaita Acharya consoled the assembled devotees. He declared that ‘they would assuredly obtain the highest bliss,—he, indeed, on his part felt perfectly sure about it. He experienced a great joy in his mind. It seemed to him that Krishna-Chandra Himself had appeared in the world.’ He asked them all to sing Krishna with the utmost delight. He assured them that they would see Krishna at that very place within a short time. ‘Krishna will display His joyous Activities in the company of yourselves. Advaita (referring to himself) is a pure servant of Krishna, only if this prove true. This servant of you all will gain such Divine favour that seldom falls to the lot of even Suka or Prahlada.’ These nectarine words of Advaita filled the devotees with great joy and restored cheerfulness to all the faculties of their minds. In their joy they shouted the Name of Hari with a thundering voice. This reached the ears of Sree Gaur Sundar Who was then playing with the children. He entered Advaita’s Academy on hearing the sound of Hari. ‘What brings Thee here, Darling?’ asked the devotees. The Lord said, ‘Why did you ask Me to come?’ With these words the Lord sped into the midst of the children. No one could understand those, by the contrivance of His Divine Power.

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

mind. They are enabled to receive the knowledge of the Absolute by the resuscitation of the dormant serving faculty of the soul by the Grace of the Absolute Himself. The Absolute descends into this limited world in order to reveal Himself to the redeemed soul of man. When He does so, He is recognized as the Absolute by His pure devotees who are eternally and divinely enlightened. Advaita, the purest of devotees, was the first among the assembled Vaishnavas to realize the Descent of Krishna into the world. he also simultaneously realized that those assembled Vaishnavas were the servants of Krishna, who had appeared in the mundane world preparatory to the Advent of the Lord Himself. Thus the Whole Truth flashed on the spiritual consciousness of Advaita and he realized in it the special mercy of Godhead towards Himself in response to his single-hearted devotion.

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

Sachi was very much delighted on hearing these praises of the good qualities of her Son. But Misra was greatly dejected. He now opened his mind to Sachi. 'The Boy would not remain in the family. The same thing would happen in His case as in that of Viswarup. It was by studying the Shastras in this manner that Viswarup became aware that the world was not true at all, and it was not worth one's while to live in it for a single moment. It was the knowledge of the transitory nature of the world that made Viswarup quit it. If this Boy came to learn the real meaning of the Shastras, He also would give up all worldly

pleasures. But this Son of ours is the Life of us both. If we do not see Him, Both of us will surely die. Therefore, He must have nothing to do with study. Let our Nimai only stay in the family. We do not mind if He is illiterate.'

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

Nimai was sorry at heart at this abrupt stoppage of the pleasures of study; but, in obedience to His father's command, He at once discontinued His studies. His waywardness, however, now increased more and more. It now passed all bounds. He did indiscriminate damage to property both in the house and elsewhere. He took particular delight in smashing everything that came in His way. Some days He stayed away whole nights amusing Himself in all kinds of play with the children.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Boy, however, still lingered where He was and went on laughing from His

seat on the top of the pile of the refuse cooking pots. Those who saw it were fascinated, and the joy of those persons of good deeds knew no bounds. Till at last the mother herself went up to the Child and fetched Him with her own hands. The Lord now came away, laughing all the time, like a blue opal shooting its sparkling light in all directions. Thus did the Lord speak out the truth in the mood of Dattatreya; but no one understood it by the interposition of the Power of Vishnu.

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

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

accordingly lost the effective support of all classes.

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

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

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

from ordinary rules of worldly conduct by their possession of a much more advanced and consistent philosophical nature. In the hands of the smartas these rules have suffered mechanical elaboration and stultification for being adopted to the worldly purpose.

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

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

‘The Lord, the Moon of the home of Sachi-Jagannath, thus enjoyed His childhood sports, infinitely more diverse than are found in this world, of which an infinitesimally small part will be hereafter made known to the world, by way of revelation, by the Acharya’. These are the words of Sree Brindavandas Thakur. The words of the Veda reach only the ears of the most fortunate persons. The rest of the world must submit to receive the knowledge from

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

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

As the beautiful thread adorned the Divine Form, it seemed as if Sree Shesha himself encompassed the Lord in the guise of the slender line. The identical Leela of the Lord, that He performed in His Appearance as Vamana (Dwarf), was thus reenacted. Sree Gaurundar manifested the Leela of Sree Vamana to the delight of all beholders. All saw the fiery radiance of the Brahmana and no longer thought Him mortal.

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

enacted this Leela of amana for the deliverance of all persons.

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

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

These are the two successive stages thorough which every disloyal soul has to pass, on the way to the spiritual service of Godhead. These processes have

nothing to do with the hereditary caste or lifeless ceremonial that is sought to be monopolized by any hereditary caste.

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

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

By the express testimony of the Shastras, the pseudo-Brahmanas of this Kali Age are the worst of all classes of the people. Sree Gaurasundar appeared in a Brahmana family, in fulfillment of the words of the Scriptures, for showing His mercy to the degraded Brahmanas. As Sanyasin Sree Chaitanya was a strict observer of the Shastric rules that impose various restrictions on a person belonging to that order, in order to set an example to the degenerate sanyasins of the Kali Age. Such conduct does not mean that a sanyasin is, spiritually speaking, superior to a householder, but that both should really follow the Word of God, if they want at all to serve Him which alone matters. It would be

a blunder to suppose that there could be any excellence in any institution if it ceases to serve God, or that any institution which serves the Lord can be inferior to any other, or that any mundane class difference can apply to the servants of the Lord. Those, who are unduly attached to the vanities of seminal birth or the externals of ceremonials and institutions, are ever condemned to the delusion that their ungodly worldly preferences are endorsed by God Himself. It is not possible to be completely free from the influence of such worldly predilections except by the Causeless Grace of Sree Gaursundar Manifested in His Activities.

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

Sree Jagannath Misra accordingly took his Boy to the Chatuspathi (Academy) of Sree Gangadas Pandit who received him with the greatest respect. Misra communicated to him his intention of placing in his hands the education of his Boy. Gangadas most gladly accepted his new Pupil.

Gangadas always treated Nimai with special consideration. The extraordinary Capacity of the Child soon manifested itself. Nimai fully understood whatever His teacher explained only once. He practiced to refute all the explanations of His teacher in order to re-establish them more firmly. The number of students, who attended Gangadas Pandit's classes, was very large. But there was no one who had the ability to find fault with the explanations of Nimai. On the contrary Nimai gave constant trouble to all His fellow-students by His puzzling questions. He did not spare even the senior students such as Sree Murari Gupta, Sree Kamalakanta, Krishnananda and their associates. They, however, took this favourably, as they regarded the Child with special affection. Gangadas Pandit was most highly gratified on noticing the wonderful intelligence of his new Pupil and accorded Him the honour of the highest position among all his students.

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

The senior boys were at last fain to ask Him why He was so extraordinarily quarrelsome. ‘Let the youngsters,’ they said, ‘ask instead questions for testing one another’s knowledge. Only then it could be really known who possessed the correct information of his britti, panji and tika.’ The Lord welcomed their suggestion and invited all the urchins to put to Himself whatever questions they liked. One of the students protested saying that He ought not to be too boastful. The Lord only repeated His challenge to be asked any questions. The irate scholar forthwith demanded that the Lord would then and there expound

all the formulae of verbal root. The Lord, desiring them to listen attentively, at once explained all the sutras in the correct manner. All the students praised His exposition. The Lord said that He would, however, refute all that He had said to them just then, challenging them to defend the very expositions which they had approved. They were struck dumb with astonishment on recognizing that the refutation was also flawless. He told them that He would re-establish the previous expositions and fully satisfied ever one by His explanations to that effect.

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

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

Misra noted this exemplary conduct of his Son and was filled with the highest happiness. He knew nothing but joy night and day. Every day he derived fresh and inexhaustible delight by looking on the Face of his Child. The joy of Misra cannot be expressed in words. He drank in the Beauty of his Son with such ardour that he all but merged in the Body of his Boy with his own frame and all individuality, the consummation so vainly wished by the pseudo-liberationists.

But as a matter of fact, the joys of merging in the Divinity or of any other form of liberation are as nothing to the bliss of Jagannath Misra who had no occasion to think of those coveted trivialities. The Lord of all the worlds is the Son of Jagannath Misra. The eternal father of the Lord is the revered of all the devotees of the Supreme Lord.

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

One day Misra had a most wonderful dream which filled him with the utmost grief in the midst of all this happiness. Rising up in great anxiety Misra prostrated himself in obeisance, reciting the prayer, 'Govinda, may my Nimai stay in my house. This is the only boon I pray from Thee, O Krishna, that my Nimai may be a householder and stay in the family.' Sachi noticed this and being greatly surprised asked Misra the cause of his prayer offered to Krishna with such sudden anguish. Misra narrated to her the story of his vision. 'I have had a dream,' said Misra, 'as if Nimai had shaved His Head. I cannot describe His marvellous attire of sannyasin. He laughed, danced and wept, uttering continuously the Name of Krishna. Advaita Acharya and other devotees,

forming a circle round Nimai, chanted the kirtan. Sometimes Nimai seated Himself on the throne of Vishnu and, holding up His Feet, put Them on the heads of all. Four-faced, five-faced, thousand-faced forms sang Victory to the Son of Sree Sachi. All recited hymns of praise to Him from every side with the greatest joy. I was dumb with fear at what I beheld. Then I saw that Nimai went along on His way dancing, through each and every town, taking with Him crores of people. Lakhs of crores of people ran after Nimai and sang the Name of Hari, Whose sound rang through the universe. I could hear on all sides only the praises of Nimai Who journeyed to Puri in the company of all those devotees. It is this most strange dream that has made me so anxious, lest the Boy leave the family through lack of attachment for things of this world.' Sachi Devi did not think that there was any real ground for anxiety, notwithstanding the dream, as 'the Boy was so completely engrossed in His books that the taste of learning had verily become the whole of His duty.' The father and mother of the Lord were of a disposition that was utterly unselfish. They had between them many a discussion on the subject by reason of their exclusive love for their Son.

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

The only point that remains to be noticed in this connection is the statement that the form of Sree Jagannath Misra is described as eternally pure and also that he withdrew himself from the view of the people of this world and did not die. In fact, the soul is also our only real body. The physical case is a temporary accretion as a corrective contrivance for curing our godlessness. But Sree Jagannath Misra, the father of Sree Gaursundar, is eternally pure plenary Divine Essence and has no physical body as there can be no godlessness in his case. What seemed to godless people as his physical body was really his eternal all-holy spiritual form. The Father of Godhead, who is ever identical with his

body, manifested himself in this world of matter, in obedience to the will of Godhead and for the purpose of participating in the Divine Activities when the Latter appear in this world. He remained visible in this world as long as his part was being played. He ceased to be visible after this function was fulfilled. His manifestation in this world was brought about by the Spiritual Power of Godhead and was a wholly spiritual affair, unlike the birth of sinful jivas, which is brought about by the deluding Power of God and is really transitory and insubstantial. Those, who suppose that there is no difference between this mortal body and the apparently similar bodies of the eternal devotees of Godhead when they manifest their appearance in this world, ignore thereby the eternal and categorical distinction between matter and spirit. To the material eye of the conditioned soul the body of a Vaishnava, when by the Grace of Godhead he becomes visible to him, may appear to be material, just as to a jaundiced eye everything seems to be yellow. The defective vision of the sinner is, however, solely responsible for this delusion. The deluded soul is not privileged to have the sight of the real form of the Vaishnava. The birth, death and activities of the Vaishnava, although they have an external resemblance to those of conditioned souls, are categorically different from the latter. It is only the spiritual eye, the eye of the pure soul, which can actually see this difference.

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

Therefore, neither of these can be the cause of the Sorrow of Sree Gaursundar. Sree Jagannath Misra's anxiety on account of his Son, lest He became a sannyasin, and Sree Gaursundar's Sorrow at the apparent disappearance of Sree Jagannath Misra, are instances of Divine Activities which are absolutely free from all taint of unwholesomeness, unlike the apparently similar activities of fettered souls which are altogether unwholesome. There is separation, pang of

separation and anxiety at the prospect of separation, also in the Transcendental Realm of the Spirit. The conditions for this are supplied there by the Spiritual Power of the Divinity and are, therefore, also spiritual, that is, absolutely free from all unwholesomeness. This is inconceivable to the fallen jivas but is the only Reality obscured to the view of the latter by the joys and sorrows of the physical body and the materialized mind. In the realm of the Absolute, there is no break of existence but only the semblance of it, in order to heighten, diversify and enrich the positive joy of eternal existence. In regard to the things of this world the case is otherwise, and it is the greatest of mercies that this is so. Had it been otherwise, it would have only perpetuated the barren experience of mundane activities which are the trivial and unacceptable distortions of the facts of the eternal existence. The Absolute exists by Himself. This physical world has not only a relative but also superfluous, unwholesome and altogether subordinate existence. It is so, because everything is real in Godhead, although it is often both unnecessary and impossible for the individual soul to understand it, except in so far as it is actually divulged to his serving disposition by the mercy of the Supreme Lord.

Chapter VIII

—Early Youth and Student Life—

The Lord still chose to remain self-concealed, passing His days mostly in the company of His mother. Sree Sachi Devi, in lieu of His father, now devoted herself exclusively to the service of the Boy. If she did not see her Son for the fraction of an hour, the power of sight left her eyes, and she would lose all self-consciousness. The Lord also displayed constantly His love for His mother and consoled her with encouraging words. He bade her have no anxieties since He Himself belonged to her, and as He would supply all her wants and fetch for her, with ease, things that were obtainable with great difficulty by Brahma and Siva. As she gazed on the beautiful Face of the Child, Sachi Devi lost the memory of her bodily existence, not to speak of her sorrows. The Lord Himself,

by the mere remembrance of Whom all wants are fulfilled, was ever present to her in the form of her own Son. How could, therefore, any bodily sorrows persist in her? The Lord made His mother the very soul of joy.

There is no desire for selfish enjoyment in the realm of the Absolute (Vaikuntha). The servants of Godhead, who are the denizens of that Happy Realm, being always in the Presence of the Lord by reason of their entire dependence on Him, are altogether forgetful of their own selves. The inhabitants of this mundane world, due to their forgetfulness of Krishna, put their reliance on their own bodies, and are accordingly liable to cherish all those concerns that minister to its transitory pleasures. It is in this manner that fallen jivas by their own contrivance become subjected to the various miseries of this mundane world. There was no room for selfish grief in the pure heart of Sachi which was wholly occupied with love for Godhead. The eternal spiritual impulse of maternal affection for the Divine Child alone possesses the quality of causing complete forgetfulness of one's own body. A worldly mother loves her son for her own selfish pleasure. This is also the case with the so-called love of a mundane wife for her husband. All such pretended attachments are impure by reason of their intrinsic selfishness which completely captures the mind the moment it is turned towards the objects of this world.

The Lord Godhead, King of Vaikuntha, thus passed His days in Nabadwip in the form of a Brahmana Boy, in the Ecstatic Bliss of enjoying the moods of His own mind known only to Himself. In the home at Nabadwip the uttermost poverty prevailed. The Lord's commands were ever worthy of the Lord Paramount of the highest gods. He did not care to know whether there was anything in the house. If whatever He demanded was not instantly supplied, it produced the most terrible consequences. He would immediately smash up everything, the house, doors and windows; and, in fact, nothing escaped the fury of His Anger. He was absolutely heedless of the damage done by Himself to His own property. But despite all mischief that was thus done continuously, Sachi Devi was always assiduous in supplying, with all care, whatever He asked for, by reason of her unmixed affection for her Son.

On a certain day as the Lord was about to go out for His bath in the Ganges, He

asked His mother for oil and 'myrobalan' and also for choice garlands of flowers and odoriferous sandal paste, as He wished to worship the holy Ganges with the said offerings after His bath. The mother implored Him to wait for a very short time to enable her to procure the garlands. No sooner did Sree Gaursundar catch her words that she was to bring the garlands from elsewhere, He became terrible as Rudra, the God of Destruction, in His sudden anger. With the words, 'Would you then, indeed, go out for the garlands now?' He entered His apartment raging furiously. Then first of all He vented His wrath on the earthen pots, in which the holy water from the Ganges was stored, and broke all of them. By the stroke of a big stick, He next broke deliberately all those pots which contained oil, ghee and salt. He then smashed all the pots, big and small, that happened to be in the room. Oil, ghee, milk, rice, cotton, paddy, salt, cakes of pulse, mudga, were mixed up together on the floor of the room. He then snatched away all the nets of rope for hanging up articles and tore them to shreds. All clothing that He found in the house shared the same fate. When there remained no article to break, the Lord's anger turned against the house itself. He plied the big stick with both Hands on the house, no one venturing to utter a word of protest. Having smashed the doors and windows, He turned to the trees and treated them in the same fashion. In that mad fit of anger there was no disposition to forgive. When there remained no article to break, His stick showered blows on the very earth itself.

All this while Sachi remained in a state of great fear, almost hiding herself behind a remote corner of the house. The Lord, the Establisher of religion Himself the Eternal Religion, did not lift His Hands against His mother. Although He was still fully disposed to manifest the fury of His wrath which knew no bounds, yet He did not go against His mother, nor try to hurt her. Having smashed all things, the Lord came out into the yard and rolled on the bare ground with an angry mind. His golden Body became enveloped in sand and was, it is hardly meet to divulge, a wondrous, beautiful Sight. After thus rolling frantically on the ground for some time, the Lord became motionless. As he lay in this quiet posture, the Lord glanced at the Power that lulls Him to slumber (Yoga-maya) and the Lord of Vaikuntha did enjoy His Sleep on the bosom of the Earth. The Lord, Whose resting-place is the All-Holy

Form of Sree Ananta Deva, Whose Lotus Feet are ever tended by Lakshmi Herself, the Object of quest of the four Vedas, slept in this fashion in the yard of Sachi ! The Lord, in the vesicle of Whose hair there lies afloat an infinitude of worlds, Whose servants have power to create, maintain and destroy, Whose Qualities Brahma, Siva and their peers sing with rapture, the Self-same Supreme Lord Himself thus reposed in a deep slumber in the yard of Sachi! The Supreme Lord slept on in the Bliss of His Own Consciousness. The Sight made the gods laugh and cry.

After some time had passed, Sree Sachi Devi, having procured the garlands and made ready all requisites for the worship of the Ganges, laying her hand softly on the Body of her Son, tried to awaken Him by- gently wiping the dust from His Person. 'Wake up, my Darling,, said she, 'see, here are the garlands; take them for worshipping the Ganges even as Thou likest. It is well and good that Thou hast smashed all things of the house. Let it take away Thy Sorrows., Roused by these words of His mother, Sree Gaursundar, feeling ashamed at heart, set off for His bath without more ado.

After the Lord had left, Sachi made all the rooms clean and prepared to cook His meal. Sachi did not feel the least sorrow in her mind, although the Lord habitually did such intolerable mischief. Sachi put up with all the waywardness of Sree Gaursundar in the same manner that Sree Yasoda bore the restless turn for mischief of Sree Krishna in the cowherd settlement. I have no power to record all the wayward acts of the Lord. But Sachi bore up with all those with unruffled patience of body, speech and mind, like mother earth herself.

The playful Lord returned home after bath and, having worshipped Vishnu and offered water to tulasi, beloved of Vishnu, sat down to His meal. After meal the Lord appeared to be satisfied. He then performed achaman and began chewing betel. His mother then spoke gently. 'For what purpose, Darling, didst 'Thou do all this damage ? The house, doors, windows, all articles of the household are Thine. All the loss is Thine. It does not affect me. Even now Thou wilt be going off for Thy study. There is nothing in the house wherewith to buy anything. What wilt Thou eat tomorrow?' Hearing these words of the mother the Lord laughed. 'Krishna,' said He, 'nourishes; He will maintain.' With this the Lord of

the goddess of learning, book in hand, strolled off to His studies.

A certain interval of time was passed in the joy of study, after which the Lord came to the bank of the Ganges in the evening. Having stayed there awhile, the Lord returned home. He then called His mother and taking her aside gave her two tolas of pure gold. 'Mother,' said He, 'Krishna has given this stuff. By changing it, meet all necessary expenses.' He then retired to bed.

Sachi was filled with great astonishment. 'Whence could He procure this gold He had been doing it pretty frequently of late.

In fact whenever there was any want of money, He obtained gold in this manner. Was it likely to bode any danger? Did He borrow or know some magical art? Whence, how, whose gold was thus brought?, These anxieties troubled the mind of Sachi which was untainted with greed in any form, being perfectly generous. She was also afraid of getting a change for such gold time and again. She always instructed the person; whom she entrusted the changing of it, to do so after he had shown it to a sufficient number of discreet people.

Such conduct in any other boy, as old as Sree Gaursundar, if allowed free scope by his doting mother, would hardly appeal to the judgment of many persons as auguring any good for the future of the child. They would, at any rate, fail to find any decent apology for such excessive and unbounded material leniency. An unruly child is required to be handled, indeed, with tact but also with real firmness if he is to be prevented from getting out of hand. The conduct of Sree Sachi Devi and of Sree Yasoda does not fulfill this ideal of motherhood. Many a child, with an abundance of the animal spirit, have been altogether spoiled by the doting policy of unrestrained motherly indulgence. It should be very difficult, nay almost impossible, for dutiful worldly mothers to appreciate the maternal conduct of Sree Sachi Devi.

Vaishnavism has been charged with the attempt to idolize sentimentalism of the most exaggerated type. Even if for the sake of argument sentimentalism be allowed to possess any outstanding value, it should still be necessary to keep it

within natural bounds. The Vaishnava is apparently supposed to know no such limits. He seems to be ready to make a display of his feelings and to evince a great pleasure in carrying his heart on his sleeves. The practical and cognitive sides of one's nature do not thus appear to receive their due recognition in the conduct that is extolled by the Vaishnavas as ideal, which displays an apparently sickening exuberance of the most effusive sentimentalism. This is doubly inexplicable as coming from persons who deprecate all sensuousness.

I think it would not be fair to my readers if I do not avail myself of the first opportunity of trying to clear up misapprehensions that are apt to be entertained even by unprejudiced persons in reward to this feature of Vaishnavism.

Most worldly people identify, religion with morality. Ordinary morality aims at serving the jiva by ensuring for his mundane body and mind an ever-increasing fund of sensuous enjoyment. A child is subjected to rules of discipline in order to aid the realization of the above object. Waywardness has to be checked, lest it becomes a habit which may stand in the way of the worldly well-being of the child when he grows up. Morality would not be valued and is ignored on principle, whenever it is actually opposed to the worldly interest. The instinct which seems to claim for it an absolute value, is apt to be stifled by the voice of the worldly reason, which secures its victory by pointing to the uncertain, transitory enjoyable consequences of any absolute rule of practice.

There are also those who have tried to prove that the moral instinct itself is the product of those untoward material circumstances which it is set up to correct. The Absolute is thus altogether ruled out, and the purely temporary object is substituted in His place, a procedure which has given to the empiric science of ethical conduct its so-called 'practical' and definitely worldly character. The rule of expediency has been openly adopted as the final principle of rational human conduct, the object being the amelioration of worldly wants and the consequent extension of worldly happiness. It is taken for granted that there is nothing beyond our present pleasures of this world that need be considered as really valuable. This scheme undoubtedly possesses the qualities of clearness

and apparent feasibility. It is admittedly incomplete, as it professes to be ignorant of many things. But if it be identified with religion, it becomes necessary to suppose that there is a dead void beyond the activities of this world, as they, are practiced by the majority of us. This would be inconsistent with the ideal ordinarily professed to be cherished by the empiric moralists.

But it may be urged that, even if morality is not wholly identifiable with religion, it should not, therefore, be also ignored by the latter. If it be pleaded that morality, in the above sense, forms an integral part of religion, this would also be illogical. Such proposition really begs the question to be proved. The whole scheme of morality is based on a definite and unwarrantably narrow view of life. Is it logical to insist that such narrowness should be allowed to remain intact even after the view of life has been infinitely widened. All we can insist on is that morality must be incorporated in Religion in so far as its retention may not defeat the purpose of Religion. We cannot insist that it must not be enlarged, while admitting that expansion is not mere destruction or involving the loss of any wholesome interest.

It is not asserted that no evil consequences, in the worldly sense, can result from the licensed extreme waywardness of an earthly child due to fond indulgence shown to such a Child by a doting earthly mother. A man of this world will be punished, if he breaks any law of this world. One, who is in quest of worldly pleasures, will not gain (?) them by neglecting to follow the course apparently laid down by God Himself for their attainment. A wayward child, who merely refuses to submit to the laws of physical Nature, will incur and deserve the punishment that is attached to such conduct by such law. On the other hand, one who does not desire to enjoy material pleasures is also punished as he chooses to go against the laws of Nature. It is not possible for any possessor of the physical body and limited mind to be immune from the operation of the laws of physical Nature.

But Sree Gaursundar and Sree Sachi Devi, although they may appear to us to be like the people of this world, really belong to the transcendental sphere. They act in accordance with the innate freedom of that higher realm. It would be

unwise, therefore, for us, while we are situated in this world, to try to imitate their conduct or to condemn it for the mere reason that it does not correspond to the ideal of mortals. They are beings of another world, endowed with other and higher natures, who have chosen to appear in our midst, independently of the laws of this world. Therefore, what we have to do is to try to learn about that other world from what they say and do. That would be the proper and logical attitude on our part. We must by no means try to imitate them. We shall be punished by the laws of this world, if we try to do so.

In that transcendental world waywardness need not be checked, as no evil consequences are produced, everything being perfectly pure and harmonical and incapable of being curtailed by hostile conflict with anything else. Our souls in their normal state are the denizens of that happy realm. We have been hurled into this nether world by our disinclination to avail ourselves the freedom of that world. We can regain our natural state of purity and unalloyed bliss, if only we agree to accept the Higher Law. Godhead and His beloved ones come down into this world to remind us of our true native land and enlighten us regarding the cause of our exile therefrom. The words of the people of the Spiritual Realm are identical with their conduct. Both mean the same thing. Godhead and His beloved ones come down into this world to tell fallen jivas the tidings of Vaikuntha and, lest they misunderstand their words by supposing them to refer to the things and conditions of this world, Godhead makes All His Activities of Vaikuntha visible to mortal eyes. Even a mortal can see them with the eye of faith, that is to say., if he is disposed to love and obey Godhead which is the only law of the Spiritual Realm. on the contrary, if we seek to please ourselves, those very visible Divine Activities represent only their deluding, i.e., seemingly worldly, face to us.

Common misapprehensions in regard to Vaishnavism owe their origin mainly to that natural aversion to Godhead which is the sedulously cultivated second nature of all fallen jivas, and partly to the misleading activities of the pseudo-Vaishnavas who, in the state of sin, imitate, without caring to understand its

real significance, the external conduct of the true devotees of Godhead. The conduct of the true devotees of Krishna is always perfect and combines in itself, without necessitating the least curtailment, the principles of knowing, willing and feeling in the fullest harmonious measure. To us who are wholly sensuous, the Perfectly Pure Activities of God necessarily appear as being also wholly sensuous. They are, however, absolutely pure and without any mundane defect. But this can be fully realized only by the soul who is himself free from all earthly taint. The Activities of Godhead and His devotees rebound to our lasting good, if they are approached with a serving disposition as manifestations of the Divinity by the method of listening to the account of them from the lips of the true devotees of Godhead. By this method and this method alone we, fallen jivas, may be enabled to understand their real meaning and thereby learn to obey Krishna. If they are approached for any other purpose, they only show their deluding face to us. The pseudo-Vaishnavas are as much more deluded than even those who are openly and frankly skeptical. Both are equally attached to the pleasures of this world; but the former further try to extend the scope of their sensuous enjoying propensities also towards spiritual matters. They seek to procure sensuous pleasure by aping deliberately the performances of the sadhus with fatal consequences both for themselves and their followers. The skeptics are right in holding the pseudo-religionists to be worse than themselves; but they certainly carry their aversion to undue lengths by supposing that the true worship of Godhead, described in the Scriptures, is itself non-existent or harmful. This is the real punishment of Such worldly skepticism.

The Supreme Lord, Who could have easily disarmed the opposition of all the people, even the most skeptical, by the display of His Divine powers, chose to remain in obscurity, and went on with His Pastimes, in this manner at Nabadwip. At this period He never left off His books for a single moment. He was most assiduous in His studies in the company of the other students among whom He could be easily distinguished by His extraordinarily beautiful Appearance. He looked as if the god of love himself had become manifest on this earth. His Appearance of this period is thus described by Thakur Brindavandas: 'The beautiful tilaka mark, pointing in an upward direction,

adorned His Forehead. The profusion of curly hair that graced His Head captivated the minds of all beholders. The sacrificial thread was placed gracefully across His Shoulder. He was the Living Form of the fiery Brahmana spirit. His cheerful and beautiful Face was always covered with smiles. His Teeth were perfectly pure. The pair of His lotus Eyes were inexpressibly wonderful. His Cloth, worn with a triple kachcha, was a thing of most marvellous beauty. Whoever beheld Him gazed on His Beauty and found it impossible to take away their eyes from Him. There was no one who did not pay Him the tribute of his unstinted praise.'

The wonderful manner of His expositions filled His teacher with unbounded joy. His teacher, leading Him by his own hands, made Him occupy the highest seat among all his pupils. The teacher said, "My Dear, read attentively. I strongly declare that Thou shalt be the Greatest of Teachers." The Lord replied, "Is the position of the Greatest of Teachers difficult to be attained by One Who has your blessing"

No student could answer the questions of the Lord. He Himself settled the interpretation of the sutras and then refuted His own explanations. And when no one was able to establish the right meaning, the Lord explained the text in the proper manner. The Lord had no other thoughts except the Shastras, whether at His bath, at His meal or in His walks.

The Lord thus came to be looked up to as almost their Teacher by the pupils of Pandit Gangadas. Early in the morning, after performing the sandhya ceremony, the Lord went out to study in the company of all His students. He then took His seat at the assembly-hall of Gangadas Pandit and was constantly engaged in polemical discussions in opposing or supporting propositions that might be advanced. The Lord always deprecated those students who did not avail themselves of His Teaching, mercilessly using every opportunity to expose their ignorance. After study with Pandit Gangadas the Lord expounded the texts to the pupils. The leading students, each with his group of junior followers, sat round the Lord in different rows, all with the solitary exception of Murari

Gupta who alone refused to be coached by the Lord, for which reason the Lord was never tired of exposing his defects.

While explaining lessons to the students, the Lord sat in the centre wearing his cloth in the style of Yogapatta and in the posture of the seated warrior (beerasana). The upward tilaka mark of sandal-paste adorned His Forehead. The glow of the rows of His charming Teeth put to shame the lustre of pearls. The Lord was in His sixteenth year in the bloom of budding youth. His beauty enchanted the god of love himself. He displayed a scholarship that was deemed superior to that of the celestial sage. He ridiculed all who did not study under Him. He was very proud of His learning and would challenge everybody to refute His conclusions. He often declared that those, who did not know how to combine two words by the process of sandhi (compounding), dared to set up as expounders of the texts in order to console themselves with the idle vanity that they could really understand the books by their unaided intelligence. Many persons unfortunately turned out fools by reason of such vanity which prevented them from learning from their betters.

This was intended for Murari Gupta who would remain silent and obdurate even under this severe castigation. But the Lord always loved to poke His servant whose sight filled Him with joy. The Lord would ask Murari, who belonged to the vaidya caste, to betake himself to his legitimate trade of healing sick persons, by giving up study: 'The Vyakarana Shastra was difficult in the extreme. There was no prescription in it for phlegm, bile or indigestion. what will you understand of it by your assiduous cogitations ? Better go back home and treat your patients.'

Murari, though of a fighting temperament was prevented from being angry by looking at Vishwambhar, and only replied, "What a great personage ! You poke everybody and brag a good deal. You are author of sutra, britti, panji, tika, etc. But did You ever fail to get a reply to Your questions from me? Without asking any questions You say, 'What dost thou know?, You are Brahmana and worthy of my reverence. What can I say?" The Lord said, 'Explain then what you have read to-day.' As Gupta began to construe, the Lord began to refute. Gupta

explained in one sense, the Lord expounded in another. The Master and the servant were equally matched and neither could score a decisive victory.

Gupta was most profoundly learned by the power of the Lord. The Lord was delighted by hearing his explanations. Being pleased, the Lord touched his body with His Lotus Hand and forthwith the whole frame of Murari was thrilled with joy. The thought flashed in the heart of Murari Gupta, 'This Person is never a man of this earth. Such scholarship is also impossible in man. By the Touch of His Hand one's body becomes full of transcendental bliss. There is no humiliation to study under Him. In the whole of Nabadwip there is not another who possesses such excellent understanding.' The worthy Gupta being highly pleased said, 'I say, Vishwambhar, I agree to study under Thee.' Godhead and His devotee ever engage in such blissful Pastimes. They went off to bathe in the Ganges after this learned encounter, in the company of all the students. Godhead Himself tasted the delights of study in this manner, as Student.

These details have been handed down by the associates of Sree Chaitanya, regarding His Student Career. Study divorced from religion is not only considered now-a-days to be useful, but also as a necessity. Religion, which appeals to 'authority,' is supposed to be the antipode of that 'freedom of thought' which is considered necessary for really successful pursuit of knowledge. Knowledge is never pursued for its own sake. In gathering knowledge we suppose to make use of a faculty which the Great God has mercifully bestowed upon us for our physical and mental improvement. This may also be supposed to be corroborated by the conduct of Nimai as Student. He also devoted Himself whole-heartedly to the acquisition of secular knowledge, e.g., Grammar, which is the science of language. He rebelled against His parents, when He was a mere Child, when they stopped His secular studies. He was the terror of all the students for His acumen in purely secular controversy. Does all this look like tame submission on His Own Part to authority by relegation of freedom of thought? It is true He led the life of the ideal Brahmacharin and daily worshipped Vishnu and honoured the tulasi and mahaprasada. But those did not prevent Him from the undiluted pursuit of purely secular studies. His method as well as object as student may thus appear

to be identical in practice with those of modern pedagogics.

Why did He find fault with everybody and specially the teachers ? He boasted that no one could meet His objections, nor refute His interpretation. The evident implication is that according to Him all those teachers were wandering in a maze of errors. Even as Student He wanted all persons, including the Professors themselves, to learn from Him, and not to depend on themselves. We have the recorded testimony of the Vaishnavas of that period that the learned Professors were no less deeply engrossed than others in the pursuit of worldly objects. This plan was also carried into their Academies in which, in place of the pursuit of Truth, was substituted the dissociated study of different secular subjects, such anarchy being mistaken for real freedom. The result was the absolute want of all real scholarship and the utter disregard of the only proper object of all studies. The conclusions of such spurious scholarship only confirmed the reign of ignorance. Nimai had no respect at all for this system or its products.

European psychologists have tried to establish the rationale of the exclusive pursuit of isolated branches of knowledge, by their denial of the very existence of a soul who is located beyond the jurisdiction of the mind. They make the limited mind identical with the soul. They want to add to the defective equipments of the mind. This they call spiritual effort, as in their opinion the mind is identical with the soul. The mind, thus furnished with knowledge, is regarded as being thereby rendered more capable of successfully performing the various duties of this life. One's duties are also supposed to be properly performed, if the worldly consequences of one's acts are duly considered and provided for, the object again being to obtain the maximum pleasant results in the worldly sense. The mind, which lives, moves and has its being in this World, is to be enabled to do all this in such manner that it may not only fall foul of the laws of Nature, but may avail itself of them for overcoming the unpleasant possibilities represented by those very laws. The policy may properly be described as the application of the principle of 'divide and rule, to Nature. This mastery over, or enjoyment of, physical Nature, according to fashionable Philosophy, is the goal of spiritual progress.

The Pandits of Nabadwip of the time of Sree Chaitanya were famous for their learning and also for their aversion to Krishna. They had no idea of obeying 'authority,' that is to say, of serving anybody excepting themselves. The means, whereby this result was to be achieved, might have been more defective than now-a-days, as was to be expected in that comparatively backward Age.

Their exclusive pursuit of Grammar, Logic and such 'abstract' subjects was the cause of their lack of worldly 'prosperity,' as was also the case in other countries in the mediaeval period. The pursuit of scientific knowledge by the methods of observation and induction has ensured the wonderful material progress of the present day. The agreement between empiric method and object, which was then lacking, has been effected with greater success by the 'free' efforts of the human mind during the last four centuries. Might not Sree Chaitanya's objection to the comparatively barren pursuits of the Pandits of His day have been due to His perception of this defeat in the systems of the studies of His time ?

Let us take a hypothetical case. Let us suppose that we possessed a vision that enabled us to find out the details of the operation of all the laws of Nature. What use would we then make of this knowledge? Would we try to submit to those laws or control them by making them oppose one another? Why should we consider it our duty to be able to do either? In what way does it profit us ? It would be excellent amusement to be able to manipulate Nature in the way we like. But why do we at all desire to do it? Would we be really satisfied by the temporary seeming possession of this power ? It would not enable us to eliminate our bodily and mental sufferings. It would only modify them. But such modification, in itself, would also be an equally intolerable suffering, if we are thereby doomed to live perpetually under limiting conditions of that sort. So we arrive at no satisfying goal of our efforts by the method of merely modifying the opportunities of material enjoyment, mental or physical, which is the professed and exclusive object of the empiric scientists.

Did Sree Chaitanya only want us to follow this so-called advanced scientific

method and object? Did He want us to be more engrossed in material pursuits? The Pandits of that time had made great progress in the sciences of abstract Logic and Grammar. It would be difficult even at the present day to suggest any considerable improvement of the knowledge they then possessed of those subjects. Modern science has put its seal of approval on the abstruse speculations, in those fields, of the ancients although it has supplemented them by the methods of more careful observation of phenomena on which all empiric knowledge is supposed to be based.

The science of Indian Grammar is apparently one of the greatest triumphs of inductive generalization from observed phenomena. Sree Chaitanya seems to have objected neither to the empiric method nor to the subject of investigation. His objection applied to the interpretation. Interpretation means the establishment of the connection of a subject with the self. The interpretations of Nimai were true. The interpretations of everybody else were fallacious. In the absence of the right interpretation, all so-called knowledge remains external to the self and is liable to be used in a way that is harmful to the self. The right interpretation of phenomena can be known by the mercy of Godhead and learnt only by submission to Him. Without this allegiance to the Supreme Lord, all so-called knowledge becomes only a dangerous delusion, although we, in the unsubmitive state, are not properly aware of this. We shall presently learn more regarding this matter, when we consider the Activities of Nimai as Professor of the Real Science of Grammar.

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 Gauranga as Professor for the pursuit of learning.

The variety of Nimai 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 Shastras. "I challenge them to expose My mal-interpretations. I would admit they deserve their high-sounding designations of 'Bhatta' 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 Brahmana of the name of Sree Ballabha acharya 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 Vaikuntha. The Brahmana constantly thought of a suitable Husband for his daughter. Lakshmi was well-known to Sree Sachi Devi and Nimai Himself.

Kaviraj Goswami has recorded the following incident of the Boyhood of Nimai in his work Sree Chaitanya-charitamrta. In His Boyhood Nimai 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 Thakur Brindavandas, have already been reproduced. Nimai, as we saw, did not spare even the girls from His turbulent attentions. One day as the daughter of Ballabha acharya 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 mallika flower. The Lord began to laugh on receiving her devotion and accepted the desire of her heart by reciting the shloka of the Bhagavatam 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 Shastras 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 Smriti, '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 acharya 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 Thakur Brindavandas, 'can understand the Pastimes of Sree Gaurasundar ?'

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 Narayana is the Source of all manifest and non-manifest existence. Sree Narayana is the only Lord of all created things. He creates through the medium of Sree Lakshmi Devi. This eternal Marriage of Sree Lakshmi Narayana is hidden from the view of mortals by the shadow of the desire for carnal enjoyment falling across their vision.

The Shastric institution of marriage is intended to reclaim bound jivas from the deadly slough of carnality. If they follow the life enjoined by the Shastras 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 Narayana does not belong to the category of the carnal marriage of sensuous jivas. The marriage of the fettered jivas becomes successful, according to the Shastras, 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 Shastras, 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 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 unintegrated 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 Narayana, and the jiva, in his proper nature, is the eternal servitor of Sree Narayana, 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 Narayana 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 a 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 Narayana, 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 Brahmana match-maker (match-making by the way was then an honoured office as it should be)

who bore the name of Banamali acharya, providentially made his appearance before Sachi Devi. The Brahmana, after making his obeisance to mother Sachi, accepted a seat which was cordially offered by her. Thereafter Banamali acharya broached his proposal: 'It was high time for her to think about the Marriage of her Son. Sree Ballabha acharya, 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 Brahmana felt utterly discouraged by this dry rejoinder and left with a heavy heart.

Banamali Acharya 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 Brahmana 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 acharya in a gracious manner. Sachi was delighted on catching the hint from her Son and sent for the Brahmana 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 Brahmana immediately set out for the home of Ballabha acharya. When Banamali Ghatak presented himself before Ballabha acharya the latter received him with great respect. Having accepted a seat duly offered by Ballabha acharya, Banamali 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 Banamali had to make to him. He accordingly advises Ballabha Acharya to accept the same, provided, of course, it really commended itself to him.

Ballabha acharya 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 acharya, 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 Narayana.

The preliminary (adhibas) ceremony was duly performed on an auspicious day, to the accompaniment of dance, song and a great variety of music. The Brahmanas recited the Veda on all sides. Nimai took His seat in the centre of the gathering. The friends and Brahmanas performed this ceremony of betrothal by making offerings of perfumes and garlands to the Lord. The Brahmanas were specially pleased, being treated to excellent perfumes, sandal-paste, betel and garlands. Ballabha acharya 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 Brahmanas 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 acharya 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 Narayana 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 paean 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 Brahmanas washed His Lotus Feet, by Whose adoration Brahma, his prime ancestor, had been enabled to create the world. He then bestowed his Daughter in Marriage in due form. The Brahmana 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 acharya. 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 dola, with Lakshmi seated by His Side. Lakshmi and Narayana 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 Narayana.' A group of ladies declared them to be 'Seeta and Rama, shining with incomparable Beauty, seated together on the dola.' Thus said all those ladies. They beheld Lakshmi and Narayana 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 Brahmana matrons, with great joy, led her Daughter-in-law into the house. She satisfied all the Brahmanas and the dancers and musicians by lavish gifts of money, clothing and sweet words. We have it on the authority of Thakur Brindavandas 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 Puranas, that he alone can know the Supreme Lord whom He Himself favours.

I have retained the actual words of Thakur Brindavandas in describing the Marriage of Sree Gaursundar 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 initiation 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 tenttively 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 Gaursundar should be listened to from the lips of sadhus, 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 Brahmana has nothing inherently spiritual in it. But it is nevertheless an Eternal Activity for God to accept these 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-Brahmana 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 nonspiritual, 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 sadhus. Being thus enlightened by the mercy of sadhus, one is

enabled to realise the true meaning of Shastric 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 (sadhu) may adopt the married state in order to serve God by setting an example to fallen jivas embodying the shastric 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 sadhus, 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 Narayana; 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 Narayana, 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 pleenary 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 Gopala. 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 identical 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 worldling 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 Gaursundar as professor (adhyapaka) has been described in some detail by Thakur Brindavandas. 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 Gaursundar, fortunate Gangadas 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 death. They did not hesitate to speak out to His Face, 'Why dost Thou waste Thy time in the delusions of learning?' The Lord laughed as He listened to the words of His servants and replied, 'I am fortunate in that you take the trouble to teach it to Me.'

There was at this time a considerable community of Vaishnavas resident in Nabadwip, as the place offered special facilities for study and the prospect of living close to the holy Ganges. Among them was a large body of devotees from Chattagram (Chittagong). In the afternoon the Vaishnavas assembled in the Academy of Sree Advaita Acharya. They met there regularly to discourse about

Krishna. It was a gathering of persons, all of whom were from their birth without the least attachment for the things of this world. In fact they were not of this world at all. They had been born in different parts of the country and were brought together at Nabadwip by the Will of Godhead.

Mukunda sang the kirtana of Hari to this assembly of the pure devotees. All the Vaishnavas were pleased with Mukunda whose song had the quality of melting their hearts. The joy of the assembled devotees, as Mukunda would begin to sing, became so intense that it expressed itself in strange ways. Some wept. Some laughed. Some began to dance. Some rolled on the ground, forgetful of their apparel. Some donned their cloth tightly and shouted challenge of defiance. Some ran up to Mukunda and clasped his feet. So wonderful indeed, was the effect on those Vaishnavas of the Kirtana of Krishna sang by Mukunda. His song produced the highest bliss and made the Vaishnavas forget all cause of grief.

The Lord was specially pleased with Mukunda, in His heart, for this reason. He would tease Mukunda whenever He chanced to meet him, by asking him to solve logical riddles. This led to prolonged controversies. Mukunda was well-versed in the science of Logic and made use of every form of argument in holding his ground against the onslaughts of Sree Gaurisundar. But he was always beaten in the long run. Nimai put these riddles also to Sribas Pandit and other devotees. They were very much afraid of His puzzles and always scattered at His Approach. The devotees had no taste for any discourse except regarding Krishna, and Nimai never proposed anything except riddles of dry logic. No one could solve His puzzles and He mercilessly exposed all who broke down.

One day as the Lord was passing along the highway in the company of His pupils with every manifestation of the vanity of a pedantic scholar, Mukunda, who was going to the Ganges for his bath, saw the Lord from a distance and immediately took to his heels, Noticing this the Lord said to His servant Govinda, 'Why did the rascal bolt on seeing Me?' Govinda did not understand

the reason of Mukunda's conduct. He suggested that he might have had some business of his own. The Lord said that the real reason was his belief that a Vaishnava should never greet a person who is averse to Godhead. Then the Lord spoke in the hearing of all, 'Let him keep aloof for the present I will see how long he will avoid Me in this manner. I will become such a good Vaishnava that even Siva and Brahma will dance attendance at My doorsteps. Those very people, who now flee at My Approach, will then sing My praise.' He said this to His students laughingly as He was returning home in their company.

It was, indeed, a most distressing period for the devotees of Nabadwip. The whole of Nadia was mad with the taste of riches and sons. The people launched into invectives as soon as they heard of kirtana. They, indeed, said openly that it was only a device for filling the belly. They were specially wroth against Sribas and his three brothers.

The arguments they used against the Vaishnavas have been preserved by Thakur Brindavandas. 'Was there any justification in dancing in their saucy and unmannerly way, giving up the method of intellectual communion?' 'I myself have read the Bhagavata many times over, but I do not find in it any method of dancing and crying.' 'I cannot get any sleep after dinner on account of Sribas and his brothers. Is it not pious enough if one calls upon Krishna with a subdued voice? Is there any unavoidable necessity of dancing, singing and shouting?' This was the universal attitude of all non-Vaishnavas. They talked and jeered in this manner whenever they met the Vaishnavas.

When the devotees used to feel very much depressed at such treatment by the people, Sree Advaita Acharya would repeat His assurance that He would destroy all those atheists, as Sree Krishna would be with them in a very short time in the town of Nabadwip itself. The words of Advaita dispelled all their sorrows and the Vaishnavas kept up the blessed Kirtana of Krishna with the greatest joy. Such was the state of affairs at Nabadwip when Lord Vishwambhar was deeply occupied with His secular studies.

So the Lord Himself, the Teacher of the whole world, by His Conduct as well as

Instruction, was apparently pursuing a mode of life which was indistinguishable from that of the average worldly people. Would we be justified in blaming the pseudo-teachers of the Vaishnava religion of these days who, professing to follow the example of Sree Gaurasundar, lead a life of luxurious ease with their wives and children ? If Sree Gaurasundar chewed betel should they not also do the same as in duty bound? If Professor Nimai dressed faultlessly, poked fun at the Vaishnavas and devoted Himself exclusively to secular studies, why should such innocent amenities of a householder's life be forbidden to His followers?

The questions no doubt suggest their own answer. In the case of Sree Gaurasundar all this was absolutely proper. To the true devotee of Godhead every thing is handy and fit, as he knows their use for the service of Godhead. The eternal conduct of the devotee derives its value for worldly observers from this internal quality. If a woman is really chaste, she can do nothing that is improper. If she is really unchaste, she can do nothing that is proper, not even by mimicking the external conduct of any chaste lady. Such mimicry is in no way different from unchastity and is often the more dangerous form of wickedness. A thing can be but itself. External conduct is always deceptive, being external. By imitating the external Conduct of Sree Gaurasundar that was visible to mundane observers at any period of His Activities, nothing but the direst offense is reaped. The Relation of the Lord to His Consort, to His pupils, to His devotees is misunderstood if we choose to misunderstand them by refusing to listen to those who are acquainted with the real Nature of Nimai. Even the Vaishnavas confessed, when they came to know Him later as He really is, that they also had once utterly misunderstood Him and His Activities, before He Himself manifested the real nature of them in their more explicit form to their higher consciousness.

The full view regarding the activities of Sree Gaurasundar is attainable only if they are regarded as the Pastimes of Godhead Himself. Sree Gaurasundar is identical with Sree Krishna. Those, who ignore this by misunderstanding His Role as Devotee, necessarily fail to obtain the adequate view of His Doings. The want of this knowledge apparently led even the Vaishnavas themselves to

deprecations of the external conduct of Sree Gaurasundar at this period. They wished that He should become a devotee like themselves. This is the Natural desire of all pure Vaishnavas in regard to non-Vaishnavas. The pursuit of secular studies in which Sree Gaurasundar was wholly absorbed and the employment of His controversial powers on subjects other than Krishna were, therefore, condemned by those pure devotees as the abuse of His intellectual powers. It is instructive to find that those Vaishnavas were not under the delusion, which is so much cherished by the pseudo-Vaishnavas of these days, that the Conduct of Nimai was that of the model servant of Godhead. They were right so far. They apparently erred in supposing that Sree Gaurasundar was a Vaishnava and not Vishnu Himself. But subsequently also, when they knew the Lord by His grace, they did not, therefore, try to imitate the Conduct of Sree Gaurasundar.

Secular studies and pursuits in their purely worldly sense are not only unnecessary but are positively harmful to the jiva in the state of bondage. The object and method of all non-spiritual activities is to be enabled thereby to acquire extended opportunities of selfish, material enjoyment, a desideratum which is foreign to the nature of the jiva in the State of Grace. Any act which is undertaken for securing one's own enjoyment ceases to have any reference to the service of the Lord Who is the Absolute Master, Proprietor and of everything. The pursuit of the knowledge of the things of this world with reference to ourselves as enjoyers of them is not the function of the pure soul. By all knowledge Godhead alone is properly served. The pursuit of secular knowledge is productive of spiritual well-being if it possesses this exclusive reference to Godhead both as regards its object and method.

The acceptance of this true principle does not destroy any value, it only removes our ignorance and fulfills the only real object of all knowledge. God certainly indwells all knowledge, but inaccessibly to the conditioned soul. As soon as the conditioned soul is enabled to realize His Presence in all learning, his object and method of pursuing knowledge ceases to be secular and harmful. Sree Gaurasundar was within His Rights in accepting the service of the goddesses of secular learning and of physical Nature, because He is their Lord and

Proprietor. There could be no absence of Reference in the Reference Himself. But because Sree Gaursundar was pleased to exhibit the Leela of pursuing secular knowledge for its own sake, those who are aware of His Divinity should not, with an inexcusable perversity of judgment, jump to the conclusion that His Conduct was intended to justify the apparently similar procedure of any jivas, if they happen to cherish the unnatural desire of becoming the masters or slaves of Material Nature. God is always the Master even when He chooses to manifest His Divine Form in this unspiritual world. Even when the Lord seems, to the perverted judgment of fallen jivas, to be subject, like themselves, to the laws of physical Nature, He remains her Master none the less.

Even the devotees themselves failed to understand the Doings of the Lord at this period, although His conduct was appreciated by worldly people who supposed, in their disloyal delusion, that it resembled their own. This latter kind of appreciation was an unconscious offense against the Lord, while the depreciation of His Conduct by the devotees was not an offense, although it was an error, into which they fell by the Will of Godhead Himself, for the furtherance of His Pastimes.

Worldly people misunderstood the Conduct of both Sree Gaursundar and His devotees. They admired Sree Gaursundar for His great Qualities, for the Beauty of His Person and for His great Learning. They desired those things for themselves and could, therefore, appreciate them by the method of envy. The bound jiva wants to enjoy, to rule, to possess beauty and learning for increasing his supposed power and scope of selfish enjoyment. Sree Gaursundar had all what they so wrongly desire. The worldly people regarded Him as the most successful of worldlings. They disliked the devotees, because they did not approve of their lack of worldliness. The mode of life of the devotees seemed in the eyes of those worldly people to be not merely bad, but ridiculous. It is not possible for worldly people to understand the ways of pure devotees ; it is still less possible for them to understand the Ways of God Himself.

If we want to follow Sree Gaursundar we should in the first place have to know our real relationship to Him. In proportion as this knowledge of our

relationship with Godhead is realized, we are in a position to understand His Ways. When Sree Gaursundar took to secular study, apparently for its own sake, His Purpose was to be merciful to the goddess of secular learning inside whose heart He ever dwells in the Form that is incomprehensible to the conditioned jiva; and, secondarily, to establish the principle, for the benefit of the fallen jivas, that they should neither thoughtlessly imitate nor condemn the conduct of the pure devotee, nor suppose that he is ever liable to error by reason of his youth, or apparent ignorance of the concerns of this world, or even apparent devotion to them. The efforts of the servants of God are not governed by the instinct of so-called self-preservation, or for adjustment to the phenomenal environment, which is apt to dominance the activities of fallen jivas. The devotees never do anything except under the pure impulse of serving Krishna. It is not altogether impossible for us, even while we continue in the sinful state, to admit this.

Regarding Sree Mukunda Datta, we have the hint in Sree Chaitanya Charitamrita that 'Lord Chaitanya Himself dances in the kirtana of Mukunda.' Mukunda made his appearance in Chittagong. In Gauraganoddesadipika he is identified with Madhukantha, the singer of Braja. We have seen already that Mukunda Datta was a fellow student of Sree Chaitanya in the Academy of Sree Gangadas Pandit. Mukunda was a most brilliant scholar and Chaitanya found great delight: in putting to him the most difficult riddles of Logic. Mukunda read the Bhagavatam to Sree Chaitanya after the Latter's return from Gaya. When Sree Chaitanya danced in the yard of Sribas Pandit, Mukunda sang the kirtana. He accompanied Sree Chaitanya to Katwa on the occasion of His Acceptance of Renunciation (sannyas), and subsequently followed Him to Puri. He used to come every year to Puri from Bengal to visit the Lord, in the company of His other devotees

The godless people of that time objected to the kirtana on the ground that dancing and singing with a loud voice are not the method of worship recommended by the Bhagavatam. This is true in regard to the insincere performances of the pseudo Vaishnavas. But the Bhagavatam frequently mentions the manifestation of genuine spiritual perturbations in the forms of

laughter, weeping, dancing, singing, etc., in an unaccountable form in the true devotees of Krishna. The people were angered by the loud kirtana of Sribas and his brothers for the ostensible reason that it stood in the way of their sleep, etc.

Those, who profess to be seekers of worldly merit (punya) for its enjoyable rewards, naturally misunderstand the efforts of pure devotees who practice devotion to Godhead, for benefiting all persons by inclining them to the service of Godhead which is obstructed by their hankerings after worldly enjoyment. But those godless people supposed, in their ignorance, that the dancing and singing of the Vaishnavas, which are performed because they are pleasing to Krishna, are a crude and inferior form of worship of which the lonely individualistic method was regarded as the highest. This insolence of judgment, which is the necessary and invariable concomitant of simulation of worship by conditioned souls, proved its own terrible punishment and effectively prevented those scoffers from listening to the unalloyed kirtana of Hari that was nightly performed within the reach of their hearing, for the benefit of all, by Sribas Pandit and his brothers, in the teeth of the violent, uncalled-for, suicidal opposition of all those self-complaisant worldly egotists.

While Nimai was thus wholly immersed in the pleasures of study, Sree Isvara Puri came to Nabadwip and presented himself at the house of Advaita. He was clad in the garb of an ascetic (sannyasin) of one staff; and so no one suspected him to be a Vaishnava. But Advaita noticed the glow of his extraordinary spiritual energy and recognized him as a theistic (Vaishnava) sannyasin. No sooner did Mukunda begin a song about Krishna in the gathering of the Vaishnavas at Advaita's, the ocean of natural love for Krishna in the pure heart of Puri was deeply stirred. Presently all the Vaishnavas came to learn that the sannyasin, who loved Krishna so deeply, was no other than Sree Isvara Puri, the loved disciple of Sree Madhabendra Puri.

One day as Sree Gaurasundar was returning home after teaching, He accidentally met Sree Iswara Puri on His way and did obeisance to him, as is the duty of every householder towards a sannyasin. Sree Isvara Puri was struck by the wonderfully beautiful appearance of Sree Gauranga and enquired Who He was

and what subject He taught. Nimai with due deference answered the questions of Sree Isvara Puri, and, with great respect and cordiality, invited him to accompany. Him to His House and accept the alms of his day's meal there.

Sachi Devi cooked the offering for Krishna and gave it in alms to Sree Isvara Puri. After the meal Sree Isvara Puri engaged with Nimai Pandit in discourse regarding Krishna and in course of the talk manifested his overwhelming love for Krishna. Sree Isvara Puri spent several months at Nabadwip at the house of Sree Gopinath acharya, sister's husband (the famous Sarbabhauma Bhattacharchaya of Vidyanagar). Nimai Pandit went to Vidyanagar in the evenings to pay His respects to Sree Isvara Puri at the conclusion of His day's teaching. Sree Isvara Puri was charmed with the love for Krishna of Sree Gadadhar Pandit who was spontaneously unattached to the world from infancy. Moved by feeling of affection Sree Iswara Puri undertook to read to Gadadhar his own work, 'Sree Krishnaleelamritam'.

One day Sree Isvara Puri asked Nimai Pandit to correct any, mistakes that He might detect in his book, promising to adopt any alterations that He might suggest. The Lord replied, 'that as the book contained the account of the Doings of Krishna and had been written by a pure devotee like Sree Isvara Puri, any person, who presumed to detect any fault in it, would certainly commit a grave offense against Godhead. Whatever the external quality of the verses of a devotee might seem to be, Krishna is fully pleased thereby. There was no doubt about it. Any grammatical or other defects that may happen to be present in the language of the devotee are over-looked by Krishna Who is ever subdued by the homage of the heart and accepts nothing but pure love for Himself. If any one found fault with the language of a devotee, it only proved that the critic was devoid of the Grace of Krishna. There did not exist the person who would dare to find fault with the language used by a pure devotee like Puripada to convey the tidings of Krishna.'

But Sree Isvara Puri continued to press his request that Nimai Pandit might point out the defects of his book. In this manner Isvara Puri spent hours in discussing daily a variety of topics with Nimai. One day after listening to a

certain shloka, composed by Sree Isvara Puri, Nimai Pandit said to him, by way of fun, that the verb in the said verse should have the form of parasmaipada and not of atmanepada. Thereafter, when Nimai Pandit next made His Appearance another day, Sree Isvara Puri told Him that he had been able to find out the grammatical authority in favour of his conjugation of the verb as atmanepada. The Lord also, in order to enhance the greatness of His devotee, refrained from finding fault with this conclusion. Having passed some time in the pleasures of these learned pastimes in the company of Nimai, Sree Isvara Puri started again on his wanderings in order to sanctify the tirthas, all over India, by his visit.

The above account of Sree Chaitanya's first meeting with His Guru is reproduced verbatim from Sree Chaitanya Bhagavata. Sree Isvara Puri made his appearance in a Brahmana family of Kumarhatta (Halishahar, on the E. B. Ry.) . He was the most beloved disciple of Sree Madhabendra Puri. In Chaitanya-Charitamrita it is narrated (Antya, VIII, 26-29) how Sree Isvara Puri obtained the mercy of his Gurudeva, by his loyal service, who bestowed on his worthy disciple his own love for Krishna. The unique love of Sree Isvara Puri for Krishna, which was aroused in him in this manner, never left him.

Sree Isvara Puri wore the garb of a sannyasin of one staff (the staff being the symbol of self-discipline). The assumption of the single staff is the practice of those sannyasins who follow the path of knowledge to obtain the reward of the six-fold endeavours, viz., sama (equanimity), dama (self-control), titiksha (endurance), etc., by the study of the Vedanta and the other Scriptures. Those who follow the path of fruitive works, on attainment of the stage of yati, take to the triple-staff sannyas and wander about companionless in all directions. The Vaishnava Sannyasins, discarding alike the desire for worldly enjoyment as well as renunciation of such enjoyment, engage in the exclusive service of Hari. In them, therefore, the twin renunciation of worldly enjoyment and renunciation of such renunciation, are simultaneously present. Their position is thus defined in Srimad Bhagavatam, 'I shall cross the otherwise impassable ocean of ignorance by serving the Feet of Godhead by practicing devotion to the Supreme Soul in the footsteps of the great sages (rishis) of old'.

The rasa (i.e. mellowing quality) of devotion to Krishna, in which Sree Isvara Puri was established by the mercy of Sree Madhabendra, transcends all other rasas (mellownesses) by its supreme excellence and complete perfection. The transcendental rasas may have the forms of (1) Brahman bliss, i.e., the bliss of realizing the transcendent greatness of Godhead, (2) the bliss of serving Godhead as a Person Who is Supreme Ruler of the material and spiritual worlds, and (3) the highest bliss of serving Godhead as Recipient of causeless loving devotion. The Object of worship, pointed to by the above three methods of spiritual service, has been called in the Scriptures the Brahman, Sree Narayana and Sree Krishna respectively. All these rasas (mellownesses) are located beyond the zone of operation of the triple qualities that permeate this material world which find their way even to Kailasa, the abode of Siva.

The worthlessness of the worldly rasas (tasty liquid) is due to the existence of plurality of the objects of worship. In the spiritual realm, in Vishnu Who is Full, Indivisible, Pure Cognition, there is no possibility of such defects. In Krishna this spiritual service attains its highest fulfillment. Sree Isvara Puri was loved by Krishna for his attachment to Sree Guru the best-beloved of Krishna. The author of Sree Chaitanya Bhagavata says, 'that being most dearly loved by Krishna Sree Isvara Puri was necessarily kind to all jivas without distinction. Such universal kindness is never possible in those who do not serve Krishna.'

The unwillingness of Sree Gaursundar to comply with the express request of Sree Isvara Puri to correct the defects of his book is not a display of insincere civility (which passes in the name of humility in this world). Krishna makes no difference between the highly skilled linguist and one who is ignorant of the alphabet. Krishna is ever more kind to him who possesses the greater inclination of service. Krishna, Who knows the inmost thoughts of our hearts, is never guilty of mistaken partiality. Pedantic scholars devoid of love for Krishna only prove their own real ignorance by trying to find defect in the language of devotees. The ignorance of such scholars is exposed at every step by the mercy of the Lord of the goddess of learning in order to wean them from their suicidal hostility to the devotees of Krishna. This also serves to keep their scholars, pride low. All such vanity is the outcome of ignorance of Krishna

Who is the Truth Absolute. All sinfulness and unwholesomeness is due to ignorance of the Real Truth, in an aggravated form under the guise of pseudo-scholarship.

As Professor the Lord was wholly occupied with His studies, teaching and learned disputations. It was specially His practice to test the knowledge of all the teachers without exception. No Professor of Nabadwip ever came victoriously through his searching tests. No one was ever able to give a satisfactory answer to the questions put by Him. Although Nimai Pandit taught only Vyakarana, which is a comparatively elementary subject. He showed very little deference to the most erudite Professors of that celebrated emporium of learning. He often passed with a triumphant bearing through all quarters of the town in the company of His students displaying the aggressive nonchalance of the perfectly self-conceited scholiast.

One day, as Nimai Pandit was thus parading the town with His students, He met Mukunda on His way, quite by accident. The Lord took him by the hand and said 'Why do you bolt at the very sight of Me? I won't allow you to escape this time without being enlightened by you.' Mukunda thought within himself I must beat Him to-day. His special and only forte is Vyakarana. I shall silence Him by asking questions about Rhetoric that He may never again dare to be insolent to me'. Accordingly Mukunda began by deprecating Vyakarana as the Shastra fit only for children. 'Let us discourse instead about Rhetoric'. The Lord said Mukunda might select any subject he liked. Mukunda thereupon began to quote the most difficult passages from the whole range of poetical literature and asked Him to explain their rhetorical qualities.

Sree Gaur Sundar impeached every metaphor and simile and all the rhetorical figures that were employed by those poets, and laid bare their defects in their minutest details. Mukunda was unable to justify his own select pieces against the penetrating criticisms of the Lord. The Lord then said laughingly, 'Go home to-day. Look up your books with more care. I shall again examine you to-morrow. You should come early.' Mukunda took the dust of the Feet of the Lord and departed. He was amazed and began to reflect, Is such learning possible in a mortal ? There is no Shastra of which He is not perfect Master.

Gifted with such extraordinary genius, had He been only a devotee of Krishna, I would never leave His company even for the space of the fraction of a moment !'

Another day in course of His peripatetic wanderings the Lord of Vaikuntha fell in with Gadadhar. The Lord laughingly caught him by both hands and would not quit His hold of him. 'You study Nyaya. Tell me something about it'. Gadadhar replied, 'Ask any question'. The Lord said, 'Tell Me the characteristics of liberation (mukti)'. Gadadhar explained it in accordance with the Nyaya Shastra. The Lord said that the subject was not really explained. The position which Gadadhar took up was that of the Nyaya Shastra according to which liberation (mukti) ensues on the cessation or destruction of the extreme miseries.' The Lord of the goddess of learning found fault with the proposition in many ways. There is no disputant who can hold his ground against Godhead. As a matter of fact, there was not a single person in the whole of Nabadwip who could come up to the level of Nimai Pandit in learned disputations. Gadadhar now thought of saving his face by flight. The Lord said 'Gadadhar go home to-day. I have more to learn from you. So do not fail to turn up early to-morrow'. Gadadhar made his obeisance and went off.

The Lord roamed through every part of the town in this manner. He was soon recognized by all persons as a most profound scholar. All people showed Him the highest respect whenever they chanced to meet Him. In the afternoon the Lord proceeded to the side of the Ganges with all His students and sat on the bank with demonstrative joy. The Beauty of the Person of the Lord, Who is served by Sree Lakshmi Devi Herself, is unique in all the three worlds and inspired love in every beholder. The Son of Sachi sat there in the midst of His disciples and expounded the Shastras. The Vaishnavas also gathered to the side of the Ganges in the evening and from a distance listened to the learned dissertations of the Lord. They experienced a mixed feeling of delight and sorrow as they thought within themselves that Nimai Pandit was, indeed, Possessor of Learning and Beauty in an extraordinary measure. 'But if Krishna is not served thereby those qualifications are of no use whatever'. They also confided to one another the fact that they were in the habit of fleeing the very sight of Him for fear of His puzzling hoaxes. Some complained that He also did

not allow them to escape so easily, often holding them up with the peremptory authority of a customs-officer. A few admitted that the Brahmana was possessed of superhuman powers and even suspected that it is a great personage (mahapurusha) who had appeared in the world as Nimai Pandit.

Although the Lord was constantly occupied in putting His puzzles to them, still the Sight of Him somehow always made those Vaishnavas feel very happy. They all realized that such learning was not to be found in man. But this discovery also added to their poignant grief that He did not serve Krishna. They implored one another to bless Him that He might thereby attain to love for Krishna. All the Vaishnavas would prostrate themselves to the Supreme Lord on the bank of the Ganges and all of them blessed Him, 'May it be Thy pleasure, O Krishna, that the Son of Jagannath be maddened by love for Thee, giving up every other pleasure. May He constantly serve Thee with loving devotion. Vouchsafe to us, O Krishna, Him as our companion.' The Lord, who knows the inmost thoughts of the heart, was aware of these wishes of the Vaishnavas. He made obeisance to them whenever He chanced to meet Sribas and any of the devotees. The Lord received the blessings of the devotees with His Head bent in submission. 'By the blessings of the Divinity', say the Scriptures, 'love for Krishna is aroused'. Some of them spoke to Him plainly, 'Why do You waste Your time in the delusions of learning?', Some said 'Look here, Nimai Pandit; what does it profit to be learned? Make haste to serve Krishna. Why do people read—It is surely for the purpose of learning devotion to Krishna? If that is missed what is the good of learning?' The Lord smiled and answered, 'It is a great good fortune for Me that such as you teach Me to regard devotion to Krishna as essential. It seems to My mind that One, Whose welfare is sought by such as you, is, indeed, most fortunate. I have a mind, after teaching My pupils for a little time longer to betake Myself to good Vaishnavas'. Thus saying the Lord, Who found Himself in the midst of His servants, would begin to laugh. No one could recognize Him by the force of His Own Power. By such ways did the Lord captivate the minds of all persons. There was no one who did not long for the Sight of Him.

The Lord's leisure was spent in these learned sessions by the side of the Ganges and wanderings through the different quarters of the town. The citizens greeted the Feet of the Lord with the greatest affection no sooner they caught Sight of

Him. The ladies said, 'He is the god of love manifest. May woman be blessed by obtaining this Treasure at her every successive birth !' The learned regarded Him as the equal of the celestial sage Brihaspati; and the oldest of them made their obeisance to His Lotus Feet. To the yogis, He appeared to possess the realized body. The wicked viewed Him with terror, as the very Form of Death. If the Lord greeted a person only once he was thereby reduced to the condition of His prisoner and wore round his neck the collar of His love. Despite all the outspoken boastings of learning in which the Lord constantly indulged in the hearing of everybody, He was devotedly loved by all the people. Even the Yavanas displayed a great liking for the Lord Who is by nature mercifully disposed to all without exception.

The Lord held His Academy in the suite of rooms that led into the residence of the fortunate Mukunda-Sanjaya. The Son of Sree Sachi Devi engaged there in defending and opposing different interpretations and in refuting, justifying and expounding in endless ways, the texts of the sutras. The fortunate Sanjaya-Mukunda with all his family and dependents felt themselves borne aloft on the high tide of a perennial joy, the cause of which they could not understand. After the day's triumphs of learning the Lord returned home in the evening. Thus did the Ruler of Vaikuntha choose to divert Himself with the exquisite pastimes of learning.

These accounts from the pen of Thakur Brindavandas leave on the mind a most vivid impression of the realities of the Professor life of Sree Chaitanya. He was evidently the universal Favourite of both Hindus and Mussalmans alike and was feared by all the impious scholars and evil-doers of every description. He was to all appearance the ideal Householder Teacher absorbed in His studies and teaching, which were of a wholly secular character. He was also a most formidable controversialist and had a wonderful faculty of detecting and exposing weak points in the views of the leading scholars of the famous University-town. The Beauty of His Person ravished every beholder. He showed the highest respect to the community of the Vaishnavas although they happened to be the objects of persecution and ridicule by all classes of the people. But He showed very little disposition to listen to their discourses regarding Krishna. On the contrary, His genuine reverence for them did not

prevent Him from putting even to them His puzzling riddles of Logic, the activity that He seemed to like best of all. So the Vaishnavas, although they had a genuine liking for Him, were grieved by His engrossing devotion to trivial secular studies and apparently utter indifference to Krishna. But they nevertheless prayed to Krishna to bestow on Him the fullest measure of love for Him that He might be a real Companion to them.

Chapter XI —Unrecognised Direct Manifestation—

From the point that we reached in the previous Chapter begin, with a staggering suddenness, the overwhelming series of direct Manifestations which are also at first necessarily unrecognized. The beginning of this change is thus described by Thakur Sree Brindavandas. On a certain day the Lord under pretense of nervous break-down manifested all the perturbations of loving devotion. All on a sudden he began to utter words that are not of this world, rolled on the ground, laughed and smashed the house. He spoke with a deep, loud voice, girded up His loins and beat all persons whom He chanced to find about Him. His whole Body repeatedly attained the state of suspended animation and these fits of exclusiveness were so peculiar that they filled all beholders with terror. The friends came soon to learn the tidings of His supposed indisposition and turned up in a body. They busied themselves with devising the proper treatment of His mental derangement for so it appeared to them to be. Buddhimanta Khan and Mukunda-Sanjaya came to the House of the Lord with all members of their families. They applied to His Head medicinal oils, technically known as Vishnu and Narayana oils. Everyone offered the kind of help that suggested itself to him. But the Lord does everything by His own uncontrolled Will. How could He be cured by any external aid?

The Lord shivered in every Limb and gesticulated violently. His loud exclamations terrified everybody. The Lord said: 'I am the Lord of all the worlds;

I uphold the world, whence My name is Vishwambhar. I am He, but no one knows Me.' With these words He begins to run at all the people to get hold of them. In this manner The Lord did disclose His own Lordly Nature under the guise of nervous malady. Yet no one understood, being prevented by His Power. Some held that He was possessed by a demon. Others opined that it was the doing of witches. Some expressed the view that it was undoubtedly a case of madness as He manifested the symptom of talking incessantly. By these indications they failed to understand His real Nature, being thus deluded by the Power of the Lord. They applied various curative oils to His Head and kept His Body immersed in oil in a large vat. The Lord laughed without restraint as He lay afloat in oil, which gave all persons the impression that He had a very serious attack of the worst type of the disease.

Having by His Will sported for a while in this manner, the Lord regained His normal health by giving up the show of nervous malady. At this sudden recovery all people rent the sky with loud acclamations of the Name of Hari. In their joy, they made lavish gifts of clothing in such huge quantities that it baffles all calculation. All the people were gladdened by the tidings of the Lord's recovery. All said, 'May the great Pandit live for ever!' 'The Lord of Vaikuntha,' observes Thakur Brindavandas, 'made merry in this manner. Who has power to know Him if He does not make Himself known?'

These manifestations of spiritual perturbations described by Thakur Brindavandas in the above passage, are liable to be misunderstood. They were manifested by Sree Gaurisundar under the form of the symptoms of nervous malady. Those who want to understand everything in terms of ordinary mundane experience and are not prepared to admit the existence, or possibility of existence, of the super-mundane, naturally reject the clear testimony of the Vaishnava writers to the effect that the spiritual perturbations are not physical phenomena at all even though they necessarily appear as such to the clouded vision and understanding of all mortals.

The principle has already been discussed elsewhere. It applies to the whole range of spiritual manifestations. The Name Krishna, the Remains of the food

tasted by Krishna, the Objects used in the worship of Krishna—such as buildings, utensils, etc., the body and mind of the person who worships Krishna, are, every one of them, spiritual entities, the consensus of opinion of all empiricists to the contrary notwithstanding. It is a difference of view which separates those, who admit the existence of the eternal and unbridgeable gulf that divides the spiritual from the material, from those who consciously or unconsciously, hold that the two are identical. The latter form the large and influential body of the anti-transcendentalists and philanthropists.

But the real transcendentalists possess an intelligible and consistent theistic philosophy. They believe in the actual substantive existence of the super mundane plane which never submits to the inspection of the material senses. The spiritual manifestations belong to the transcendental plane. They have to be carefully distinguished on the one hand from all worldly phenomena and on the other from dishonest or misguided exhibitions of the pseudo-transcendentalist. Everyone is free to believe or not believe a thing or a proposition. But no clear thinker would claim the right of misrepresenting, or deliberately misunderstanding, a proposition or an occurrence. The materialists and pseudo transcendentalists have deliberately misunderstood and mis-stated the accounts of the Spiritual Scriptures. This is not honest blunder.

It was this possibility, nay the certainty of deliberate misunderstanding on the part of all disbelievers and pseudo-believers, that led Sree Gaursundar to devise this method, for saving them from the offense of blasphemy, of disguising the satvika manifestations of spiritual love under the form of the symptoms of a disease with which they have the closest external similarity. The opinion of those, who hold the view that the so-called satvika manifestations are also themselves due to the diseased condition of the brain, does not carry any more weight than deliberate misrepresentations. No physician can understand the real cause of the appearance or cessation of the phenomenon known as disease. But it is unfortunately only a small number of doctors who suspect and allow for this great insufficiency of the grounds of their knowledge in opining about bodily manifestations of any kind. Medical science is no less subject to the fundamental limitations of sensuous empiricism than its sister sciences. No

science in the modern sense of the term would deserve a serious hearing unless it either helped the codification or widening of our stock of worldly experience.

Considered from this point of view the science of medicine has no jurisdiction over spiritual manifestations, and this ought to be more clearly recognized acted upon and proclaimed by the leading scientists of to-day than they are always accustomed to do. They are, of course, free to criticize the methods and experiences of the Absolutists. It is only when they are really unable to understand spiritual matters after proper endeavor that such criticism has its real use in exposing the vagaries or opposition of insincere persons and thereby preventing mischief from that quarter. But let them not forget their legitimate function by themselves setting up as spiritualists and attempting in that unscientific manner to manufacture theories of the Absolute on the basis of any worldly stuff and thereby prove one more nuisance and obstruction in the way of the honest inquiry of the Transcendental. Those who willfully offend against reason are rightly punished by the perpetuation of their ignorance, for which they have to thank only themselves. The satvika perturbations due to love for Krishna, are objects of longing to devotees of the very highest order who are absolutely free from all ignorance and all taint of self-seeking. This is necessarily unintelligible to those who have not thought it worth their while to cross the threshold of spiritual life. Their self-sufficient attitude towards the problems of the eternal duties, is only a proof of their utter slavery to the illusory power of Vishnu, the goddess Maya, who is ever usefully engaged in deluding the race of the hypocrites of all shades.

The utterances and activities of the servants of Vishnu are a perpetual enigma to the shrewdest atheists. No efforts of their perverted intellect can find out their real significance. The words uttered by the Vaishnava are transcendental, as are all activities. They are perfectly incomprehensible to conceited sinners who have been assigned this material world as the place of their abode as the expiatory? punishment of such perversity. The deluding power of Vishnu is ever engaged in guarding the portals of the transcendental realm against the impious assaults of all builders of the Babel. The realisation of this truth alone enables us to attain that perfect humility of the spirit to which the gates of the

eternal realm of Vishnu are ever likely to open of themselves. The humility that is current in this world is the perverted reflection of the substantive spiritual quality and is all the more heinous because such disguised form of self-conceit constitutes the deliberate misrepresentation of true humility. External roughness or smoothness of conduct is no criterion of the real humility. The really humble conduct of the self-less devotee of Vishnu may seem as rudeness, conceit and even arrogance to the pretended view of the deliberate hypocrite. There is no help for a person who chooses to willfully misunderstand. Such persons have been aptly compared to the owl whose eyes are denied only the sight of the glorious Sun.

To many impartial critics who are fully conscious of the vagaries of our present intellect in its pretended efforts to approach the Absolute and who are, therefore, prepared to reserve their judgment on a subject so alien to their whole experience the conduct of Sree Gaursundar, on this particular occasion, may still seem to be open to the charge of apparent inconsistency. They may properly enough ask whether Sree Gaursundar wanted to be regarded as the devotee of Krishna, or as Krishna Himself. If He wished to teach the people of this world the highest and only service of the Absolute Person by His own practice, how could the Manifestation of His real Nature as Recipient of worship be consistent with such purpose?

This criticism overlooks the fact that there is a very close approximation to the Divinity in the highest stage of devotion when the devotee is apt to be persuaded that He is Krishna Himself and in that mood sets himself to imitating the Activities of Krishna. This is to be carefully distinguished from the erroneous conclusion of the professors of the cult of the undifferentiated Brahman that the fulfillment of worship, which they regard as only a probationary stage, is attained by complete merging with the Object of worship Who is conceived as being absolutely devoid of form and activity of any kind.

In the case of the true devotee the worship is not a make-believe, temporary expedient as it is in the case of the other. If the service which we offer to Krishna is supposed to be due to certain changing circumstances it at once loses the character of sincerity and truth. The Vaishnava knows Himself to be

the eternal servant of the Lord. He does not think it possible or desirable to merge in Krishna and thereby cease to be His servant. This is the ambition of those hypocrites who, while pretending to be the servants of a god whom they cannot or do not purposely attempt to define, really cherish in the back-ground of their disloyal minds the design of being some day freed from the irksome necessity of such service as the reward (?) of their insincerity! To them, therefore, the end is necessarily different from the means.

By the adoption, for the time being, of a particular method, which is to be discarded on the attainment of the object of such endeavor, the Absolute cannot be realized. The relative can never lead, not even as a means, to the Absolute. It involves the fallacy of the major premise. The major premise in this case is too narrow and the middle term is undistributed. Untruth cannot lead to the Truth. By means of the Truth alone the Truth can be realized. As we do not possess the knowledge of the Truth and have no chance of ever knowing Him with the help of our present limited faculties we are either doomed to the state of eternal ignorance or liable to be enlightened from above by grace. There is no other alternative. The Vaishnava; therefore, accepts the latter alternative for attaining to the knowledge of the Truth. The abstract monist holds consistently neither to the one nor to the other. He does not believe fully either in his own ability, or in revelation. He has, therefore, no locus standi and necessarily tumbles headlong into the depths of Uncertainty which he calls God or Brahman in order to delude himself and his followers with the hope, which, despite all perversity, his and their natures instinctively demand, that they are for a time being as a sort of servants of the Absolute. When the true devotee exhibits the moods and activities of his Master he does so as a loyal servant rendered completely oblivious of his own separate existence and interests, by the contemplation of his Beloved. But he knows, specially at such moments more fully than ever, that he himself is not the Master. The conduct of the monist in his so-called realized state (siddhi) bears no resemblance to the activities of the devotee engrossed by the thoughts of his Master who, due to his consequent forgetfulness of his own self, thus enacts the Master's part. But the monist ceases to function on merging with the Absolute (?).

In the case of Sree Chaitanya He is sometimes found to be declaring Himself to be Krishna. Those who want to misunderstand will say that He was guilty of inconsistency of conduct because He could have easily avoided any suspicions being aroused regarding the sincerity of His own conduct by abstaining from such explicit declarations of His possession of the Master's Nature. But at the same time we must remember that He was not merely simulating but actually personating the devotee. This is incomprehensible to us. But it happens to be the fact, as testified to by the author of Sree-Chaitanya-Charitamrita in the opening verses of his work dealing with the object of the Lord's Appearance in this world. The real object, says Sree Krishnadas Kaviraj, was to taste His own sweetness by clothing Himself with the disposition and beauty of Sree Radhika. All other work could have been, and was as a matter of fact actually performed by the secondary Avatars. The Lord's own special Purpose in appearing in the world, which cannot be realized by any except Himself, was to experience the love of Sree Radhika for Himself. He, therefore, could not be recognized by those who were not His innermost devotees.

It is true that He was recognized as Krishna by His followers from whom He did not hide His real Nature. This was necessary for the purpose of the Leela and the possession of such knowledge by His devotees served to enhance the charm of their service and also to regulate their conduct. Therefore, these direct manifestations possess a double face like Sree Chaitanya Himself. Those who choose to ignore the face of the devotee, will miss the real significance of His Conduct and Teaching, no less than those who disregard the Divine face. All so-called partial truth is a deluding empiric conception and has no place in spiritual experience. In the absolute realm there is diversity, without rupturous dividing lines.

In order to be able to understand the activities of the devotees of the Absolute Person Vishnu it is necessary to remember that enlightenment from above is the indispensable essential precondition. It is futile to attempt to know Him by means of our present limited understanding. Hence the necessity of having

recourse to the spiritual preceptor and spiritual initiation. Initiation (diksha) consists in complete submission to the Absolute, which is equivalent to loyal and sincere submission to the guidance of the spiritual Preceptor, such submission being identical with obedience to the Word of Krishna as revealed in the satvata Shastras of which the spiritual Preceptor is both the only bona fide exponent and follower, the indispensable requisites for spiritual preceptorship.

The act of the disciple in submitting to the Preceptor, is not to be confounded with the renunciation of the right of private judgment or subordinating one's own judgment to another's. Both Preceptor and disciple are under obligation to obey only the spiritual Scriptures. It is a matter of willing admission of superior progress on the path of the Eternal, and not a question of enforced servitude. Both preceptor and disciple are free and sincere enquirers of the Absolute by the method of unconditional submission to the Absolute. Both realize the necessity and the rationale of such submission. Both know that the only real freedom consists in absolute submission to the Truth. All these conditions are scrupulously observed in their mutual relationship by the bona fide Preceptor and disciple. The effect of such practical submission to the Absolute is freedom from the limitations of the materialized senses. No sooner is this act of complete self-surrender to the spiritual Preceptor made then the devotee is accepted by Krishna as His own. The body, senses and mind of such a person are surcharged with the spiritual essence by the Grace of Krishna. And the initiated thereby becomes eligible for eternally serving the Feet of Krishna by the purified body, senses and mind.

The service of the Absolute is possible only on the plane of the Absolute and in the spiritual body by means of the spiritual senses. The soul of jiva possesses body, senses and mind. Krishna has also His own Divine Form, Senses and Mind. The soul of the jiva is constituted to serve Krishna with his spiritual body, mind and senses. The activities of the jiva in this world, in the fallen state, is a perverted deluded caricature of his true and eternal function. The body, mind and senses of the devotee appear to conditioned souls to be similar to their adventitious material body, senses and mind. But this is not really the case. It is the effect of delusion. The satvika perturbations which are possible

only in the spiritual body, appear to the materialized vision of sinful jivas as possessing the character of physical manifestations. Such conclusion is equally deluded. Those who do not admit the necessity of submission to Krishna, cannot necessarily understand what the practice of such submission implies. The act of submission is the key to the spiritual realm. The denial of this is tantamount to ignorance. The refusal to submit to the Truth is the logical equivalent of the slavery of untruth by means of the deluding physical senses. The atheists are the only ignorant and unfree persons by their refusal to follow the guidance of their reason.

Sree Gaursundar talked much while He was exhibiting the Leela of Direct Manifestation under the guise of nervous distemper. This confirmed the suspicions of those who were looking out for the symptoms of disease. The words uttered by the devotee are transcendental sounds that have the power of producing spiritual enlightenment by freeing from worldliness, if the unprejudiced ear is turned to them. The Transcendental Lord is served as the Transcendental Sounds. Those who admit the spiritual nature of the devotees of Krishna know that they are constantly engaged in the service of Krishna on the plane of the Absolute. The utterance of too much earthly sound is no doubt a sign of aggravated worldliness and is the malady of madness to which we are sometimes subjected by the mercy of Krishna so that we may be reminded thereby of the insubstantial and transitory nature of our most highly valued worldly possessions. One suffering from the aggravated disease of worldliness is not healed by the application of medicines which are supplied by physical Nature for the restoration of the worldly delusion. Such malady, treatment and cure all belong to the realm of delusions. They only serve to keep up the deluded idea of the wholesome nature of this world and its concerns for the correctness of atheists by such bitter experience. The delusion of those who put their trust in the delusion of the earthly physicians, who have a very high opinion of themselves, their science and its utility, is augmented by the practice of such trust.

The maladies of both worldly patients and worldly doctors can be healed only if they learn to distinguish between the symptoms of real disease, the punishment

of sin, and the similar spiritual manifestations of devotees who are absolutely free from all taint of worldliness, which are the only cure of all diseases. But the ill-fated have not the leisure, so wholly engrossed they choose to be in their worldly concerns and self-gratulations, to exercise their unprejudiced reason on the subject of their disease of the worldly sojourn. They are so absolutely persuaded of their own rectitude that they employ their wits in disproving the claims, to any real goodness, of those very persons who endeavour to cure them of their worldly disease by affording them the opportunity of listening to those redeeming sounds that bring the tidings of the Absolute to all benighted souls. They mistake, as the symptoms of an unsound mind with which unfortunately they are only too familiar, words and utterances that are the only medicine of their diseased souls. This infatuity is the corrective punishment of their unwarrantable self-complacency. Krishna's Deluding Power is ever seeking the holes in the coats of everyone of us in order to disturb us in the most sensitive parts and thereby to cure us of the disease of such fatuous reliance on the resources of our deluded, limited understanding. He, therefore, sends His own beloved ones, in the guise of patients, to the doctors of this world for delivering such of them as keep their ears open to the voice of Krishna spoken through the mouths of His devotees. But the other sort seeing, sees not, and misses their only opportunity, as further corrective punishment for their gross, deliberate worldliness. This is the fate of those worldly-wise people who consider the Unrestrained Talk of Sree Gaurisundar as a conclusive proof of His madness.

Of course it is possible, not inevitable for a time even after initiation, for a person to exhibit the state of suffering from the actual effects of sensuous activities that he had indulged in before his initiation. This does not come amiss to the bona fide probationer who never wants to get rid of his merited sufferings in lieu of his intention to serve. Such suffering causes the genuine probationer no pain but, on the contrary, is to him a source of unalloyed spiritual bliss as providing greater opportunities of service. To the uninitiated the sight of apparent suffering of the devotee presents a double face, viz., of those patient sufferings and merited punishment, both of which are untrue and are a trick of the Deluding Power to prevent the obstinate impious from serving the devotee as devotee. The doctor who may be called by the devotee to treat

him is afforded the opportunity of rendering unconscious service to the Vaishnava and will obtain his reward in the shape of a lessening of his worldliness, if he is careful not to allow his mind to cherish any prejudice against the bona fide of the real devotee merely from the fact that he might have been guilty of worldly conduct in his past life. This total absence of all irrational prejudice is possible only in a person who is sincerely conscious of his own imperfections.

A doctor who treats a real sadhu without prejudice thereby unconsciously serves Krishna Himself and obtains as his reward freedom from all ignorance by the mercy of the sadhu who is pleased to manifest to him his real spiritual nature by the will of Krishna. As soon as one obtains the real sight of the Vaishnava he instantly awakes from the deep waking slumber of ignorance to which he was being lulled by the deluding tricks of Maya. No amount of any so-called unprejudiced service rendered to a non-Vaishnava can lead to such a result. On the contrary if a non-Vaishnava is too zealously served his so-called benefactor (?) is liable to be punished by an increase of his delusion as he would thereby only develop the vanity of false humanity which makes him overlook the distinction between the Vaishnava and the non-Vaishnava as recipients of our service. Such a person can hardly be expected to be ever able, unless after he is really cured of his fondness for non-Vaishnavas, to grasp the real significance of the eternal distinction between the spiritual and the material, or to realize the truth that his soul has no affinity whatever with the objects and aspirations of this world.

The apparent defects of a bona fide Vaishnava have been aptly compared to the mud and froth that are sometimes found in the holy water of the Ganges. These in no way affect the eternal and unchangeable purity of the sacred stream that issues from the Holy Feet of the Supreme Lord. On the contrary even such mud and froth themselves imbibie, by contact with the chastening water of the Ganges, the quality of delivering all really unclean persons from the sticking dirt of worldliness. It requires a really impartial and supremely patient judgment to be able to enter into this spirit of the philosophy of theism. Sree Gaurasundar's teachings are a sealed book to the crooked and captious, but are

easily understood by the really candid. Worldly merit or demerit is of no help in this matter. Sincerity of the soul is ~e one thing needful. Insincerity is the concomitant of worldliness which is the cause of all our self-made ignorance and misery.

But some may still raise the objection that Sree Gaursundar could have done even greater good and obtained a better hearing for His teachings if He had exhibited no such symptoms even of apparent madness. Of course the Supreme Lord is free to do whatever He likes and there can be no defect in what He Wills or Does. Gaursundar was, in this instance, exhibiting the Leela of the ideal devotee. The necessity for such performance lay in the fact that the deliverance of all fettered souls is absolutely dependent on the realization of the transcendental nature of the devotee of God. Such realization can alone enlighten him regarding the spiritual nature of His own proper self. The object of Sree Gaursundar was to remove all misconceptions that stand in the way of such realization.

One of the commonest fallacies of this wide world is that religion is only one specific department of human activities out of many; or, in other words that it is possible to serve both God and Mammon at the same time, or at any rate in recurring succession. This idea, it would not be an exaggeration to observe, has been allowed by culpable negligence on the part of writers to pervade all literature of modern times. Religion is pedantically differentiated from politics, from morality, from aesthetics and from worldly activities of all sorts, not so much for the purpose of emphasizing the eternal distinction between the spiritual and the material but with the sinister motive of restricting the scope of religious activity itself within defined worldly bounds. If this fallacy, which is so widely disseminated, once finds a real lodgment in the brain, one can never realize the nature of the spiritual service of God, nor understand that it is possible to practice the same even while we are placed in this world without doing harm to anybody. I may notice in passing that the practice of so-called religious toleration, which is so much affected by a particular stamp of thinkers, is also based upon the above fallacy, viz., that it is possible without any real danger to anyone to keep religion out of the other affairs of life. One, who prays

regularly to God in the evening and morning and thinks that thereby his obligations to Godhead are at least partially fulfilled, utterly misunderstands the nature of his duty as the exclusive servant of the Lord. The obligation to serve Krishna is a self-imposed principle which knows no limits. Krishna can and ought to be served in all circumstances by each and every person of this world. One who really serves Him does so in his every act and thought. The devotee serves Krishna at all times both when he wakes and when he seems to sleep. Every act of the devotee under every circumstance is an act of service. One who fails to understand this fundamental principle of spiritual existence, cannot recognize the devotee of God and is doomed to sin and worldliness for this reason, notwithstanding all his exertions resembling the external conduct of the real sadhus.

The devotee of Krishna serves Him under all circumstances and he does nothing else. He neither eats nor sleeps but only serves. When He exhibits the activity of apparent eating and sleeping he does so for our benefit in order to show us how ever we, for whom eating and sleeping are necessary, can get rid of this false existence with its whole round of so-called interminable duties and obligations, if we only obey the Word of God manifested in the holy Scriptures and explained by the discourse and practice, of the eternal servants of Krishna who, by His command, make themselves visible to our mortal senses and who live and move in our midst for the fulfillment of the beneficial Purpose of the Supreme Lord in regard to ourselves. Such is the real nature of the true servants of Krishna. The Vaishnava tells us that the soul of every entity has the capacity of serving Krishna however circumstanced he may appear to be. The souls of the stone, the tree, the baby in the womb, the lunatic, the dying and the dead, are all equally eligible in this matter. Because no circumstance of this deluding world, however formidable or adverse it may seem to be to our eclipsed cognition, can offer any real obstruction to the spiritual service of the Lord. It is the truth of this proposition that the devotees are engaged in establishing for the benefit of the unbelievers of this world, by all their teaching and practice.

It would be a great blunder, therefore, to suppose that any evil can befall the servants of Krishna, here or elsewhere. The devotee is put by Krishna in all

possible situations in order to train up the judgment of those who profess to believe in them. It is only when a person's budding faith survives this purgatorial ordeal that he is in a position to understand the teaching of the Vaishnava which is identical with his conduct. Conversely the hypocrites are prevented from committing the offense of the pretense of serving the devotee by such constant searching of their weakest points. These exhibitions serve the doubly beneficial purpose of enhancing the faith of all sincere seekers of the Truth and keeping at a distance all those who have no inclination to serve Krishna but only themselves.

In this world we cannot really serve Krishna; we can only serve those servants of the Lord who are mercifully sent by Him into our midst to deliver us from the state of sin and ignorance. Krishna cannot be served by the sinful and the ignorant. Those who think that it is possible to serve Krishna with the resources of our limited understandings or by the physical bodies, confound the transcendental service of Krishna which passes the understanding of man with the corresponding atheistical performances. To complete this delusion they are also firmly persuaded by reason of their cultivated aversion to Krishna that whatever any individual sinner may choose to fancy as the Truth contains an element of truth. What they really want is that Truth must serve them and not they the Truth. They want to be the masters and not the servants of Krishna. But these irrational, hypocritical, self-seeking, misguided atheists are prevented, by their perversity due to such senseless prostitution of their freedom of will, from having the Sight of Krishna or His devotees.

Those who fail to realize the fatal nature of the offense committed against the Vaishnavas, are unfit to serve the devotees of Krishna although by such service alone conditioned souls can be delivered from the consequences of their willful transgressions. It is an offense against the Vaishnavas to suppose that a bona fide Vaishnava does anything else than the service of Krishna which is absolutely free from the least taint of worldliness. It is also an offense against the Vaishnavas to serve or associate with a non-Vaishnava, or to suppose that a sinner while in the state of sin is a Vaishnava. Until we are freed from these impious errors we cannot be said to desire the mercy of the true devotees of the

Lord. The transcendental activities and teachings of Sree Gaursundar as expounded and practiced by His associates and the followers of His associates, can alone save us from these errors to which an Age given to superficial controversies, like the present, has an abnormal besetting tendency to subscribe.

The real significance of these Pastimes of the Lord, although they happened to be perfectly explicit, were not apparently permitted to be understood even by the devotees in order to impress upon worldlings the truth that no one is able to know Him until and unless He enables one to know.

The tidings of the recovery of Sree Gaursundar filled everyone with joy. The Vaishnavas specially availed of this opportunity of impressing upon Him the necessity of serving the Feet of Sree Krishna by arguing the reason that there is no certainty of life or sanity. Sree Chaitanya was naturally partial to the Vaishnavas. Their exhortations made Him smile as He stopped to do obeisance to them all on His way in the company of His innumerable pupils.

Sree Chaitanya then resumed His duties as teacher. He taught His pupils inside the Chandimandap of the house of Mukunda-Sanjaya. While the Lord was thus engaged in expounding the texts to His pupils perfumed medicated oil was applied to His Head by some exceptionally fortunate persons of many good deeds. Sree Chaitanya took His seat in the middle of the room and was surrounded by His pupils who sat in a circle round their Teacher. That gathering is without a parallel in the annals of the world. Sree Brindavandas Thakur ransacked the Scriptures for a parallel instance for the purpose of comparison. At Badarikasrama Sree Narayana teaches Sanaka and other Rishis sitting round Him in a circle. The Act of Sree Gaursundar resembled this Leela of Sree Narayana Himself. The comparison holds good for the reason that the Darling of Sachi is the Same as Sree Narayana who dwells at Badarikasrama. It was, therefore, the very same Pastime of Badarikasrama that Sree Chaitanya was thus enacting in the company of His disciples at Nabadwip.

At the conclusion of His teaching by mid-day Sree Gaursundar would go out with His pupils to the Ganges for His Bath. After sporting for a time in the holy water of the Ganges He returned home and worshipped Vishnu. Offering water and circumambulating Sree Tulasi He sat to His meal by uttering repeatedly the Name of Hari. Sree Lakshmi Devi served the Food and the Lord of Vaikuntha ate the same. The pious mother was privileged to have the full view of this Sight. After meal He used to chew betel and then retired for rest. Sree Lakshmi Devi tended His Feet as the Lord laid Himself down in His Bed. The Lord then bent His Auspicious Glance on the goddess who serves in the office of Sleep of the Supreme Lord. Having rested for a while Sree Gaursundar used to go out of the house a second time with His books.

Chapter XII **—In the Streets of Nabadwip—**

Sree Gaursundar as Professor chose the afternoons for visiting the citizens of Nabadwip in the company of His pupils. He graciously accosted all the people; and everyone entertained feelings of the deepest regard for the Lord. This respectful attitude towards Him, which was universal, was a matter of instinct, as at this period no one was aware of the Divinity of the Lord. The Lord frequented all the streets of the city affording the people an opportunity of beholding Him Who is inaccessible even to the gods.

The Lord now behaved with the same absence of reserve on these visits to the citizens as we noticed on the occasion of His nervous malady. In this case also no one was able to recognize Him although He stood fully manifest to all seeming. Thakur Brindavandas has handed down the following particulars of these activities.

On one of these occasions Sree Gaursundar presented Himself at the

door of a weaver's home. The weaver at once made obeisance to Him with the greatest respect. The Lord asked Him to bring out his best cloth, which the weaver did at once. The Lord asked what price he expected for his cloth. The weaver replied that he would accept whatever was offered. After the bargain had been settled the Lord said He had no money with Him. The weaver replied that it was not necessary for Him to pay immediately. He might take the cloth, wear it and pay in ten days or a fortnight or by installments, according to His convenience. The Lord bestowed His auspicious Glance on that weaver as He left the place.

The Lord then entered the quarter of the town which was occupied by the milkmen. He took His Seat at the door-way of the home of one of the cowherds. The Lord, by the privilege of a Brahmana commanded him jocosely in an imperious tone to bring out his milk and curds, saying that He would favour him that day by accepting the best of the gifts that his household could provide. The cowherds beheld it was the God of love Himself Who thus asked for their gift. With great respect they offered their best seat to Him. The Lord continued to talk in a jocose vein to the cowherds. They addressed Him as their 'maternal uncle'. Some asked Him to eat their cooked food in their Company. A certain milkman took Him to his home on his shoulders. A few remarked that He had once eaten all the cooked food that was in their houses and He might probably recollect it. Saraswati, the Goddess of speech, spoke truly, but the milkmen themselves did not know. The Lord laughed at these words of the cowherds. All the milkmen now brought out their milk, ghee, curds, sar and excellent butter and gladly gave to the Lord. The Lord expressed His satisfaction at such friendly conduct of the cowherds.

He then went forward and entered the home of a dealer in perfumes (gandhavanika). The trader made his bow at the Feet of the Lord with great respect. The Lord asked him to bring out his best perfumes. As he did so the Lord inquired their price. The trader replied that the price must be already known to Him and that it would be hardly proper to demand any price from Him. That

trader then begged to be allowed to apply the perfumes to His Body and to return home for that day. If enough of fragrance persisted till next day and did not cease after bath, then He might pay any price that He liked. With these words the trader, with his own hand, put his perfumes all over the Holy Form of the Lord in a rapture of joy that was perfectly unaccountable. 'The Supreme Lord', observes Thakur Brindavandas, 'abiding in the heart of all beings, ever attracts their minds unto Himself. Who is not bewitched by the Sight of His Beauty?'

The Lord next made His way to the home of a garland-maker. The garland-maker was smitten with the extraordinary Beauty of the Lord and did obeisance to Him after offering a seat with great respect. The Lord asked Him to give good garlands and told him that He had no money with Him. The garland-maker noticing that He had the appearance of one who had actually realized Godhead said that He might not pay. With these words the garland-maker placed his garlands on the Divine Form of the Lord. This made Sree Gaursundar and all His pupils laugh. The Lord bestowing His auspicious Glance on that garland-maker, made his way to the home of a betel-seller.

The betel-seller was taken by surprise on seeing the Lord Himself crossing the threshold of His humble abode. In his delight the betel-seller, of his own accord, offered Him his betels which made the Lord laugh. The Lord asked why he was offering the betel made up with betel-nut without demanding any price. The betel-seller made reply that it was due to a spontaneous impulse of his mind. The Lord began to chew the prepared betel that had been offered. The betel-seller then presented the Lord with betel-leaf, camphor and other spices of excellent quality used in making up the betel, desiring Him with great reverence, to accept it and would not take any price. Sree Gaursundar favoured that betel-seller in this fashion.

The Lord visited the residence of a dealer in conches who made Him, obeisance with great reverence on beholding Him. The Lord asked for good conches declaring that as He had no money with Him He did not know how He could buy them. The conch dealer, at once gave the Lord his best conches with the

remark that He might pay at His leisure and consider Himself under no obligation to pay The Lord was very much pleased by hearing these words of the conch-dealer and bestowed on him the favour of His auspicious Glance. In this manner the Lord visited regularly the houses of all the towns-people of Nabadwip.

The Lord next made His way to the house of a diviner who could predict everything. The Lord told him that as he was reputed to be a very competent person He had come to him to inquire about information regarding Himself as to what He was in His former births. 'Right' said the diviner. But on applying himself as a preliminary to repeating mentally the mantram of Gopala that diviner of excellent deeds at once beheld the Divine Form with the bluish hue, Four-Armed, holding the Conch, Disc, Club and Lotus, His Breast adorned with the jewel Kaustuva and the sign of Srivatsa. He saw the Lord in the prison-chamber at the dead of night with His parents in front of Him in the act of adoration. Presently he had a vision that the father, taking up his new-born Boy in his arms, put Him away that very night in the cowherd settlement. He saw again the Nude, Beautiful, two-Armed Child, with the belt of jingling bells on His Waist, tasting the butter with both Hands. The diviner in fact saw all those Signs that belong to his own cherished Divinity on Whom he mediated at all time He beheld once again the divine form, with the Flute touching His Lips, in the triple-bent attitude, surrounded by the milk-maids, discoursing instrumental and vocal music. On beholding this extraordinary vision the diviner opened his eyes in wonder and fixing his gaze on Gauranga went on repeating his recitals. He then supplicated the Deity of his cherished worship in these words, 'Listen, O Gopala, divine Boy! Do Thou show me quickly who this Brahmana was in His former Births.'

Thereupon, the diviner had a vision of the Lord, Bow in Hand, of grass-green Hue, seated in the Attitude of the warrior. He saw Him again in the midst of the Cataclysm of complete destruction in the form of the wonderful Boar Whose Tusk was holding aloft this world. He saw Him once more Appearing as the Man-lion, of most fierce Aspect, infinitely Tender to His devotee. He saw Him again in the Act of deluding the sacrificing King Bali, in the Form of the Dwarf.

Then He beheld Him in the form of the Fish in the waters of the Deluge, playing merrily in the Flood. That diviner of excellent deeds saw the Lord once again in the Form of the maddened Holder of the Plough, with the Club in His Hand. The diviner saw the shining Form of Jagannath with Subhadra in the middle and Balarama on His right. The diviner had a vision in is manner of the true Nature of the Lord, but yet he understood nothing. 'Such', says Thakur Brindavandas, 'is the force of the deluding power of the Lord.'

The diviner was very much astonished and thought within himself that the Brahmana must be a great sorcerer or He might be some god who had perchance appeared to him in a frolic in the guise of a Brahmana in order to delude him. He also duly noticed the indications of the super-human fiery glow irradiating the body of the Brahmana and was perplexed thinking that he was being befooled for pretending to know everything. While the diviner was busy with these thoughts the Lord said laughing: 'Who am I? What do you see? tell me everything without reserve.' The diviner said, "Be pleased to leave me alone for the present. Let me repeat my mantram with a clear mind. I shall tell You in the afternoon.' 'Very gook," said the Lord as He went off on His way laughing.

The Lord now presented Himself at the home of His beloved Sridhar. The Lord often visited Sridhar at his house on various excuses and never left him without exchanging jokes with him for a short time. On seeing the Lord Sridhar at once approached Him with great respect and made Him take a seat. Sridhar was naturally of a most gentle disposition. The Lord's behaviour was that of a most restless and arrogant person. thereupon the following dialogue ensued between Sree Gaursundar and Sridhar.

The Lord asked, 'Sridhar, you take the Name of Hari constantly. Why do you yet suffer such great privations? Tell Me how it is that you suffer from want of food and clothing by serving the Lord of the Goddess of wealth?' Sridhar replied, 'but I do not actually starve and I also put on clothing of some sort, be it long or short'. the Lord went on, 'I notice your cloth is patched at a dozen places and there is no straw to the thatch of your hut. Is there the person in the town who is stinted for food and clothing by worshipping Chandi and

Bishahari?’ Sridhar said, ‘Bipra, Thou hast said well. But yet the time of all persons passes all the same. The king lives in a palace of gems and eats and dresses most sumptuously; the birds inhabit the tree-top. Nevertheless the time of both passes away all the same. They enjoy the fruits of their respectively acts awarded by the Will of Isvara.’

The Lord said, ‘You have immense wealth. You dine on it most sumptuously in secret. when will that day be when I shall make your secret known to everybody? then shall I see how you can deceive the people so!’ said Sridhar, ‘Pandit’ it is better for you to return home. It is not meet for us to quarrel with each other., The Lord said, ‘I am not going to let you off in this fashion. Tell me at once what you are going to give Me., Sridhar replied, ‘I live by selling the bark of the plantain tree. You better say what at all I can give your Reverence.’ The Lord said, ‘I am not just now going to take the buried treasures that you possess. I shall have it later. For the present give me gratis plantain, radishes and the soft core of the plantain tree. I shall not trouble you if you do so.’ Sridhar thought within himself, ‘The Brahmana is so very arrogant. He is certainly: going to thrash me one of these days. And even if He hurts me what can I do to a Brahmana? Neither can I afford to give Him daily without being paid. Still what a Brahmana takes even by force or guile is surely my good fortune, and I shall, therefore, give Him everyday., After meditating in this manner Sridhar said, ‘Listen, Your Reverence You need not pay anything. I shall willingly give you core, plantain. radishes and bark. So be pleased not to quarrel with me any more., The Lord said, ‘This is well and good. There will be no more quarrel from now if only you always give Me good core, plantain and radishes.’

The Lord dined everyday off the plantain-bark of Sridhar. The core, plantain and radishes of Sridhar were the most relished dishes at His Daily Meal. The Lord ate the gourd, that grew on the plant trained on Sridhar’s thatch, cooked in milk and pepper. The Lord now asked, ‘Sridhar, what do you think I am? I shall go home as soon as you tell Me only this.’ Sridhar said, ‘You are a Brahmana, a part and parcel of Vishnu Himself., The Lord replied, ‘You do not know. I come of a family of milkmen. But you see Me as the Son of a Brahmana.

I, however, know Myself to be a milk-man.' Sridhar laughed on hearing the Words of the Lord and did not recognize his own cherished Deity by the force of His Deluding Power. Said the Lord, 'Sridhar, I will tell you the Truth. All the greatness of your Ganges is due to Myself.' Sridhar protested, 'Well, Nimai Pandit, art Thou not afraid even of the Ganges? Man grows sober with advancing years. But Your restlessness is increasing with double speed'. After indulging in such merry repertoire with Sridhar Lord Gauranga-Hari returned to His own Home.

The above episodes may seem to represent the Lord in the character of a begging Brahmana who is out among the hard-worked artisans and poor people to squeeze from them the best that their poverty can yield. there are two subjects in this picture, viz., the conduct of the Lord and of the humble folk, both of which deserve our careful consideration.

Sree Gaursundar did not accept the gifts of the poor for any charitable purpose but frankly for His Own Personal Use. He does not appear to have rendered them any service in return; those people did not expect nor wish for any return. Neither did they apparently give their things with the idea that they were giving them to a needy beggar. they gave from a feeling of reverence and not on account of His individual qualities of which they had not always a very decidedly all-round favourable opinion. even Sridhar admitted to himself that the Brahmana was unduly arrogant. the soothsayer, who to many persons would seem to have been the most favoured of all, took Him to be a Person versed in the Black Art Who was trying to befool him. so all these people gave away their best things to this arrogant brahmana in conformity with a customary practice and not for the reason that Sree Gaursundar possessed any outstanding merit or worth of His Own. Sridhar even complains that the Brahmana was not above using both force as well as dissimulation to obtain the lion's share of his scanty wares. Sree Gaursundar may, thus appear to be evidently exploiting the credulity of ordinary superstitious, ignorant, masses for His own personal profit and thereby countenancing the objectionable practices of those degenerate Brahmanas who go about begging for their livelihood.

Why did those poor people give Him their best things? Let Sridhar speak for the rest. Sridhar said he did not covet the wealth of kings. He thought that the time of himself was passing in exactly the same way as that of kings and he did not hold Godhead responsible for making any inequitable difference between a king and himself as in his opinion there was really no difference. But neither was Sridhar a cynic. He was aware that the things of this world were capable of being rightly used in the service of Vishnu; and that no depth of poverty was an excuse for the neglect of this paramount duty. Giving to the Brahmana was in his opinion, identical with giving to Vishnu 'because Vishnu was represented in this world by the Brahmana for accepting such service through His devotees. True, the Brahmana in question, viz., Sree Gaursundar, appeared to him to be very arrogant and dissembling. But he himself was also not prepared to give willingly anything to the Brahmana on the worthless plea of his utter poverty; and, therefore, the only alternative was to suffer his things to be taken by force or fraud by the Brahmana who did him the favour of accepting his things in this boisterous fashion'. This is the inside of the heart of Sridhar. This was the faith of all those humble people.

But can we really serve Godhead by offering Him the things of this world. Sree Gaursundar says we can. If we regard Godhead and the objects offered to Godhead as categories of this world the process is objectionable involving the degradation of worship. Godhead is not a receiver of any earthly objects. But we have also nothing to offer Him except these very earthly objects, because we ourselves are of this Earth at present. Sree Gaursundar says that we are not earthly; but if we attain our natural, super-mundane, state we are in a position to realize that the objects of this Earth have also a spiritual relationship to ourselves. This spiritual side of the things of this world does not manifest itself to us as long as we continue to regard them as being meant for gratifying our hankering for worldly enjoyment. Such attitude is the sign as well as cause of our real ignorance of our true self.

There is such a thing as the soul, apart from limited and temporary entities of all gross and subtle types. This soul is our proper self. The vision of our souls is for the present clouded by the exclusive contemplation of alien objects which

we are apt to consider as having affinity with ourselves. The soul in the sinful state values only such use of things as can afford him pleasure in some form or other. He constantly strives to multiply the opportunity and scope of such enjoyment. This vision is, however, the clouded vision. It was not Sridhar's vision. Sridhar realized that the enjoyment of the things of this world could not really satisfy his soul. The things of this world are meant not to be enjoyed but to be used in some other way. They are to be offered unconditionally to One for Whose Sole enjoyment they are meant. And Who is that One Person ? He cannot be any sinful creature. He is no mortal, but Godhead Himself. The Brahmana is part and parcel of Vishnu. Vishnu also appears in this gross world for enjoying the things of this world. Sridhar believed that He does so for the benefit of sinners, that Vishnu appears in the form of Brahmanas who are free from all sin. A Brahmana knows the proper use of the things of this world. He does not seek his own enjoyment but serves Godhead therewith. It is because he possesses this knowledge that he is a Brahmana. If anything is given willingly or unwillingly to a Brahmana it is offered to Godhead and is sure to reach Him through the Brahmana. The things of this world in this relationship to Sree Gaursundar also appeared to Sridhar in this light. This was so because Sridhar's soul was in his natural state who could realize that he has no affinity with the things of this world as a means of his worldly enjoyment.

Sridhar's philosophy might seem to make no provision for the material prosperity of the world. It may also seem to be akin to blind faith. The last objection has been answered in the preceding paragraph. The so-called clear-sightedness of the conditioned souls is their real blindness. Our faith in the value of the things of this world as objects of our enjoyment, is the real blind faith. Sridhar's faith is not blinded by this essentially- irrational partiality in favour of worldliness the utter-worthlessness of which must be patent to all as a fact of even one's daily and hourly experience. Sridhar's philosophy does not, indeed, trouble about the progress of this world which it attributes to the Direct Action of Godhead awarding the material fruits of the sinful endeavours of conditioned souls who alone happen to be the denizens of this mundane world. He regards so-called worldly prosperity more as a snare than a help. But he is careful not to ignore, for this reason, the very existence of this world. The

world is not an illusion.

So long as we are placed in this world we cannot but have to do with things mundane. Our duty, while we are so placed, must however, be to use all kinds of material facility for the service of Vishnu Who has no wants of His Own but Who condescends to condescends to receive our offerings in order to enable us to live, also under these adverse circumstances, a life of service. The service of Vishnu is the only true and eternal religion. It's truth can be recognized by our clouded understanding during those lucid intervals when we are impelled by the experience of worldliness to be impartial seekers of a really wholesome function. There are sinless people who are not subject to the domination of the enjoyable side of phenomena to whom all things of this world disclose their spiritual forms who teach us to serve Vishnu with their help. The condition that is ensured by such service is the only true progress and one that, instead of augmenting our blindness, serves to clear up our blinded vision. But we may still be disposed to ask certain questions, 'Will the offering of our best things to unworthy and beggarly Brahmanas, who claim them as a matter of right for the purpose of gratifying their worldly appetites, also conduce to such a result?' It is not necessary to discriminate between a real Brahmana and a real non-Brahmana? And who, indeed, is a real Brahmana? Did Sridhar or the other poor people really know that Sree Gaursundar was Vishnu Himself? Evidently they did not bother. Is such blind devotion to caste Brahmanas recommended as a reliable and wholesome principle by the above episodes? Neither did Sridhar nor any of the other townsmen, who were so liberal to Sree Gaursundar, entertain any suspicions regarding the worth of Sree Gaursundar as recipient of their gifts. They did not venture to gauge the worth of a Brahmana by the measure of their clouded understanding. In this view their conduct was not the denial but the perfection, of the truly rational attitude. They waited to be enlightened, without muddling. This excellence of judgment was the natural concomitant of their own unworldly life which is an indispensable preparatory for the spiritual. They will thereby soon learn about the real Truth and be saved from the degrading effects of indiscriminate, worldly charity to beggars for a worldly purpose. It is the only duty of all true

Brahmanas to enlighten everyone who really wants to be enlightened. Unworldly conduct in every relationship of life is the only proof of the possession of such desire. This mode of imparting enlightenment is the eternal Dispensation of Providence and it never fails to operate with unerring beneficence in all cases. Those who are charitable to Brahmanas from any worldly motive never have the sight of a real Brahmana who possesses the knowledge of Godhead.

But it may be argued that Sree Gaurasundar was encouraging the trade of a betel-maker by accepting his service. Is not the trade of a betel-seller altogether harmful? Will such encouragement not be misunderstood as approval of a practice which is condemned by the Srimad Bhagavatam Srimad Bhagavatam warns us against sensuous enjoyment of the objects of this world and proceeds to enumerate categorically certain forms of sensuous enjoyment that are to be avoided by all means. It says no doubt that no rules are applicable to those who really serve Krishna. Srimad Bhagavatam does not mean that the bona fide servants of Krishna are privileged to indulge in sensuous conduct. What it means is that Krishna is served by the senses of those who are perfectly unmindful of their own enjoyment. We are not required to give up anything we are required to learn the only proper method of using everything. Till we understand this true method we should agree to be taught, by desisting from the wrong method which would otherwise prevent us from knowing truly by the only effective method, viz. , that of actual personal experience.

Sree Gaurasundar did not declare a crusade against the externality of conduct of any kind. All activities are a part and parcel of the eternal scheme of the universe and can and need never be abolished. Sree Gaurasundar desired that we should acquire the right vision which enables us to employ all things of this world in the service of Krishna, without interfering with the external appearance which is the eternal perverted concomitant reflection of the real shutting from us the true view of the Reality. But the perverted reflection can no more be abolished than the reality. Both exist for ever in their respective reciprocal relationship. It is not they but our attitude to them that requires to be adjusted. Gaurasundar declares that the smarta view, i.e., the ordinary view of

so-called orthodox Hindus, which regards a thing of this world as pure or impure by its worldly reference, is opposed to the teaching of the spiritual Scriptures. Nothing can be impure except the attitude of the observer. To the pure vision everything is necessarily pure. According to the Bhagavatam the paramahansas are above all those rules that are meant for the guidance of conditioned souls. This leniency to them means neither undue partiality nor indiscriminate license. The Scriptures provide for the strictest guidance of all dissociable souls by the eternally free sadhus who alone can understand the real spirit of those regulations and can, therefore, apply them in the proper way. This is so because they themselves always spontaneously follow the spirit that is negatively represented by those regulations. The real devotees are privileged to know that for no one there is any such thing as impurity in the sphere of spiritual service. Those who, being themselves averse to Godhead, set up as teachers of the Bhagavatam, delude themselves as well as their pupils by their false teachings.

The eternally free state is not a figment of the atheist's imagination. It is, on the contrary, the most decisive proof of one's utter ignorance of the state of the devotee to suppose that the true nature of such state can be realized by the imagination of one who does not serve God. It is tantamount to confounding the shadow with the substance, darkness with light; because such knowledge is real ignorance and such imaginary purity is the most insidious form of aversion to Godhead. Such deluded people bring upon themselves the richly deserved punishment that is due to their hopeless pursuit of the shadow under the willfully mistaken plea that it is the substance. The identification of the unreal with the real, of the wrong idea with the object, is the consciously perpetrated great error of all empiric speculations regarding the Reality. It is equivalent to conscious or unconscious denial of all reality on the dishonest plea that the Reality is incomprehensible to our present limited understanding. On this misapplied plea are we justified in deliberately choosing to be content with an imaginary 'moral, order and call it also 'real, on the testimony of a gratuitously assumed universal instinct of the race? In other words are we to recognize the failure of our pervert reason to know the Reality by stifling the faculty of reason itself? Sree Gaurasundar warns us against such useless act of suicide and

declares that the Reality really exists and can also be really known to us despite the self-created insufficiency of our present understanding; and that it is, therefore, our first and only duty to try to realise the Truth by adopting a life which is really free from all taint of duplicity. That this is also the only truly rational course and one whose success is a foregone conclusion.

On His return home after accosting Sridhar in the manner described above, Sree Gaur Sundar seated Himself at the door of the room that was consecrated to the worship of Vishnu. The students, who had been in attendance, departed to their respective homes. As He caught sight of the rising full moon the Lord's heart was filled with loving recollections of the Moon of Brindavana. He thereupon began to discourse strains of the Flute, Whose sweetness was never experienced in this world. But no one could catch it except the mother.

On hearing the note of the Flute that bewitches the triple universe, the mother fainted on the spot by complete immersion in the ocean of bliss. Presently recovering her external consciousness, having compassed her mind, she listened to the unprecedented melody of the Divine Flute. She perceived the sound to proceed from the direction where Gaurangasundar was seated. Having this wonderful aural experience the mother came out of the room and found her Son still sitting at Vishnu's doorstep. She could no longer hear the strains of the Flute but beheld the Disc of the Moon in the Bosom of her Son. She saw distinctly the Sphere of the Moon inside the Breast of her Son and looked about her in amazement.

Returning to her room the mother began to think about the reason, but could not arrive at any solution. Such was the high fortune of mother Sachi who constantly beheld such never-ending Divine Manifestations. One day during the night mother Sachi heard hundreds of people singing and playing on musical instruments. She heard various musical sounds made by the mouth, the sound as of a dance, the tread of feet as if a vast Rasa Pastime was in progress. One day she found that all the house, the rooms, doors and windows, were made exclusively of light. Another day she had a sight of celestial nymphs, beautiful as Lakshmi Herself, their hands adorned with the shining lotus flower

One day she had a vision of shining gods and, after just catching sight of them, could not see them again. All these visions are nothing at all impossible in the case of the Mother Whom the Veda declares to be the very Form of Devotion to Vishnu. Even those, on whom the Mother casts Her auspicious glance but once, are thereby endowed with the eligibility of beholding those manifestations. Thus did Sree Gaurasundar, Wearer of the Garland of Wild Flowers, abide in His Own Eternal Joy, in concealment; such being His Pleasure. although the Lord was manifesting Himself in all these various ways yet He could not be recognized even by any of His Own servants.

The Mothers of Sree Krishna serve the Lord as embodiments of the principle of pure reverential devotion like that of Devaki and Prisni, or by unmixed maternal affection like Yasoda and Sachi. The Mothers are not denied the transcendental un-alloyed service of Krishna although they are His superiors by relationship and are regarded as such by Krishna. It is the special privilege of the servants of Krishna to behold the manifestations of His Divine Power and Majesty. Sree Sachi Devi serves the Lord with greater devotion than His other servants. She loves Sree Gaurasundar as her Son standing in constant need of her protecting affection. This is different from the purely reverential attitude of service. In this world parental affection precludes all element of the principle of service as practiced by an inferior. Even when the mother nurses her own child she cannot be supposed, without a jarring violation of all sense of propriety and truth, to be guided by a feeling of reverence for her own offspring. The two sentiments, as they are conceived in this world, are different and incompatible. In the Mothers of Krishna maternal affection perfects and incorporates, instead of excluding, the element of loyal servitude. There is no loss of any principle but only the growing excellence, by additional elements, of the one indivisible basic function which, inconceivably to us, gathers up all minute and nice distinctions that are found pervertedly reflected in the exclusive grades of mundane relationships

The most noticeable Feature of the Activities of Sree Gaurasundar at this period, is Arrogance. He chose to carry the Pastime of His Arrogance to such lengths that there was at that time in the whole of Nabadwip no person who could beat

Him in this respect. Commenting on this Thakur Brindavandas is led to observe that it is the peculiar and inalienable Characteristic of Krishna that He has no equal in whatever role He chooses to play and Sree Brindavandas Thakur proceeds to recapitulate the most notable instances of His Excesses. When the Lord chooses to indulge in the Pastime of fighting He excels all in the most perfect use of the weapons of warfare. When He wishes to indulge in amorous sports He effects the conquest of myriads of His sweethearts. When He desires to enjoy the pleasures of riches the homes of His servants are filled with the most profuse abundance of all precious jewels. When, at a subsequent period, this very Arrogant Gaur Sundar renounced the world and turned a Sannyasin, a particle of His Renunciation was vainly to be looked for in all this triple universe. The truth of this Fact, says Thakur Brindavandas, writing of Events that were still fresh in the minds of all the people, is patent to all. The Renunciation of Sree Gaur Sundar is never possible in any other person.

Those who represent Sree Gaur Sundar as engaged in amorous pastimes with His mistresses in the manner of His Activities of Dvapara Leela, commit an unpardonable offense against the canons of historical as well as spiritual propriety. It is directly opposed to the testimony of Sree Brindavandas Thakur who says clearly that at this period when Sree Gaur Sundar was exhibiting the Leela of a house-holder at Nabadwip He was, indeed, a most restless and mischievous Person Who was full of arrogance, but with one most significant reservation, viz., He altogether abstained then and throughout His Career from the society or discourse of women for indulgence in amorous pastimes as Enjoyer. He exhibited all along the role of the ideal servant of Krishna who is exclusively devoted to his Lord and absolutely free from any hankering for enjoyment on His Own Account.

Certain sections of Sree Chaitanya's professed followers, actuated by their worldly propensity, do not hesitate even from casting the aspersion of adulterous conduct on the perfectly abstemious Character of Sree Gaur Sundar. This willful and gross misrepresentation of a historical fact only shows the depths of the utter degradation to which the human nature is liable to fall by its efforts to comprehend the Doings of the Divinity under the dictates of its

irrepressible hankering for sensuous enjoyment. It is for this reason that the contemplation of the conduct of the devotees of Krishna has been extolled by the Scriptures as being of greater help to souls striving for spiritual amelioration than even the Doings of the Lord Himself; because the Latter are liable to be wholly misunderstood by those who do not properly realize the supreme necessity of being instructed therein by the transcendental preceptor who leads the perfectly unworldly life and who is thereby enabled to have the right understanding of the Divine Activities of Sree Krishna Who is altogether unintelligible even to the candid worldly mind that pretends to seek for the real Truth. By such willful distortion of the Leela of Sree Gaurasundar these insincere and thoughtless people only prevent themselves and others who are minded like themselves from realizing the true nature of the genuine devotee whom it was the object of Sree Gaurasundar to make known to us by His Own Divine Conduct and Teaching. Unless and until we learn to follow the Teaching of Sree Gaurasundar we can never realize the true Nature of the Activities of the Lord in His Avatara. in the different Ages by reference to their Source.

For the same reason a conditioned soul must never try to ape the transcendental conduct of the servants of Krishna; because the activities of the unalloyed devotees cannot be understood except by their mercy, that is to say except by unconditional submission with body, mind and speech to the servant of the Absolute. It is not enough to have listened to the words of the devotee without submitting to be fully guided in our every act. On the transcendental plane there is no difference between idea and word and object denoted by them. This has to be realized not by persisting to differentiate between them while undergoing discipleship under a sadhu, but by submitting to realize them as an indivisible whole in our practice as well. So long as we actually retain an idea of our present disloyal conviction that they are separate from one another and that the Absolute Truth can be realized by merely exercising our intellect in the same way in which we find out the so-called truths of our worldly experience, we are doomed to deceive both ourselves and others by willfully and profanely confounding, against the imperative dictates of our own unalloyed reason, the material with the spiritual. Or, one may fall into deception of the opposite kind and ape the external conduct of a sadhu without

caring to listen, with sufficient attention and with a serving disposition, to his words regarding Krishna. This will make one's conduct a mechanical performance and also prevent the due realization of the momentous fact that on the plane of the Absolute there is no such thing as unintelligibility, i.e., absence of the fullest cognition. Every act of the servant of Krishna is instinct with all real cognitive significance, not in the imagined, figurative, or transferred but undivided absolute sense. The words of the sadhu have to be lived if one is sincerely willing to realize their true significance. Hence there arises the necessity of complete submission to the bona fide spiritual guide at all stages of spiritual endeavour.

The Doings of Krishna are not cognisable even to His Own servants unless He is pleased to let them know The activities of Sree Gaurasundar, although He exhibits the Leela of the devotee, are not intelligible to any person except by means of His special Grace vouchsafed through His servants. The Arrogance of Nimai Pandit deceived everybody in regard to His Real Nature. He appeared even to the Vaishnavas as an atheistical pedant whose only ambition was to acquire the reputation of the greatest scholar of His time. They confounded Him with those really egotistic pedants who abounded in Nabadwip and who were the worst enemies of the true religion inasmuch as in their role of teachers of the Religion they supported their impieties by the authority of the Holy Scriptures. They are the Putanas who abound in a controversial Age and it was necessary to stop their mouths if the Religion as not to be stifled at its birth. It is the Nature of Krishna to deal with everybody at his own weapons. He is the Servant of His servants and the Terror of His enemies.

The Ideal Devotee of Krishna, Sree Gaurasundar possessed by right of His Devotion all these Qualities of Krishna Himself. He was dealing with the atheistical teachers of religion on their own plane where alone, indeed, they could be met, although they did not deserve such aggressive mercy. But the Lord Himself must not, therefore, be supposed as belonging to their plane. By this conduct Sree Gaurasundar was trying to help them in the only way that would be intelligible to them, viz., by proving the insufficiency of their polemics and thereby making it clear that they could not understand the real

meaning of the Scriptures.

The Pride and Arrogance of the Lord humbled even those proud and arrogant atheists who had grown hoary, in the practice of sophistry and were too bad to be reformed in any less violent way. This is the case of all empiricists, more or less, of this day or that. They really understand nothing, but always act as they know everything. They only submit to the sophist who is a greater juggler than themselves. Such polemical defeat serves to confirm them more strongly in the wisdom of their suicidal course. But if the art of the juggler is used not to confirm but rescue the juggler from his favourite self-deception such remedial jugglery is thereby raised to the level of the service of Krishna Who wishes to rescue all perverse souls by their own co-operating free choice. Sree Gaurasundar set the example of such service in His Leela as ideal House-holder and Teacher. It is the duty of all scholars and teachers, if they want to be saved from self-deception and to prevent others from being deceived by their pedantic untruths, to accept unreservedly the service of the Absolute Truth as the only goal of their endeavours, and, when they find Him, to assert Him against all who parade such untruths as the medicine authorized by the scriptures of all the ills of our mortal estate. If this ideal of teachership were adopted it would really cure all distempers that the flesh is heir to, which can be healed by no other method.

The distinctive feature of the Teaching of Sree Gaurasundar is Causeless and Unbounded Mercy to all souls. The very Fullness of His Mercy stands in the way of the realization of its nature and specially by those pedantic worldlings who are proud of their own mis-supposed worth and are thereby led to prescribe their nostrums for the undoing of their unfortunate admirers. Those who mechanically follow the dictums of Vaishnavism or Revealed Religion, i.e., all Pharisees also necessarily fail to understand the supreme Mercy of Sree Gaurasundar. Sree Gaurasundar sets no value on conduct that is not inspired by unalloyed love for the Absolute. He teaches the function that breaks through all rules and conventions for the purpose of acting up to the Fountainhead of all rules and conventions. He sets His Face against all forms of self-complacency that is unduly vain of its laurels. The pure soul knows no inferior and has no

taste for pedantic sophistry for procuring any worldly laurels. He strives under all circumstances, to realize the unconditional service of the Absolute. He has no selfish inclination and no suspicion that anything may not benefit himself. He knows spontaneously by his open-hearted experience of the Reality that to serve the Absolute in all manner and under all circumstances, is the only proper function. The service of the Absolute is capable of being realized and equally liable to be missed, under every form. Those who fix their attention on the external form, can never understand the behaviour of the real servants of the Absolute. No Pharisee can understand why Godhead sends the pouring showers of His Mercy on the just and the unjust. In this case the Nature of the Source from Whom the conduct proceeds, spiritualizes the whole act. Those who confound spirit with matter, the Absolute with the relative, cannot understand, due to want of candour, how that which is apparently opposed to their experience of this world, can be necessarily, True on the plane of the Absolute. But their stupidity happily does not abolish the Truth Himself. The arrogance of the Pharisee misjudges the quality of the Magnanimous Arrogance of Sree Gaursundar. This is the wholly deserved punishment of the hypocrite. It is the only method by which even the Pharisee is saved and those who are needlessly vain of their worldly virtues, are enlightened regarding their real function towards others.

It is the Nature of Krishna to excel every entity in whatever He does, with a single exception. Krishna is always excelled by His devotee. One day the Lord happened to be passing along the public streets in the company of a number of His students who crowded on all sides of Him. The Lord was as richly dressed as a king. He was clad in a yellow robe, like Krishna. His Lips were dyed with the betel and His Holy Face had the splendour of a million Moons. All the people were praising Him. They said, 'He is verily the God of Love Himself Who has put on His Visible Body.' On His Forehead shone the tilaka mark pointing upwards. His Beautiful Hands held His books. The Glance of His Lotus Eyes dispelled all sorrow. The Lord was coming along merrily, swinging His Arms, in the company of His students who were naturally of a most restless disposition. Sribas Pandit, fell in with Him on the way quite by accident and burst into laughter as he caught sight of the Lord. Nimai Pandit made obeisance

to Sribas. The generous Sribas blessed Him by way of response saying, 'Live Thou for ever.' Sribas then laughingly asked, 'Whither goest Thou, Crest-jewel of the Arrogant? Why waste Thy. time in these vanities foregoing to serve Krishna? Why dost Thou teach Thy students so, night and day without respite? Why do people read at all? Is it not to learn devotion to Krishna? If that is not gained what does such learning avail? For this reason be well-advised not pass all Thy time in such vanity. Thou hast studied till now. It is high time for Thee to serve Krishna without delay.' The Lord replied smiling, 'Be assured. revered Pandit, what you say will certainly come to pass by your grace.' Saying this the Lord proceeded smiling to the bank of the Ganges and there re-joined the body of His pupils.

Sribas Pandit, a Brahmana advanced in years, was accustomed to treat Sree Gaur Sundar in the manner of a superior and well wisher who regarded his junior as an object of his affectionate concern. Regarded from the point of view of reverential service such conduct towards Godhead must appear as improper. The same kind of objection would apply equally to Sandipani Muni, teacher of Krishna, to Garga Muni who was family-priest of the chief of Braja and, in Gaur-Leela, to Brahmananda Puri, co-disciple of Sree Isvara Puri. It is, however, a comparatively poor conception of our relationship with Krishna to suppose that it should be confined to distant reverence for the High and Mighty Godhead.

The idea of the Absolute involved in the forms of reverential worship, is somewhat analogous to our conduct in this world where the sentiment of reverence precludes all really familiar intimacy. If a person who is situated on the plane of this world affects to conduct himself towards Krishna as towards his Chum or Junior he certainly perpetrates the grossest impropriety. The philanthropists (prakrita sahajiyas) pretend to think that it is possible to adopt the attitude of confidential intimacy found in this world towards Sree Krishna while we are in the sinful state in imaginary imitation of the similar feasible relationships of the absolute world without committing the grossest profanation. At the same time it would be no less untrue to suppose that the method of distant reverence itself is, therefore, the only or proper kind of service of the Divinity.

The method of distant reverence is based on an incomplete view of the Absolute and does not therefore, belong to the highest plane. It is shy and diffident. It is also indicative of a certain reserve of love. Reverential service is of course not to be confounded with any form of hypocritical philanthropism. It is wholly free from all error of judgment and is bound to develop by directing its closer attention to its immature service of the Absolute. Contented reverential service, nevertheless, resembles that of the overjoyed traveler who builds his halfway house and prepares to settle down in it permanently under the impression that he has reached the goal. It is not easy to persuade such a traveler to resume his forward journey, especially if he has already built a solid structure and is supported by a strong body of admirers and colleagues of real purity of purpose. This is the form of service that is attainable in the Majestic Realm of Vaikuntha which supplies the ideal of the current religions. The latter are, however, really a veiled form of quasi-worldliness and often tantamounts to a religious refusal to seek the fullest service of the Absolute. Reverential worship especially in its degenerate forms, has proved the determined foe of all impartial and thorough inquiry in the domain of religion, no less effective than the pseudo authoritative methods that were once prevalent in the sphere of worldly knowledge. This unnatural form of worldliness aping the real service of Vaikuntha has been accepted as the only legitimate form of religion by all worldly persons who have been prepared to justify their practices by a sort of ridiculous assumption that religion is necessarily opposed to science, i.e., to the principle of free inquiry. But neither need the defects of the current forms of religious orthodoxy lead any but a deliberately foolish or wicked person to the serious conclusion that there is no such thing as the Absolute Truth Whose Admitted existence is certainly the only real obstacle in the way of all irresponsible free thinking so much affected by empiricists.

Chapter XIII

—The Ideal Householder—

Professor Nimai used to stroll in the streets of the city in the company of His pupils. Men of the highest rank stepped down from their conveyances to accost Him as they came across Him on His way and made obeisance to His Feet with all humility. All persons felt an instinctive awe on meeting the Lord. There was none in the whole of Nabadwip who did not now unreservedly admit His pre-eminence as a scholar. Whenever a citizen performed any religious function he made it a point, as was the custom of the times, to send offerings of food and clothing to the House of the Lord.

Householder Nimai Pandit was most open-handed in spending money. With Lordly Magnanimity He gave to the needy and the distressed unceasingly and without stint. Gaur-Hari thus gave away rice, clothing and money to the poor most generously whenever He chanced to meet them. There was a constant arrival of chance-guests at the House of the Lord. The Lord gave to all in the measure due to each. Sometimes a dozen or score of sannyasins would turn up all on a sudden. The Lord would joyfully invite them all to His House sending word to His mother for immediately providing the alms of cooked food for a score of sannyasins His mother was sometimes put to great perplexity for want of sufficient eatables in the House for meeting these peremptory demands of her Son. But such anxiety was always relieved by the automatic arrival of all requisites from unknown quarters.

Lakshmi Devi would then cook the food most gladly and with special care. The Lord Personally watched Her cooking and Personally attended to the feeding of the sannyasins, never relaxing His attentions till their actual departure. He spared no pains to please His guests. The merciful Lord welcomed every chance-guest in this hospitable manner. The Supreme Lord taught all householders, by His Own Example, their most distinctive function. 'The principal duty of every householder,' said the Lord, 'is to serve all his chance-guests. I call that person even worse than birds and beasts who, being a householder, does not serve his chance-guests. If one happens to be destitute of every necessary by reason of ill-luck due to his previous bad deeds, he should still gladly spread for the chance-guest some straw as a seat, and offer him water and resting ground. No good man can be without these. Let such a person speak out truly and let him

express his regret for not being able to do more. Such loyal conduct would save him from the terrible offense of inhospitality. If one serves sincerely and with a glad heart according to his means his proper duty to his chance-guest is thereby duly performed., Thus taught Sree Gaursundar and His Own Conduct bears out His Teaching.

Thakur Brindabandas, commenting on the above, observes that those chance-guests to whom Lakshmi and Narayana made the gift of their food, were certainly most fortunate. Even Brahma himself and his following always pin their hopes of deliverance on food from the Hands of the Lord Himself. This supremely coveted food was obtained by any and every chance comer. It was truly most wonderful! There are those who opine otherwise. These maintain that no lesser beings are ever in any way eligible to be recipients of such food; and the Brahma, Siva, Suka, Vyasa, Narada, and the head of all the gods, all the self-realized souls and all eternally free souls came thither in the forms of mendicants, apprised of the Appearance of Lakshmi and Narayana at Nabadwip. Otherwise who else have power to be there? Who else but Brahma and those who are on a level with him, can ever be fit to obtain that food? Others, however, hold that the Descent of the Lord into this world was for the Purpose of delivering all the miserable. The Lord ever relieves the distressed in every way. Brahma and the other gods are His own limbs, and the limbs of those limbs. They are ever and in every way the associates of the Lord. But there is His Own special promise regarding this particular Appearance, 'I will give all jivas what is attainable with difficulty by Brahma and his peers.' It is for this reason that the Lord offered His food at His own House to all the distressed.

Charity to the poor and unstinted hospitality to all chance guests are recommended by the Scriptures as the principle duty of all householders. The Varnashrama system permits a person to marry, set up as a householder and pursue an honest trade or profession for earning his livelihood. But no householder must cook any food for his own consumption. He must always cook only for the Lord. Neither should he amass wealth for the livelihood of himself and his family. He may accumulate wealth in order to relieve the

distressed and for performing the duty of unstinted hospitality to all chance-guests.

Miserliness is unreservedly condemned. A Brahmana, i.e., one who sincerely professes to lead a regulated spiritual life, is distinguished by this quality of liberality in the spending of his wealth. He must be perfectly open-handed. It is his nature and also his duty, to employ his wealth for relieving distress. It is his duty to give liberally food, clothing and money. It is also his duty to serve and accumulate a certain amount of wealth for this purpose. It is his duty to give with an easy mind. There is no higher duty for a householder than this.

This is clearly opposed to the ideal of the worldly economists who favour the method of niggardly 'doles, for relieving (?) distress. Indiscriminate or lavish charity is considered by the Economists as harmful both to the giver and the recipient of such charity. The recipient of indiscriminate charity is supposed to be encouraged thereby to lead the idle life of a parasite. The giver of such charity is accordingly supposed to be a conscious or an unconscious abettor of unprincipled idleness. It is, therefore, supposed to be the duty of a householder not to countenance any form of begging. That form of charity alone is permitted by the Economists which is exercised for helping people to lead an industrious life. This discrimination is strongly inculcated by all modern Economists. But Sree Chaitanya makes no reservation in regard to hospitality to chance-guests.

As a matter of fact the charitable disposition itself assorts ill with the principle of discrimination. Is a professional beggar really a great nuisance as he is ordinarily supposed to be by the Economists? He is the inevitable product of the practice recommended by the uncharitable Economist. He is the natural and salutary (?) check on the social triumph of undiluted industrialism. Would the world be an ideal place if it be inhabited solely by uncharitable, rich misers? Is not miserliness after all quite definitely and logically traceable to the same selfish instinct that produces the professional beggar at the other end? Those who discourage indiscriminate charity indirectly encourage miserliness by their deprecation of the vice of improvidence. The economic view cannot be free

from this grave defect.

The real danger of all those who live to eat, is due to their besetting desire for the cultivation of undiluted selfishness. This latter is the root-cause of all economic and other troubles of this world. It is, therefore, necessary to insist that the householder must give up the ideal of calculated selfishness if he is to be really at peace with himself and the world. The miser need not suppose that he is a better man than the beggar. Both of them are in equal danger of becoming selfish by, the avoidance of their duty by one another. The householder can be cured of his selfishness not by so-called discriminate or no charity, but only by true magnanimity

Those who advocate saving in order to increase the capital of a country only extend the application of the principle of exclusive selfishness to the sphere of national economy with its corresponding disastrous result. A nation which lives only to eat, is no better than the uncharitable householder whose case has been considered above. The bubble of the fashionable capitalistic theory will be pricked, and is in course of being pricked, by the rival principle of unselfish brotherly co-operation, for multiplying the so-called necessities and luxuries, for a higher purpose than that of selfish enjoyment by the nation or the individual. That higher purpose is unreserved service of Godhead, which, however, cannot be understood by those who are too exclusively absorbed in the pursuit of the alternative lines of the selfish ideal.

But it may be urged that the ideal of unselfish living sketched above, has also its danger. An unselfish individual and nation are liable to be exploited by the selfish. This is no doubt true. But is it really harmful to any party? The ,varnashrama system was never properly followed in this country. It is bound to be recognized as the best social arrangement possible in this world, and as the only one that offers the least opposition to the goal of spiritual living.

The special hospitality shown by Sree Gaursundar to sannyasins points to a spiritual duty on the part of the householder who aims at the attainment of a higher than the merely economic plane of living. By the practice of open-door

hospitality alone the householder is brought into proper touch with those who keep up the ideal of spiritual service of the Lord in the form that is least likely to be misunderstood by the economic householder.

The institution of asceticism (sannyasa) is the distinguishing feature of the varnashrama system. It is the fourth stage in the life of a person belonging to the system; the other three being Brahmacharya (period of spiritual training), Garhastya (householder life) and Vanaprastha (period of retirement from domestic life). The Yati or sannyasin does not cook for himself. He may accept food cooked by the twice-born, who, being worshippers of Vishnu, cook only for the Lord. No articles of food may be offered to Vishnu that may cause pain to any sentient being or stimulate animal passion. Hence there should be no objection on the part of sannyasins to accept food cooked by Brahmana householders.

But no sannyasin may settle down at any place other than the Abode of the Lord. A sannyasin must continuously move from place to place for the benefit of those who lead a stationary life. A sannyasin has no other purpose than to serve the Pleasure of Vishnu. He is the Guru or spiritual Guide of all persons belonging to the other three stages. It is the duty of every householder to hospitably receive him with the greatest honor. It is the duty of the householder to offer his best hospitality to the sannyasin who is always a chance-guest. It is also his duty to receive the sannyasins with the greatest honour that is due to the order of the spiritual teachers of society.

The sannyasin is the chance-guest whom Sree Gaursundar specifically teaches all householders as in duty bound to honour. according to the varnashrama system no person is to be permitted to live for himself. The professional beggars are no exception to this rule. But neither the professional beggar nor the self-centered householder is a fit member of the society that is organized for serving the spiritual end although they are tolerated and given the chance of improvement by the generous provision of the system. The loyal members of the system never live unto themselves and are therefore, neither selfish householders nor professional beggars; although all householders are

required by the system to tolerate and cherish even disloyal persons for the purpose of mutual improvement.

The professional beggar and miserly householder necessarily claim the lion's share of hospitality of every loyal household in a society in which they happen to form the majority of members. It is not laid down in the Shastras that there is any obligatory duty of hospitality toward those guests who insist on staying at a place for more than a single day at a time. From this provision it appears that the obligatory duty of householders towards chance-guests really refers to the sannyasins. The poor and the distressed are also mentioned in the Shastras as objects of charity. But it is carefully laid down that charitable gifts to such persons would benefit the giver and the receiver in the worldly sense only. But the hospitality to the chance-guest is recommended on the ground that it produces spiritual benefit to the householder without the necessity of his having to try to find out sadhus by undertaking journeys that are also enjoined to holy places where only the sadhus are to be ordinarily met with. Every householder was provided by means of such organized hospitality with the opportunity of spiritual communion with the sadhus coming to his door by serving them for his own benefit. In this duty all members of his family could also participate and be benefited thereby. It is not merely social benefit which would be secured by this practice, but an inclination for the spiritual service of the Lord without which no so-called social good is worth a brass farthing.

The institution of sannyasins is, of course, also liable to degenerate. Those sannyasin who do not serve the Lord are even worse than mere professional beggars. There has been an enormous increase of both species of beggars, as is to be expected in this world. But those professional beggars who pass themselves off as sannyasins in order to exploit the religious homage of the good householders, are also liable to be benefited by having to conform to the rules of the order which require every sannyasin to keep aloof from all association with the other sex and strictly discourage all accumulation of wealth, fixity of habitation and luxurious living. Those professional beggars with the garb of sannyasins who observe none of these rules, should be regarded as mere scoundrels who must not certainly be honoured as the

spiritual teachers of the community. But it should be possible for every householder, with a clear realization of the true principles of the varnashrama system, to practice unstinted charity and good will towards all persons in the measure that is due to each. But the claim of pseudo-sannyasins, to be the authorized spiritual teachers of the community, should not also be seriously entertained on any Shastric principle. They may be sent away with kind words and outward respect due to their garb and may be given the bare necessities of life of which they may actually stand in need.

There is, however, another and a higher aspect of the matter. Sree Gaursundar was playing the part of a devotee in the position of a householder. Those who were the recipients of the favour of His hospitality were undoubtedly most fortunate. Who then could be those who are really worthy of such high fortune. Do Brahma and other great beings on a level with Brahma stand in need of such favour ? Even they, say the Scriptures, fail to attain the supreme mercy of such favour. Judged by the test of eligibility, however, they ought to have a preferential claim to such favour. So it is maintained by those who take this view that the Householder Leela of the Supreme Lord, acting the part of the ideal devotee, was intended for favouring Brahma and other great personages, who availed the opportunity by presenting themselves in the garb of chance-guests and beggars in distress.

Food, clothing, rice, a seat, anything offered by the Lord has power to benefit everyone in the fullest measure. Brahma and other great beings are no exceptions to the rule. There call be no true greatness save by the Favour of the Lord. One who attains such greatness by Divine Grace is enabled to realize more and more the infinite mercy involved in the eternal necessity of having to be the recipients of the Divine Favour. Unless the Lord is pleased by one's activity it has no value whatsoever. Its contribution to the Pleasure of the Lord constitutes the sole and supreme value of all activity for the lowest of jivas, as for the highest. Those who want to serve the Lord without desiring to be favoured, have a very poor idea of spiritual service. It is by all means the only natural function of the soul to desire the Divine Favour in every way. It is unnatural for the soul to desire any favour from any other quarter. Those who

have no hankering for the Divine Favour, can have no experience of His Real Nature. This fatal stupor is curable only by the Causeless Mercy of the Lord which is apparently unnecessarily and indiscriminately. showered on all. Those jivas who fail to be reclaimed by the Divine Favour, have equal reason to be grateful to the Supreme Lord Who mercifully permits the fullest liberty of choice to all souls even against His own perfectly beneficent Dispensation.

It was, therefore, no departure from the principle of absolute causelessness of the manifestation of Divine Mercy, but really the most brilliant fulfillment, that is noticeable in the Activities of the Supreme Lord as Householder, in bestowing, His Favour, coveted by Brahma, Siva, and all highest personages, indiscriminately on all. This Conduct of the Supreme Lord also places before us, in true amplitude, the incalculable range of the beneficence of the activities of the bona fide Vaishnava householder. The Lord's purpose was to vindicate the function of His devotee. The favour of His devotee is superior in the quality of graciousness even to that of the Lord Himself. The devotee is eternally engaged in doing good, of which the recipients are unconscious, to those fallen souls who are deliberately opposed to the willing service of the Lord. This unsolicited favour from His devotee is the sole unknown cause of eligibility for the conscious and willing service of the Lord that is slowly manifested in all conditioned souls who are thus favoured. Rice, clothing and money which conditioned souls readily accept from the Vaishnava householder under the merciful pressure of destitution or even from the desire to beg by assuming the garb of a spiritual mendicant, possess the power of healing our aversion to the Lord that is equal to that of the direct Mercy vouchsafed by the Lord Himself to conscious and grateful recipients.

Everything possessed by a Vaishnava householder belongs wholly- to the Lord in the special sense that the devotee is fully conscious of the sole proprietorship of the Lord and is also eligible to act up to his conviction. His charity is, therefore, to be distinguished from that of one who usurps a thing by the right of pseudo-proprietorship. Whatever is therefore, accepted, given away

or retained by the true devotee, is done on behalf of the Lord and, therefore, possesses the spiritual quality, imparted to an object due to its spiritual dedication to the service of the Lord, viz., that of delivering those concerned in the same from the bondage of this world. The food that is offered by the devotee to the Lord is called maha prasadam after acceptance by the Lord. Those who accept maha prasadam thereby consciously or unconsciously progress towards the activity of spiritual service. The remainder of the maha prasadam, after being honoured by the devotee, is termed-maha,prasadam, who possesses even greater efficacy than the prasadam as he produces faith in the spiritual nature of the devotee. All this is implied in the Hospitable Activities of the Lord acting the part of a Vaishnava householder.

If any trace of doubt is still left in the minds as regards the necessity of a Vaishnava householder serving Vaishnava sannyasins arriving at his house as chance-guests, it may be observed that the Vaishnava householder does not aspire to favour, help or benefit any body but serves all persons with whom he has any dealings. One who fancies himself to be a Vaishnava is a hypocrite. The Vaishnava is really and fully aware of his inferiority to every other entity; all of whom are viewed by him as objects engaged in the service of the Lord who are to be honoured as properties and servants of his Master. The devotee alone is, therefore, fully eligible for consciously serving the Vaishnava sannyasins and understands the real value of their mercy in visiting unsolicited the homes of householders under the Direction of the Lord, in order to afford them an opportunity of serving the Lord in the best manner by showing hospitality to themselves. This function of hospitality is capable of being fully discharged only by the Vaishnava-householder who is in a position to understand its necessity and high value for all concerned.

From the point of view of the householder the spiritual value of the obligatory duty of hospitality to all chance-guests consists in its being the necessary supplement of the begging and peripatetic guiding function of the sannyasins. The value of such hospitality increases in proportion as its significance is realized and embodied in the act. The external activity is liable to be abused by the misconception of its real nature. But the abrogation of the duty which is so emphatically and clearly enjoined by the Shastras on all householders involves the fatal danger of breeding disbelief in the spiritual

principle. One, who is really anxious to find out the duty of a householder, should be careful to avoid the mistakes of supposing it to be a merely mechanical activity on the one hand or as the product of designing hypocrisy or ignorant simplicity on the other. The householder should exercise his hospitality discriminately and must always pay due attention to the spiritual import. The modern institutions of public almshouses, hospitals and other charitable organizations err by trying to remove only the worldly miseries and wants of those whom they desire to serve. The husk is ostentatiously dangled before the greedy imaginations of self-deluded souls who are deliberately disposed to prefer it to the grain which tastes bitter to their diseased palates. These institutions, if they are to do the maximum good to mankind, should change their principles of management and objective by subordinating unconditionally the worldly point of view to the spiritual. The present discriminating worldly charity which they dispense, should give place to indiscriminate spiritual charity. This applies equally to individual householders who make a show of benefitting the needy and the destitute and other chance guests by practicing covert arrogance in the name of serving hospitality. To the purely worldly understanding, the product and the punishment of egotistic vanity which is the proper negation of the principle of spiritual service, these considerations are unfortunately apt to seem visionary and unpractical. Those who deliberately choose to regard the perverted reflection as being itself the substance of which it really happens to be the shadow, have no other alternative but to continue to behave perversely.

Lakshmi Devi cooked the meals of the family by. Herself, unassisted, and yet experienced the greatest happiness in the performance of this duty. Most fortunate mother Sachi, watching this Behaviour of Lakshmi, felt a great and hourly increase of her gladness. From early dawn Lakshmi performed all the duties of the household alone by Herself. This was Her Nature, or Religion. She drew the circles of the svastika in the shrine for Godhead and the figures of the Conch and the Disc with great care. She made every preparation for the worship of the Lord by perfumes, flowers, incense, lighted lamp and well-scented water. She constantly served the tulasi and applied Her Mind, with even greater assiduity, to the service of Sachi Devi.

By observing this Conduct of Lakshmi Sree Gaursundar did not say anything openly but felt glad at Heart. On some days, taking into Her Arms the Feet of the Lord, Lakshmi Devi would continue to tend Them for a while. Once Sachi had a most wonderful vision. She saw a most brilliant massive tongue of fire burning under the Feet of her Son. On some days mother Sachi scented a great perfume of the lotus flower everywhere about the rooms, doors and windows, that also never ceased. Thus at Nabadwip abode Lakshmi and Narayana hiding Themselves and so no one could know. Then, after sometime had passed in this manner, the Lord, Who is ever full of every wish, had a desire of beholding the country of East Bengal. The Lord thereupon spoke to His mother to the effect that He intended to go out of Home for a few days. Sree Gaursundar said to Lakshmi to serve the mother unceasingly. Thereafter the Lord, taking with Him a few favored students, started for East Bengal, with great Pleasure.

In the above paragraph I have tried to reproduce the words of Sree Brindabandas Thakur. They afford a glimpse into the ideal of the relationship of the loyal wife to her God-fearing husband in this world. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the ideal servant of Her Husband's Household. There is no one else to assist her. Mother Sachi as well as Sree Gaursundar are recipients of Her help. She occupies the unconditional subordinate position. There is no question of equality of status or function. Her duties lie within the household and are not shared by Her Husband or mother-in-law. Her principal work is to make careful arrangements for the worship of Vishnu, decorate His shrine by drawing the figures that are emblematic of the Powers of the Lord, tend the tulasi and attend constantly on Sachi Devi. She cooks and serves the meals offered by the family to Godhead. She tends the Feet of Sree Gaursundar. She works from early dawn till late at night. She does all this with a perfectly loyal and glad heart.

This is no doubt wholly opposed to worldly ideas regarding the proper position of the wife in the household of her husband. It appeals to neither the mundane intellect nor to the mundane connubial sentiment. The life seems to be too mechanical, too narrow and too much subordinated. It does not at all provide

for the bodily and mental comforts of the wife. It severely curtails the sphere of her activities to the inside of the house of her husband. There is no variety of work, no provision for leisure or other recreation. There is strangely enough little reference to the sexual conjugal love. It may not be unnaturally supposed that all this may be convenient from the point of view of the elders but are not likely to be relished either by the husband or, least of all, by the over worked wife herself who is crushed by a system of sheer, joyless, purposeless slavery which can only make her gradually lose even the energy of making any piteous protests. The mother-in-law is the standing dread of a worldly wife who considers it physically impossible to please superimposed elderly mistress at her elbow whose tastes are bound to differ radically from hers.

The difference between willing rational service and slavery is real and need not be overlooked. If one submits to another from a sense of duty and in pursuance of a rational object such submission becomes necessarily differentiated from slavery. The quantity or nature of the work that may be performed is no proof of its slavish character. What should be the proper object of every household? The atheistic conception seems to be that the household is the product of the sensuous outlook and its object is to satisfy our mundane cravings in an effective manner. Work and leisure according to such view, should be so arranged that no undue excess of either may produce harmful bodily or mental discomfort. Liberty of choice in the selection of work and the method of its performance is regarded as the keystone of the arch of social and domestic felicity; although the danger of anarchy in both domestic and social government is also admitted. The two objectives of the household system of this democratic Age of equality are maximum personal liberty and maximum personal comfort of every inmate. The outlook is of course worldly. Those who are disposed to defend the system of purdah and subordination of the wife to her husband, do so because they believe that the worldly ends are likely to be better served by the adoption of those methods.

As a matter of fact inequality in work, temperament and ability are hard facts of our everyday experience, that cannot be abolished by simply overlooking their existence from a conviction of the sheer impossibility of harmonizing all

discordant differences. If the object of the household institution be to secure the maximum possible worldly enjoyment for every member, it is not possible to devise any arrangement by which this is really attainable. The full cup of domestic happiness is liable to be dashed in an instant by a solitary whisper and the mischief cannot be healed by the shibboleths of liberty and equality, or by the elaborate cunning of a complicated worldliness. The worldly end in itself is the Tantalus's Cup and it gives its deluding character to all the details of the system. It is the worldly end which really destroys the peace of the household and is bound to prevent the attainment of any really satisfactory result.

The sole object of the household institution should be to serve the Supreme Lord if it is the purpose to produce real peace and harmony. possible only by spiritual association. Neither the wife nor any other member should aim at personal comfort, nor should be encouraged to do so. But it is not possible to instill into any individual member the principle of unselfishness unless the same forms also the accepted principle of all members of the household. the service of the Supreme Lord alone can impress upon all unselfish persons, the necessity and desirability of its adoption as the only unconditional common function of all members of every household

The Supreme Lord can be served only if He happens to be a person essentially like ourselves if He condescends to receive our service. But it does not remove all difficulties, although it establishes the reality. of the serving function.

If the service of the Lord resembles the so-called service that is ordinarily offered to a human being the difficulties connected with the latter will recur in the proposed function. A human being normally desires the satisfaction of his personal needs and is prepared to do willingly what promises such satisfaction. The only difficulty in this case is that he does not know what can actually satisfy him. He is constantly in search of such satisfaction by the adoption of the available defective methods, due to his natural want of judgment and capacity. It is for this reason that he is doomed to suffer from perpetual dissatisfaction. Moreover, there is no reasonable guarantee that the methods adopted by him, for the unattainable ideal of complete personal satisfaction of

Himself as a human being, will be, in every case, promotive of the similar satisfaction of those whose services he must require for his purpose. This uncertainty in regard to both is reflected in the modern democratic cry of liberty and equality, showing that those interests have not been served by the unchecked pursuit of selfish happiness by each individual human being, however high the individualistic ideal may be regarded to be in the abstract. But the proposed democratic method has also its own defects. It quite unnaturally ignores all real differences of capacity, taste and character of the individuals. No lasting habitable structure can be expected to be built on radically unnatural and fallacious assumptions. The attempt is bound to produce fresh causes of discord and disappointment.

The common service of the Supreme Lord should be acceptable if it be really free from the above defects and thus ensure the attainment of the maximum satisfaction of the individual and the community. Vishnu is the Only Person Whose Plans for His Own Personal Satisfaction are ever productive of a perennial variety of conditions of the highest and lasting general and individual satisfactions of all jivas. The Plans of Vishnu benefit everybody, even those who wilfully abstain from receiving the benefit from a deliberate misunderstanding of the Nature of the Divine Personality. The atheists are mistaken in being afraid of losing their independence of action if they have to unconditionally obey the Lord. If they have no rational objection to unconditionally obeying their own real nature they can have none to obeying the Lord. By obeying the Lord all souls are enabled to attain the complete natural function of their own proper selves. By disobeying Him the soul ceases to find either himself or his function. This is proved indirectly by the futility of every effort to institute the perfect household by the misguided soul's own independent effort, by ignoring his natural relationship to his Lord. The service of the Lord is the source of all knowledge, all existence and all satisfaction of all souls. If we do not submit to serve Him we naturally grope in utter darkness by mistaking darkness for light. The object of every endeavour of every soul should be to seek for the Divine Guidance if he really wants to attain his complete normal existence. The service of the Lord should, therefore, be the only legitimate object of all household and social institutions.

In the Household of Sree Gaursundar every function was performed for pleasing the Supreme Lord. The practice of conjugal love is one of the most coveted objects of worldly life. It is also liable to degenerate into an abnormality due to the sensual nature of depraved man who is impelled by lust to deceive, himself in regard to his sexual responsibilities. Marriage is a failure if it be regarded as a means of satisfying one's carnal appetites. The wedded husband and wife should not be less free from the offense of sexuality than the bachelor. They marry with the object of attaining perfect immunity from carnality by adopting the regulated conjugal life that leads to this spiritual result. Such conduct for such purpose is practiced in the service of the Supreme Lord. But this natural function can also be neither learnt nor practiced except under spiritual guidance. The unassisted mentality of tiny individual souls does not enable them to realize their own supreme good. The rationality of the reason of man can itself be realized only by being rationalized by the All-knowledge and by consciously sharing in serving His Cosmic Plan. It is only in this way that one can escape the tyranny of his own native littleness.

Religion is not a departmental affair, nor the special business of any particular set of people. It is the practice of the service of the Truth in all affairs. But the Truth cannot be fully served by the limited cognition of the conditioned soul. The Truth in His Proper Nature is always Full and Immutable and is known only to the Supreme Soul Who has also the power to Communicate Himself to the multitude of individual souls. The Truth cannot be known if one acts in opposition to the source of rationality.

Conduct which is irrational is also improper and unnatural for a rational being. There can be no other test of impropriety. All conduct, therefore, ceases to be rational as soon as it neglects to receive inspiration from the Source of all knowledge. No act can be irrational or undesirable that is done in conscious obedience to the Will of the Absolute. The domestic duties of the loyal wife cease to be drudgery and slavishness if they are performed in conformity with the Wishes of the Supreme Lord. The leisure, liberty and comforts of the worldly wife are the means of confirming her taste for dissipations that are bound to react in a most mischievous manner on her real self and on the souls of her aiders and abettors.

The service of the Lord, Who is perfectly free from all defects, is the only natural function of the pure cognitive essence of the free soul. In every work that a truly rational being undertakes there can be only one object, viz., to realize and carry out the Wishes of Godhead. The Conduct of Sree Lakshmi Devi belongs to the plane of the unconditional loving service of the Lord. The unity and concord of the household are fully secured by the willing and indefatigable exertions of the loyal God-fearing wife, and, at the same time, the only function of a perfectly rational existence in the form of the practice of loving devotion of Godhead is realized for herself by the service of those who thus employ her in their service of Godhead. If Sachi Devi had any desire for selfish enjoyment she would have failed to have such high regard for her Daughter-in-law. She accepted the services rendered to her by Sree Lakshmi Devi in the spirit in which they were rendered, viz., in order to honour her Divine Husband's mother who possessed the spontaneous absorbing serving affection for her Divine Son. Sree Lakshmi Devi loved her Husband on the plane that is absolutely free from all mundane passions attainable to one who is wholly dedicated to the service of the Lord. The Lord responded to Her serving love by pursuing the Role of the ideal Devotee Who serves Krishna with all his faculties. But at the bottom of it all lay Her actual relationship with the Divine Personality, the fulfillment of Whose Wishes tantamounts to the successful performance of one's whole duty.

The work of a menial is looked down upon, but it can never be banished from this world. It is similarly easy enough to sneer at the loyal wife who sets herself with perfect satisfaction to the exclusive performance of ordinary domestic duties. But the food cooked by Sree Lakshmi Devi is accepted by the Lord and benefits all who partake of the remains of the Lord's Meal. The rich food cooked by atheists may minister to the pleasures of the palate of an Epicurean, but is never the Great Grace (maha prasadam) of the Lord that the other is. The humblest work that is performed for the Lord has the greatest potency and more than fully satisfies the utmost needs of all the faculties of our souls, because it is most fully free and rational. This makes spiritual conduct eternally different from the worldly and absolutely unintelligible to all worldlings.

The personal subordination of the wife to the good husband makes her the mistress of the household in the sense that she is thereby enabled to have the right of serving every member in the way that is in keeping with the spiritual purpose. If she aspires to be the mistress in the sense of being allowed the right to lord it over the household, her position from the spiritual point of view would be worse than useless, inasmuch as she would altogether cease to render any service to the Lord. On the spiritual plane the only admissible position for the soul is that of the servant of servants. In such case, however, neither the wife nor the husband is really servant or master of one another. Both are servants and servants of the servants of their common and only Lord. Any difference in the nature of their respective forms of service does not affect their natural status of exclusive servants of the Lord. Failure of duty towards the Lord would result if either party misunderstands his or her real status as servant of the Lord. Those who suppose that any authority can be exercised by any of us by the right of selfish enjoyment (the worldly sense of mastership), are thereby led to quarrel about precedence and status. In the spiritual institution of the household precedence is accorded to the female over the male in the service of the servant of the Lord. The wife is truly honoured above all other members in this way. This is the Divine Dispensation and is intended to curb the vanity of mastership and mistressship that are inborn to the conditioned state which is disposed to exploit the difference of sex for selfish enjoyment. There would thus be no difficulty if we regard the arrangement enjoined by the Shastras from the point of view of our mutual service to our common and only Master.

The personal service which was rendered by Sree Lakshmi Devi to Her Husband may be objected to by those females who are unduly addicted to sensuous enjoyment under the impression that it is the goal of all human endeavour. Such persons may be disposed to think that the life led by Sree Lakshmi Devi was too formal or too respectful or wanting in the qualities of sympathy and affection. But everyone will easily perceive the exquisite propriety of Her Conduct as being in perfect conformity with the requirements of the very highest spiritual service.

This brings us to an important issue. The relationship of sensuous enjoyment is wholly forbidden to the conditioned soul although it alone necessarily appears to him or her as the one thing needful. In place of such relationship, which prevails in this world, and which is the root cause of all troubles of conditioned souls, is to be substituted the relationship of common service of the Supreme Lord by the employment of the senses not for the gratification of one another but for the sole satisfaction of their only legitimate Enjoyer. This institution of marriage is intended to lead to the realization of this relationship of spiritual service in the matter of sexual conduct. This is realized by honestly following the injunctions of the Shastras against the natural dictates of our worldly inclination. Enjoyment is the right reserved for the Supreme Lord, because He alone is the only Master. He alone possesses real authority over all persons and its exercise also does not, for this reason, involve any untoward consequences. The true rational order of spiritual cosmos is set at naught by the unnatural proprietary ambitions of conditioned souls, who are by their spiritual nature, servants of every spiritual entity and can never be the Lords of any entity because every entity including themselves, is the exclusive servant of the Supreme Lord.

The failure to realize the spiritual import of the Conduct of Sree Lakshmi Devi is responsible for the sexual excesses that are sometimes practiced under the garb of following loyally the conduct of Sree Gaurisundar as Householder. Sree Gaurisundar was pleased with the Conduct of Sree Lakshmi Devi because it was in accordance with His Own Purpose and showed His Pleasure by commanding Her to serve Sree Sachi Devi during His sojourn in East Bengal. Sree Gaurisundar did not reward the loyal service of Sree Lakshmi Devi by relaxing His strictly regulated Conduct towards Her, but by giving Her further opportunities of service of a higher order. The service of the servant of the Lord is higher than the direct service of the Lord Himself. Whenever the Supreme Lord is-pleased with the devoted service of a soul He shows His appreciation of such devotion by conferring on him the higher privilege of serving His servants. The mother of Sree Gaurisundar serves the Lord, by the practice of parental affection. Sree Lakshmi Devi and Sree Tulasi Devi also serve the Lord by their

respective aptitudes as consort and maid. Sree Lakshmi Devi also served Sree Tulasi. She now gave Her whole service to Sree Sachi Devi. It was no disrespect to Sree Tulasi Devi on the part of Sree Lakshmi Devi to prefer the service of Sree Sachi Devi to that of Sree Tulasi, inasmuch as Sree Tulasi occupies a position of inferiority to the Mother of Godhead in the scale of reverence. As a matter of fact, however, the apparent indifference shown to the service of Sree Tulasi by Sree Lakshmi Devi in comparison with her reverential and constant attendance on Sree Sachi Devi, was the better way of serving also Sree Tulasi

The Activities of Sree Gaurundar are, however, not fully grasped in all their surpassing excellence unless we remember the cardinal fact that He is actually the Supreme Lord Himself. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Eternal Consort of the Supreme Lord. The inexpressible Mercy of these Activities of the Divine Pair consists in this; that They play the roles of jiva souls, endeavouring to practice the exclusive service of the Lord in this world. The Lord does not appear in His Role of Enjoyer, lest He be misunderstood. But we are so grossly addicted to sensuous enjoyment that there Are not wanting persons among us who have not scrupled to seek to detect the presence of mundane sensuous propensity even in this wonderfully transparent and unambiguous Behaviour of Sree Gaurundar towards Sree Lakshmi Devi.

Sree Thakur Brindabandas dwells lovingly on the incidents of the sojourn of the Lord in Eastern Bengal in the company of His students. The Lord progressed in His journey to East Bengal by slow stages. No one, who had the good fortune of witnessing the Lord on His journey could take away his eyes from Him. Females on catching Sight of the Lord expressed the opinion that it is really worth while for the Mother Whose Son is He to have been born at all. Let us therefore, do humble obeisance to the Feet of His Mother. That Maiden who has obtained such Husband, is also most fortunate. That excellent Lady has obtained the highest goal of Her womanly birth., Thus praised repeatedly and without stint every male and female who chanced to meet the Lord on His journey. The Sight of the Lord, Whom gods aspire to behold, was available to all persons.

In this manner, moving slowly forward, Sree Gaurundar reached the bank of

the Padmavati, in course of several days, journey. The Padmavati possesses the charming beauty of her mighty waves and excellent banks which look as if planted with orchards. As the Lord caught sight of Padmavati He sportively plunged into her water with His followers. From that day, sings Thakur Brindabandas, fortunate Padmavati acquired the efficacy to sanctify all the world.

The river Padmavati is a most beautiful sight. Her waves, banks and strong current are most captivating. The Lord beheld the Padmavati, to her great good fortune, with the greatest Pleasure, and took up His residence on her bank. The Padmavati thus obtained the same high favour which had fallen to the lot of the Daughter of Janhu (the Bhagirathi). The Lord with His followers bathed daily in the water of the Padmavati and sported with the greatest ardour in her stream, just in the same way as He had done in the Ganges.

Gaurchandra stayed for sometime in the country of Vanga. It is for this reason that East Bengal is a blessed land to this day. The Lord abode on the bank of the Padmavati. All the people were very much gladdened by the happy tidings of His Appearance in their midst. The tidings quickly spread in all directions that the Greatest of Professors, Nimai Pandit, had arrived in the country. All those worthy Brahmanas, who were really fortunate, soon presented themselves before the Lord with appropriate offerings for the teacher for admission to the high privilege of His Teaching. As they presented themselves before the Lord they made their humble obeisance and supplicated for His favour with great humility to the effect that it is by our great good fortune that it has come to happen that Thou hast appeared in this country. The selfsame Person to Whom we are wont to resort for our studies carrying with us our treasure and family to distant Nabadwip, that rare Treasure Himself, has been brought Bodily to our own door by the Mercy of Godhead. Thou art the visible Incarnation of Brihaspati himself. There is no other Professor who is like Thee. Even the parallel of Brihaspati is not worthy of Thee. Thou seemst to be an Integral Portion of Godhead Himself, as no one except the Divinity can ever possess such scholarship and may attract so irresistibly the mind and treasure of all of us. We pray to Thee for the gift of a little learning to all of us. May we humbly submit, Best of the Twice-born, that all of us do study and teach by the help of

Thy annotations and have thereby received already the indirect benefit of Thy most valuable instructions. May Thou be pleased to make us also Thy direct disciples that Thy Fame may pervade the whole world.' The Lord encouraged them by His Smile and for a period, condescended to enact His Pastimes of Teacher in the country of East Bengal. 'By the force of this most fortunate event, writes Thakur Brindabandas, 'even to this day, all over the country of Bengal, males and females perform the congregational kirtan instituted by Sree Chaitanya.'

The place, where Sree Gaurasundar took up His residence during His stay in Eastern Bengal, is not mentioned in any of the available records. Some maintain that it is the village of Magdoba in the district of Faridpur. It is necessary to note that the practice of the congregational kirtan initiated by Sree Chaitanya, in which both males and females took a part, was found to be already well established in different parts of East Bengal shortly after the Disappearance of Lord Chaitanya when Thakur Brindavandas wrote his immortal work. Thakur Brindavandas's account gives us the further interesting information that Nimai Pandit was the Author of a gloss on the Kalapa Vyakarana which was extensively used in the tols of Eastern Bengal. But we have not yet come across any copy of the gloss if, indeed, one was ever actually penned by Sree Chaitanya.

This puts it beyond all doubt that the Fame of Nimai Pandit as Professor is far from being a myth concocted by His Ignorant followers. The fact that the country of East Bengal with its great river was actually sanctified by the visit of the Supreme Lord, although the spiritual contention may not be really acceptable to the atheistical understanding, is the really momentous feature of the whole episode. There cannot be a greater fortune for a country than the Personal Presence of the Lord on its soil. The result is spiritual and eternal but is impossible to trace in a form that appeals to the heart of persons immersed in secular affairs. There may come a time when it will be possible to write the inner history of the wonderful vicissitudes of conditioned souls during their

sojourn in this world from before the beginning of Time. The peripatetic Tour of Nimai Pandit in East Bengal will appear in the true perspective in such a Narrative as fraught with consequences that are not measurable in terms of any mundane value. It is necessary for the purpose of the present account to hint at the associated result. The land trod by the Lotus Feet of Sree Chaitanya becomes the Hallowed Tirtha which it is the bounden duty of all Vaishnavas to visit. The country which is cherished by the Vaishnavas is afforded the only chance of attaining to the pure service of the Lord.

The Lord was seen, as He really is, by many fortunate inhabitants of East Bengal, both male and female. The female realized Him as the ideal Son and Husband. In the literature of the sect which calls itself 'Gaur-nagaris' the fact, so clearly stated by Sree Brindavandas Thakur, has been willfully distorted in order to suit their theory that Nimai Pandit excited the passion of unconventional amour in all female beholders. But Nimai Pandit was the Ideal Husband and Son and the Teacher by His Own Personal Example of the spiritual necessity of absolute abstinence from sexuality. The Supreme Lord in His Pastimes as Sree Chaitanya does not appear in His Roll of Enjoyer and Proprietor of all things. Sree Chaitanya is not Sree Krishna as Lover of others, but Sree Krishna as loving Himself. The two roles are wholly different and cannot be confounded with one another. One who loves the Lord has no desire for his own enjoyment; whereas the Lord Himself possesses an infinite desire for every form of enjoyment. The insatiable desire for enjoyment of the Lord provides the perennial opportunity of His service to all pure souls. It was the object of Sree Chaitanya to show by His Own Conduct how this service is to be performed by the pure souls. For the conditioned soul accordingly the Leela of Sree Chaitanya is unambiguously wholesome as affording him the chance of learning the service of the Supreme Lord by His Own Guidance and Example. It is, therefore, necessary to be on one's guard against any willful distortion of the nature of these Supremely Magnanimous Activities of the Lord. They are not identical with, but correspondent to, the Dvapara Leela of Sree Krishna. The necessity of this caution will appear from a consideration of the following facts recorded by Thakur Brindavandas to warn us against the fatal consequences of misrepresenting the Teachings of Sree Chaitanya from worldly motives.

It is, of course, not possible for any except the specially fortunate to understand the Transcendental Activities of the Divinity. It is no undue disparagement of the nature of the conditioned soul to declare that he has no chance of understanding the Ways of Providence by his own puny effort. That, which becomes intelligible to the reason of man by its assertive exertions, is necessarily limited. We are fatally disposed to be complacently content with such knowledge (?) as comes to us in the shape of our so-called acquisitions. But they are not the Whole Truth. That which is limited, that is to say exceeded or contained by. the limited reason of man, is rejected by his soul as unnecessary and worthless, the moment its limited character is clearly demonstrated. So there is a constitutional spiritual hankering for the limitless in our proper selves. This hankering also imperatively demands complete satisfaction. Such satisfaction is declared by all the scriptures to be realizable by the method of submissive acceptance of the grace of the transcendental teacher. We feel no hesitation to submit to the teacher (?) of the limited and are also proud to be the slaves of the laws of Nature. But when it is proposed that we should submit to the Unlimited or, in other words, be really free, we vehemently object to the process on the ground that we are likely to lose our birth-right of freedom by being deprived of the slavery of Physical Nature. It is this disloyal irrationality that is the only stumbling block in our way and which prevents us, more effectively than we are ever sincerely prepared to admit, from having any access to the actual realm of the Absolute. There are very few persons, indeed, who are not too obsessed by such misconceptions not to misunderstand the logic of the argument set forth above; and fewer persons still who are prepared to act up to it in practice.

The people of East Bengal, enlightened by the mercy of Sree Gaursundar, adopted the method of congregational chanting of the Name of Hari as the true universal method of worshipping Godhead. But no sooner did they accept the form of the pure religion than they were victimized by a regular succession of pseudo-saviours. Even by the time of Thakur Brindavandas there had already arisen quite a large number of these pretenders to savourship and they had actually done a good deal of positive harm. One of these degraded wretches in order to gain his livelihood passed himself off as Raghunath, the Avatara of

Vishnu. Another sinner persuaded the people to sing him as Narayana by giving up the congregational chant of Krishna established by Sree Gaursundar.

Commenting on the doings of these profane hoary rascals Thakur Brindavandas notes the height of absurdity of people, who are so entirely at the mercy of Physical Nature that she makes them change their point of view three times in course of every day, being able to induce any one to mistake such ROGUES as themselves as the Supreme Lord. There was one of these devils, a pseudo-Brahmana, in the country of Rarh, who wore the mask of a Brahmana but was really a savage cannibal. This particular rascal had the audacity of making the people call him 'Gopala' (the Divine Cow-Boy Krishna); for which reason he was nick-named the 'Shiala' (fox) by the people.

Thakur Bindabandas uses very strong language, indeed, in his open condemnation of the practices of both these pretenders to saviourship and their deluded followers. He is specially grieved for the latter, declaring that the wretch who accepts any person as Godhead in lieu of Sree Chaitanya, is the worse criminal of the two. He then solemnly exhorts all persons 'to accept as true the facts that Gauranga Sree Hari is the Lord of the infinity of worlds, that all bondage wears off by the mere recollection of His Name, that one triumphs over all adverse circumstances if he but recollects even His servants. The Praises of the Lord are sung by the whole world. It is imperatively necessary to serve the Feet of the Lord after the manner of Himself, by discarding the wrong path.'

The danger from pseudo-saviours is twofold. They (1) induce the people to give up the worship of the Lord and (2) make their victims serve their own vile selves. The method that was adopted for gaining these ends was outwardly similar to that of Sree Chaitanyadeva. Thy also prescribed the congregational chanting of the name of Godhead meaning themselves. 'Sree Chaitanya is Godhead Himself. There is no impropriety in chanting His Name. There would be the most fatal dereliction of one's duty if one disbelieves the Divinity of Sree Chaitanya. The only duty of all His followers is to proclaim this Truth to all the world in the clearest possible manner so that no one may suffer by missing the excellent opportunity of serving the Supreme Lord in the only feasible way in this controversial Age which is devoid of natural faith. Those people who do

not believe in the Divinity of Sree Chaitanya, are alone unfortunate, as they are prevented from adopting the only method of attaining the transcendental service of Godhead. This is the sad lot of the Sceptics. There is, however, a lot that is even worse than that of the Sceptics, viz., that which befalls the disloyal over-credulous. They allow themselves to be misled by the sufficiently transparent artifices of audacious rascals who know very well how to exploit their weakness. The true course lies midway between these extremes. The conduct and speech of the followers of Sree Chaitanya are, indeed, liable to be misunderstood by the hypocrites and their victims, in opposite ways. The atheistic credulous are apt to be misled by rascals who pass themselves off as Godhead for their utter want of faith in Sree Chaitanya. The faith in Sree Chaitanya is to be attained by avoiding the defects of disloyal credulity on the one hand and of scoffing incredulity on the other. It is, therefore, necessary to be cautiously but fully open to real enlightenment. But the case of those unfortunate people who are over-credulous on principle is the most deplorable of all, inasmuch as they are sure to fall into the clutches of those hypocritical rascals whose business it is to lead all those, who deliberately seek the untruth, still further away from the Truth. The only way of avoiding this danger is not to court it by neglecting the proper exercise of one's natural sense of right and wrong and by not following in all sincerity what really appears to be the right path even to our present imperfect judgment. The only right conduct, which also should spontaneously suggest itself to all persons so conducting themselves, is the cultivation of exclusive association with those who actually lead the spiritual life by avoidance of all unspiritual company. By such conduct the innate tendency for the service of the Truth is strengthened and the chance of benefiting by the instructions of the bona fide sadhus, who come to every seeker of their own accord, is decisively increased.

But it is not till one has the opportunity of the right kind of personal association with sadhus that he has any substantive chance of spiritual enlightenment, i.e., of realizing his natural faith in the Actual Existence of Personal Godhead. One who seeks to undergo the necessary training for being fitted for the spiritual service of the Supreme Lord, can obtain real and effective help in this Age from no one else except Sree Chaitanya. But it is reserved only

for those who are sincere seekers of the Absolute Truth to realize this. One may be very dull or very intelligent, as the world goes. Such dullness and cleverness will equally help or retard one's progress on the spiritual path according as he is sincerely disposed to serve. The theory of good conduct is related to substantive good conduct itself, as shadow to substance. The substance necessarily includes the shadow, but not vice versa. Right conduct is the practice of substantive sincerity. Those who are disposed to under value actual conduct regarding it as external are liable to overlook this all-important consideration. External conduct can alone feed the inner enlightenment by the process of concrete actual growing experience of the reality. The experience of the service of the Lord resulting from conduct possesses far greater enlightening power than the experience of worldly affairs, inasmuch as on the spiritual plane conduct and theory are really identical. A dull person who sincerely acts under the direction of a sadhu, attains the spiritual vision in much the same time that is taken by an intelligent person who is equally sincere. Worldly dullness does not stand in the way of obtaining the service of the Godhead, provided there is no deliberate insincerity. The dull person is never made intelligent in the worldly sense by his spiritual enlightenment. He still appears to be very dull to worldly people who are devoid of all true intelligence and incapable of understanding the perfectly cognizant spiritual conduct of the bona -fide servant of the Lord.

That, which appears to be wrong or right to the stultified conscience of the conditioned soul, is undoubtedly true for the time being, although the hollow and ephemeral nature of empiric ethical conduct must be patent to everyone who feels the slightest inclination for the ethical principle. Spiritual conduct is not mechanically attained either by practising or by discarding the empiric ethical conduct. In the conditioned state, ethical conduct with the necessary safeguards should be undoubtedly obligatory and one, who may be wantonly disposed to disregard the rules of morality, should be regarded as a real menace not only to social but also to spiritual well-being, and such conduct should be punished by all means. This will also automatically prevent the exploitation of the unthinking masses by the otherwise formidable gang of the pseudo-religionists. It is absolutely necessary to try resolutely to avoid this last-mentioned danger. But one should at the same time be careful not to fall into

the blunder of supposing that empiric morality is the absolute principle or that social or domestic well-being is the summum bonum of human life. If the standpoint from which the moralist regards life be incapable of affording us a view of the Truth, in spite of any passing conveniences that may seem to result from its adoption, it should be the bounden duty of the human reason to seek for further enlightenment. Such an attempt may, indeed, show our want of absolute faith in the conclusions of empiric morality. But it is not antagonistic to the empiric moral principle. On the contrary it marks the stage of distinct ethical progress embodying as it does the conviction that speculative morality does not take us far enough towards the attainment of the goal vaguely proposed by such morality.

Spiritual conduct, indeed, must not be imagined as identical with the empiric moral conduct, nor as its derivative. By the cultivation of so-called moral living the spiritual life is not positively realizable. Moral life is the imaginary Ultima Thule of the advocates of so-called worldly well-being. The vision of the empiric moralists cannot pass the bounding line of the horizon of this world. The principles of empiric morality have a limited and temporary value. They are rehabilitated, not supplemented by the laws of spiritual living. One, who is truly anxious for spiritual enlightenment must, therefore, be prepared also for a thorough re-adjustment of his moral conduct both as regards its external manifestation and internal attitude. This change will not coincide with the requirements of the really irrational form of living striven for by the worldly minded ethical person and may even be found fault with by those who are thoughtless enough to imagine the correlative worldly principle to be the obligatory rule of human conduct. Such opposition is beside the point and has always to be reckoned with by all sincere seekers of the service of the Absolute Truth. It has its value for the negative well-being of the world in forcing the spiritual novice to explain his purpose to his opponents in an intelligible form thus helping the diffusion of the knowledge of the Truth and preventing hasty adoption of untruth that is found to parade in the garb of truth in this world.

But one may also commit the no less fatal blunder of waiting too long to embrace the Truth when He actually presents Himself by pretending to be

cautious. If this is hypocrisy or idleness, as is often the case such a procedure will not help one progress towards the Truth. It is necessary to be sincerely prepared to firmly discard all untruth and to accept actively the Truth at all time in proportion to our real convictions. One who does not do so, is still the unreclaimed egotist who has not yet to acquire the salutary ambition for seeking to become an humble and active servant of the Absolute Truth. A seeker of the active service of the Truth should also be prepared to commit an infinity of mistakes in his honest endeavour to find Him. Indifference and idleness are the masked-forms of hostility to the principle of spiritual service and have to be most carefully avoided by all who are truly desirous of attaining the service of the Truth.

The Lord stayed for two months in East Bengal moving about in different directions always taking a particular interest in visiting the river Padmavati. There was a great resuscitation of sound erudition by His scholastic exertions. Hundreds of persons returned to their homes gaining their diploma by a brief course of study under the Lord;—such is the wonderful Power of Sree Chaitanya. The whole of East Bengal rushed to the Feet of Nimai Pandit for the acquisition of learning. Thousands of persons in this manner became the disciples of the Lord; and it is impossible to ascertain the number of those who obtained the blessing of His Teaching.

Meanwhile at Nabadwip Lakshmi Devi was very much distressed in Her heart by separation from Her Lord. She did not divulge Her condition to any one. She constantly served the mother. She tasted no food since the departure of the Lord but only made a show of accepting food as a mere formality. She was stricken at heart with the deepest grief by separation from Her Lord. She wept all through the nights by Herself. Sree Lakshmi Devi got no respite from Her great anxiety even for a moment. She at last felt the separation to be wholly unbearable and wished to make Her way to the presence of Her Lord. Thereupon, leaving behind in this world a body resembling Her Own Transcendental Form, Lakshmi Devi silently betook Herself to the Side of Her Husband, eluding the notice of everybody. Holding closely to Her heart the Lotus Feet of the Lord, Lakshmi Devi thus found Her way to the bank of the

holy Ganges, in the state of beatific contemplation.

Thakur Brindavandas has refrained from describing the grief of Sree Sachi Devi at the Disappearance of Lakshmi, remarking that the cries of the mother melted even hearts of wood. The neighbors were very much pained by hearing of the departure of Sree Lakshmi Devi and turned up to do their customary duties by the departed.

The term used in the Shastras to denote the Consort of Godhead is 'Shakti' which may be rendered as 'Power'. Godhead is the Possessor or Lord, of all Powers. The Power of the Supreme Lord wears a twofold aspect and serves Him in apparently opposite ways. There is in the first place the spiritual Aspect. This is the Enlightening Aspect of the Divine Power and it is this Aspect that is directly obeyed by all bona fide servants of the Lord. There is also the deluding, Material or Limiting Aspect. This Aspect is of the nature of the Shadow of the Spiritual Aspect and as such manifests Herself at the opposite pole as the negative and subordinate form of the Spiritual Aspect. This second Aspect is called in the Shastras 'Maya Shakti' or the 'limiting' Power ; while the Spiritual Aspect is called 'Chit Shakti' or Cognitive Power. The two are not really separate, as the material Aspect is correlative and wholly under the control of the Spiritual Power. The bona -fide servants of the Supreme Lord are not under the necessity of obeying His Material or Limiting Power. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Plenary aspect of the Spiritual Power of the Lord.

The relation of the Spiritual Power to the Supreme Lord, Who bears the Name of Sree Krishna, is one of indivisibility. Sree Krishna as the Lord of His 'Chit Shakti' is the Possessor and Controller of Power by means of the Divine Will, while Sree Lakshmi Devi, the Spiritual Power of the Lord is the Executrix of the Divine Will. Between the Divine Will and the Agency of His execution there is no difference of category, the One automatically and fully implying the Other. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Plenary Power of Sree Krishna, representing the Will of Her Lord and carrying out the Same in regard to the secondary powers. Maya or the Material Power, is the Negative, Deluding Face of the Spiritual Power for the performance of a subordinate function that is secondary of correcting the paltry perversity of dissociated souls and for this reason being necessarily

superfluous in the Spiritual Realm. The Material Power is comparable in Her action to the operation of a piece of cloud on the broad bosom of the spotless sky preventing the conditioned souls of this phenomenal world from obtaining a view of the Great Sun Sree Krishna. The cloud devised by Maya is a very very small part of the Cosmic arrangement, serving the Spiritual Power in a negative capacity for the sustenance of disloyal souls and correcting their perversity by providing the congenial scope for its indulgence. Maya has to employ deception in order to correct without resorting to any violence, the perversity of the dissociated soul due to the abuse of his freedom to choose his own course. But this necessity to deceive has no place in the economy of the Spiritual Universe

We are in this place concerned with the question of the intervention of the Spiritual Power in the benighted sphere under the penal jurisdiction of Maya. This is the Descent (Avatara) of Sree Krishna into this world For this Purpose the Lord employs the smallest fraction of His Spiritual Power, Or sends down Those Infinity of Plenary Divine Forms of His Own Who serve in diverse ways the Various Purposes of His Endless Activities, or He Himself comes down into this world. Sree Lakshmi Devi, the Eternal Consort of the Lord executes all these Purposes of the Lord through every degree and variety of Her co-ordinate manifestation. She is identical with the Divine Activity.

But the Principle which constitutes the bond between Sree Lakshmi Devi and the Supreme Lord, is not one of mechanical submission and domination. It is not at all like the relationship that exists in this phenomenal world between material power and its deluded possessor or slave. Neither is it the so-called rational submission which is conceivable by the perverted reason of the conditional soul. The Principle is expressed in the Shastras by the term 'prema' ordinarily rendered into the English word 'love', although the word love, does not possess the spiritual significance of 'prema'. 'Prema', or 'spiritual love', may be defined as the principle of conduct that aims exclusively and causelessly at the gratification of the Spiritual Senses of Krishna. Unspiritual love (karma) is defined as the principle that aims at the gratification of the material senses of

non-Krishna i.e. of the agent himself.

Divine Personality, as conceived by the conditioned soul, is a profanation. The worldly notion of personality is radically unwholesome, being made of material stuff. It is not possible for the conditioned soul to conceive of personality except in terms of a physical body bound to a sensuous mind delighting in its inextricable union with the former. This gross conception of personality also finds its way into the empiric attempt to conceive a Personal Godhead. The unwillingness on the part of empiricists to recognize the Divine Personality, is due to their apprehension of the inevitable presence of grossness in the personal conception itself. They naturally hesitate to extend to the Supreme Entity who is declared by the Scriptures and the innate senses of all humanity to be free from the least taint of unwholesomeness the degrading notion of personality that is conceivable to the reason of the conditioned soul. But there would be no ground for such hesitation if the Divine Personality were found to be really such as to make Him not only altogether free from our actual gross experience of personality of this world, but in perfect keeping with the highest requirements of our unbiased reason, which Can never be really satisfied with its hypothetical concoctions, and also with the declarations of the Scriptures

The conditioned soul posing as a person is possessed of two conjoined sets of apparatus called indiscriminately in the English language, by the same word viz. 'senses'. The internal, cognitive sense-principle operates on the external world in the conditioned state by an external process of physical perception through the medium of the physical sense-organs directed and supplemented by the re-action of the material mind which educes the subtle entities of precepts and concepts from the gross impressions of external objects supplied initially by the physical organs. The personality of the conditioned soul is empirically supposed to consist definitely and concretely of the enveloping material principles and processes of the mind and the physical sense-organs directed to the objects of phenomenal Nature and tending to material gratification realizable in terms of the same by the inner conscious principle which remains otherwise passive. The unwholesome element of such personality consists in its material sensuousness. The inner conscious principle,

by seeking to establish his affinity with the objects of phenomenal Nature, is ultimately responsible for the perpetuation of the super-imposed unwholesome ego thus realized as the individual personality which is condemned by the spiritual pro-personalists and the empiric impersonalists alike.

Philanthropism is the result of the unpardonable and sacrilegious attempt to make an ideal of this pseudo-personality and to thrust it also on the Divinity Himself. This is not always unaccompanied by a suspicion of the incongruity of such attempt. But the philanthropists fall into this utterly profane error by striving to escape by a natural impulse from the suicidal alternative of the acceptance of the principle of impersonality proposed by the logical school of Empiricism. But by confounding the mundane for the Divine they prove to be even worse enemies of theism than the impersonalists.

The tragedy of the profession of the spiritual(?) nature the mundane personality is due to the incongruous association of soul with matter in the state of bondage. The conditioned soul deliberately seeks sensuous gratification, which is foreign to his own spiritual nature, by making the world serve the pleasures of the senses. The principle on which he is made to set to work in such a process is supplied by his deluded assumption that he is proprietor, or enjoyer of this material world. But the role which is thus attempted is one that is foreign to the real nature of the jiva soul.

This proposed proprietorship means the domination of the infinitesimally little over the Infinitely Great. Such a process can by its nature be only delusive and disappointing. If the tiny soul allows himself to be dominated by the Supreme Soul he suffers from no such self-elected difficulty. The Supreme Soul can find the employment for the tiny soul that relieves the latter from the necessity of seeking the impossible unnatural paltry satisfaction of the gross physical senses. In the perfectly pure rational existence the subordination of the really little to the really Great is realized as being necessarily natural and congenial. It is the unnatural domination of the non-rational and the non-Great that demoralizes the soul in the conditioned state. The only cure of the aberrations of this frail so-called mundane personality is, therefore, supplied by the arrangement of the

positive spiritual service of the supreme Soul by the little souls, not mechanically as proposed by the smartas, for the purpose of the gratification of the physical senses, nor impersonally which tantamounts to self-destruction but for the infinitely higher purpose of seeking the gratification of the Spiritual Senses of the Supreme Person Who is the necessarily Absolute Proprietor of everything.

The Supreme Dominating Person can be served positively and consciously by reciprocal dominated personalities and only negatively and unconsciously by impersonal entities. Hence the real reciprocal spiritual personality of his willing servants, or powers, is proved. The relation of the individual soul to the Supreme Soul is not identical with, but the reciprocal of the relationship of the Supreme Soul to the jiva. Sree Lakshmi Devi seeks the gratification of the Senses of Sree Krishna by an infinite number of complementary little personalities of various dimensions and specifications acting in perfect harmony for ministering to the pleasure of the Perfect Senses of Sree Krishna. The Personality of Sree Lakshmi Devi is not one of enjoyer but of provider of the Enjoyment of Sree Krishna and She serves only the Pleasure of Krishna. This reciprocal function in its twofold aspect, is 'prema' or 'spiritual love'. So when the Supreme Lord intervenes Personally in the affairs of this mundane world for the deliverance of conditioned souls, Sree Lakshmi Devi ever accompanies Him and carries out the Wishes of Her Lord towards the jiva souls.

This is the real background of the picture drawn by Thakur Brindavandas. But the role that Sree Lakshmi Devi has to play as the consort of the ideal householder-devotee during his sojourn, by command of the Lord, in this material world, is only One Aspect of Her Divine Function as the Eternal consort of Her Supreme Husband in the Realm of the Absolute. She is the servant of the Servant of the Lord. She has to minister to the pleasure of the Supreme Lord under the direction of Himself as Servant in the role of Householder. She must not, therefore regard Her Husband as identical with the Supreme Lord in His Nature of Absolute Proprietor. She must not suppose that Her Husband stands in need of, or has any inclination for, enjoyment of any kind for Himself. Her Function as the Consort of the Devotee corresponds to

that of Her Husband, Both acting the part of Associated Servants of the Supreme Lord in Their Roles of Husband and Wife of Each other, in order to teach the deluded wives and husbands of this world their proper relationship to one another in conformity with their absolute loyalty to Krishna.

Her pang of separation is, therefore, inexplicable on the supposition that Sree Lakshmi Devi actually experienced the discomforts of a mortal wife placed in a similar circumstance; although Her Conduct seems to be due to such motive. Her Disappearance from this world, which is ascribed to the intensity of Her Sorrow, also calls for a little explanation to prevent any gross misunderstanding.

Sree Lakshmi Devi was engaged in tending Sree Sachi Devi by Command of Sree Gaursundar during His tour of East Bengal. By refusing to take food and drink and forming the resolution of deliberately starving Herself to death (?) to put an end to Her own grief, She might be supposed to have been apparently neglecting the duty assigned to Her by Her Husband. To this the Conduct of Sree Vishnupriya Devi, after Renunciation of the Lord and also subsequently to His Disappearance from this world, would seem to be a great contrast.

The duty of a faithful wife whose husband is abroad, as laid down in the Shastras, is to eschew all comforts for herself and keep her mind perpetually fixed on her absent husband. By this means she would be enabled to retain and augment the constancy and intensity of her love for her husband. A wife may be faithful to her husband either quite causelessly out of pure love, or from a sense of duty, or for her own selfish happiness. The wife, who loves her husband causelessly, is supposed to be the ideal wife; while one, who minds her own advantage in caring for her husband, is rewarded as a hypocrite. But none of these have any, reference to the service of the Supreme Lord. If the husband himself be a servant of Vishnu it is only then that the conduct of the wife, who seeks to assist him in such service, necessarily also attains the level of service of the Divinity. In this case any love, duty or indifference, shown to the husband personally, without any conscious realization of his function as servant of the Lord, would also seem at first sight to fall short of the full service of Krishna.

This brings us really to the dangerous ground. It is, of course, possible for his wife to be carnally attached to a Vaishnava husband. If it be so, what will be the consequence of such attachment? A Vaishnava by his very nature can never be a participator in the carnality of his wife. There can, therefore, be no chance of reciprocal carnality in such a case, as the wife would receive no encouragement to follow her suicidal course. There would then remain the chance of her own regeneration if her attachment to the Vaishnava husband, although due to carnal motive, induces her to serve him faithfully through all apparent neglect on his part. This will tend to establish that real contact between the two which will be undoubtedly beneficial for both, if the husband continues true to the Lord. Even if in such a case the wife be not enabled to attain to the conscious service of the Lord she would unconsciously take a long stride in the direction of such service. If, therefore, the husband be a true Vaishnava a path is opened thereby even to a carnally disposed wife to attain to the spiritual condition by serving him in a friendly way. Any service rendered to a Vaishnava from any kind of friendly motive, is rewarded by the attainment of the summum bonum. On the other hand the only conduct, that is really obstructive of the spiritual well-being of any person, is that inspired by disinclination to serve the Vaishnavas or a positive inclination to oppose or vilify them.

The spiritual service of Krishna offers unfettered freedom of choice to everybody as regards the form in which it is to be rendered. The only thing needed is absence of conscious aversion to the Lord or to His servants, and especially the latter. Any aversion shown to the servants of the Lord is fatal for the same reason that makes any form of friendly attachment to him a means of assured safety. There is no other way for the deliverance of conditioned souls except by serving the servants of the Lord, who appear in our midst and who by command of the Lord graciously accept any and every form of service for the well-being of all sinners without exception.

Therefore, judged from the point of view of the wife of the ideal house-holder-devotee the conduct of Sree Lakshmi Devi is self-protected against all adverse criticism for the reason that it happened to be of the nature of an intense friendly attachment for the Servant of the Lord. Her Role was, therefore, exactly

in keeping with the Purpose of the Lord Himself and vital for clearing up most serious misconceptions on the subject of one's duty by a Vaishnava.

The Departure of Sree Lakshmi Devi to Her Own Realm of Vaikuntha did not in anyway obstruct the Activities of the Lord. The loyal wife of the most rabid worldling can desire for no more pleasant exit from this world than was exhibited by Sree Lakshmi Devi without any of the unwholesome factors that are necessarily associated with the departure of the sinner.

But as a matter of fact the mode of Disappearance from this world of the Supreme Lord and His Eternal Consorts, servitors and paraphernalia is altogether different from the death of a mortal. The art of the magician furnishes the nearest parallel of the Divine Activity. The magical performs the feat of dying in his own person to the view of the spectators without really dying at all. Sree Lakshmi Devi deluded the people into believing that they witnessed Her death to the detail of cremating her Supposed dead body, independently of any change to Herself. The creation 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 pretense. 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 Gauranga-Sree Hari was pleased to accept their offerings, bestowing His Merciful Glance on all. Having taken His leave of all persons Lord Sree Gauranga 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 Shastras. This may be objected to on the ground that it amounts to nothing less than the selling of knowledge which is forbidden by the Shastras. 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 Shastras as unobjectionable 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 Shastras 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 Shastras 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 Nimai Pandit in order to study Vyakarana 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 Brahmana, 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 inquirers 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 Shastras. 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 Brahmana 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 Shastras and prolonged performance of Shastric 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 Shastras. As the result of this he had made the discovery that it was not possible to understand or obey the Shastras, 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 Nimai Pandit Who would solve all his doubts. The god told him further that Nimai Pandit is no other than Narayana Himself Who had appeared in this world in His Human Form

for delivering the conditioned souls. The Brahmana was also warned not to divulge this secret of the Vedas to anyone else as such conduct would entail trouble for him in all subsequent lives. The Brahmana 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 Brahmana 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 Shastras for the information of everyone. The Lord Krishna Himself says in the Geeta, 'I appear in this world in the successive Ages for the purpose of delivering the sadhus, 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 Dwapara. 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 realized in the Krita Age by following the method of meditation (dhyana) on Vishnu; in the Treta Age by worshipping Him with sacrifices (makha); in the Dvapara 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 Gaursundar also assured Tapan Misra that he would realize 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 Mahamantra, That should be chanted consists of sixteen Names and thirty-two letters possessing the potency of the mantra, "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare."

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 Varanasi (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 uncertain 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 Shastras 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 Maya for deluding the soul. Spiritual Truth cannot be discovered by the efforts of the materialized 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 Shastras, the Truth reveals His Own Form. The duty of the conditioned 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 realizing the inevitable futility of the empiric method of quest, is in search of the right method and object of the true rational inquiry.'

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 Shastras 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 realized. 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 in the material world by willfully 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 recognizable 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 Shastras 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 unconviction 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 Shastras alone are not dogmatic, but are wholly opposed to and free from all taint of irrational empiric dogmas open and disguised. The Shastras, 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 Shastras. Their constructive function is to supply the clue to the Absolute Truth.

But the Shastras 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 Shastras they do not misunderstand, or imperfectly understand, or fail to act up to, the method laid down in the Shastras, 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 Shastras. 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 Shastras.

It is, no doubt, impossible to fully understand how the instructions of Nimai 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 Nimai Pandit Himself was free from all such hypocritical dogmatism.

What Nimai Pandit said is this: “Tapan Misra should constantly repeat the maha mantra. The maha mantra. consists of sixteen Names and thirty-two letters of the Alphabet. The maha mantra., 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 maha mantra., have the following order: ‘Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare; Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama; Rama, Hare Hare.’ This maha mantra is to be constantly recited. There is no condition. The real meaning of the method and object of spiritual endeavour, laid down in the Shastras, 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 Shastras. 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 maha mantra 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 Nimai 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 fulfillment 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 Shastras. 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 mahamantra mechanically. Such a piece of advice gratis could not have satisfied a real inquirer 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 inquiry. 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 Krishna. 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 realize 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 realize 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 materialized 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 endeavor. 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 Vaikuntha, 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 Vaikuntha, 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 inquired 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 matter 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 canceled 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 anyone 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 Vaikuntha. We fall into this world as soon as our spiritual vision is obscured. The same Vaikuntha 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 Vaikuntha 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 Vaikuntha 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 millstone 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 Gaurasundar 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 Vaikuntha resembles life in this world, but it does not interest the people of this world. In Vaikuntha 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 Vaikuntha tells one to do neither. The Vaishnavas are endowed with the common sense of

Vaikuntha 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 esoteric 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 Vaikuntha, 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 Vaikuntha. 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 Vaikuntha. 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 Vaikuntha 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 Vaikuntha by means of our poor, corrupt imagination.

Every activity of Vaikuntha 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 Gaurasundar apparently led a most ordinary kind of life as householder. Later he led the ordinary life of a sannyasin. But Both were actually lived on the plane of Vaikuntha. 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 Vaikuntha. 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 Vaikuntha.

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 Vedanta Philosophy that spiritual enlightenment is attainable. There are unfortunately many clever exponents of the Vedanta 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 Gaurasundar are worth most careful perusal because They raise at every step the gravest issues discussed in the Vedanta, in their concrete, living form. All exposition of the Vedanta 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 Vaikuntha 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 Gaurasundar exhibited the Leela 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 Vaikuntha but there it is a particularly delicious variety of uninterrupted happiness. The reason of this we gather from the Words of Sree Gaurasundar 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 Gaursundar 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 materialized 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 Vishnupriya 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 Purushottamdas.

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 Brahmana 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 Shastras in all particulars.

The making of the tilaka mark on twelve different limbs of the body is prescribed by the Shastras as the indispensable duty of every Brahmana. 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 all 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 Brahmanas who are candidates for the study of the Veda. The tripundra is deprecated as being the mark of a non-Brahmana. The tripundra is worn by those who claim to be themselves Narayana. The urdhvapundra 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 Brahmana. Access to the Veda is closed to a person who does not recognize the superiority of the servants of Vishnu. The non-Brahmana do not admit the eternal superiority of the spiritual preceptor. They are sudras. They paint on their forehead the tripundra sign symbolizing their identity with Godhead. This is the most deadly of sins and accordingly it is laid down that if one meets by chance a Brahmana (?) wearing the tripundra mark, he must forthwith bathe with all his clothes on, in order to be purged of the pollution caused by the unholy sight.

There is really no worship for one who refuses on principle to recognize the eternal superiority of the Lord. Those who do not worship the Lord are sudras. On the other hand it is the bounden duty of every Brahmana, who is a servant of the Lord, to worship Him daily. Unless this is strictly complied with no one must be admitted to the status of a student of the Vedas. Those, who demur to the stringency of such regulations on the pleas of liberalism and toleration, suppose that education freely imparted produce a change of heart even of those who behave improperly through sheer perversity. It is also assumed that secular knowledge, which is capable of being irregularly acquired, is necessarily better than secular ignorance. Nimai Pandit was the Teacher of Vyakarana which forms the primary course of study that has to be gone

through by every student of secular learning. Nimai Pandit did not admit into His Grammar-class anyone who had not performed his daily worship of Vishnu and had not painted his forehead with the mark of the upward tilaka.

Should this be regarded as intolerant? It is no doubt a proposal to ban all education not based on the true religion professed by a Brahmana. Nimai Pandit did not say that non-Brahmanas were to be banished or suppressed forcibly. Atheism has always flourished in this world and is the creed more or less of the vast majority, nay strictly speaking, of almost all persons, of this world. It is the paramount duty of every God-fearing man to try his best to help in reducing this appalling volume of atheism. Secular education happens to be such by reason of its total dissociation from religion. It is the outcome of the open atheistic attitude. The pseudo-Vaishnavas are masked atheists and are also advocates and apologists of spurious liberalism, compromise and willing toleration of all forms of unspiritual conduct. The highest devotees are tolerant for a different reason. To the devotee the Truth is the only Object of worship and he does not recognize any value of any method separated from the Object. According to current empiric Ethics the method and the object must be severally moral. In other words the method of the empiric thinker is not identical with the object. Grave harm is apprehended by empiricists if this vital and salutary difference between method and object, insisted upon by empiric morality, is ignored. This is one of the elementary principles of empiric ethics and need not be laboured. This separation between method and object does not exist in spiritual conduct. For example toleration is considered by empiric ethics as a good principle by itself. At any rate they expect that every consideration should be given to it in coming to any decision in regard to really ethical conduct. If it is necessary to be intolerant under any circumstances, and such contingency is by no means impossible nor rare in practice, the necessity itself is regarded by empiric ethics as an evil which is unavoidable in the present imperfect conditions of this world. Empiric morality is thus perpetually reduced to the form of unprincipled compromise between the principles of hypocritical good and necessary evil, which is regarded as undesirable in theory but unavoidable in practice. Nay it even recommends as our duty to adopt any compromise, however objectionable, which may be necessitated by an impartial

consideration of the specific circumstances of each case. But as there is no such necessity for compromise on the spiritual plane the difficulty does not exist and the method there is always identical with the object. The apparent intolerance displayed by Sree Gaursundar towards novices on the spiritual path is not a necessary evil, a departure under pressure of circumstances from the standard of the absolute good, but the perfect good itself.

It is necessary to consider this vital point a little more in detail. Why is empiric ethics under the necessity of viewing the method of an activity as separate from its object? Because it is not possible, circumstanced as we are at present, to understand the whole purpose of any person. A practical code of conduct, the formulation of which is the object of empiric ethics, therefore seeks to correct our unavoidably imperfect knowledge of the complete, the whole purpose of another by providing a confessedly imperfect safeguard by attaching a presumptive value to the external features of an act, attempting to join method and object in a separable combination to obtain a rule of conduct which at best possesses only a negative value. In the case of the Absolute Truth the obstructive circumstances are altogether absent. Absolute knowledge is perfect knowledge. Conduct issuing from such knowledge has no separable external features that belong even to the so called ethical conduct of this world. The conduct proceeding from perfect knowledge possesses the perfection of its source. This is not all. This perfection is unattainable on the material plane, whereas it is natural and inevitable on the spiritual plane. On the spiritual plane the object and method of conduct are alike spiritual. The objects, with which we have to deal on the spiritual plane, are themselves spiritual, that is to say, capable of communicating the knowledge of their real nature to us. This establishes that perfect unity between method-and object which is denoted by the term identity, if we want to express it by the nearest material analogy.

It is only if we bear in mind this categorical difference between ethical and spiritual conduct that we would be enabled to avoid the blunder of judging spiritual conduct by the empiric ethical (?) standard. And it should also be possible for us to understand the perfect validity of the contention that conduct that is sanctioned by the spiritual test, is the only truly ethical conduct even as

regards also its external appearance. In consequence of this rational conviction such pseudo-ethical fetishes as the so-called principles of toleration, chastity, truthfulness, etc., etc., professed to be worshipped by empiric ethics, cease to impress or frighten and can even be discarded without any chance of being overtaken by those dire immoral consequences which they are utterly unable to prevent or modify.

The question of the spiritual value of any external 'symbol' has been confidently decided by empiric thought against the claimant of such value on grounds which that science is equally at a loss to explain. This point has already been treated in another part of the present narrative. It will suffice to say here that the regulation of the connection between the material world and the spiritual, if it is to be at all properly performed, must be placed wholly under the jurisdiction of the latter. That the human body is the temple of the Lord may appear to be no more than a 'symbol' to the empiricist who really understands by 'symbol' as indicating what is not wholly non-existent. But if the empiricist really cares for his own logic he should call the wholly abstract as also the symbol of the non-existent and vice versa. The spiritual is neither concrete nor abstract mundanity. It is quite different from the concrete and abstract of our mental speculation, both of which are perverted deluding reflections of the Substantive Truth. The abstract which the empiricist is pleased to call spiritual for reasons which he cannot explain, is really only the abstract of the relative and is situated at the furthest distance from the Absolute Reality. The spiritual is neither the concrete gross matter nor the abstract speculation about gross matter. This world, although it seems to have an existence of its own, has really no independent substantive existence. The impersonal or abstract worship, which the empiricist is so anxious to provide, is a figment of his perverted imagination and has no substantive existence even at its source. He is himself only a pseudo-symbolist and his condemnation of improper symbolization applies really to himself. It is for the deliverance of such blundering pseudo-symbolists from the clutches of this fatal form of delusion that the process of worship enjoined by the Shastras have been laid down by those who are themselves free from such delusion.

The tilaka mark is no doubt a symbol. But it is a symbol of the Reality to Whom we have no access at present except by means of the real symbol. This symbol is intended, and authorized, to arouse the consciousness of the Reality in those who are at present devoid of the same. Those who oppose the symbol on the ground that it does not correspond, like their own unreal symbols, to the perverted, deluding shadow of the Truth, are only worshippers of the changing symbol of untruth. The pseudo-symbolists have, indeed, no objection to decorate their gross physical bodies with all manner of symbols of this material world, conceived by them as being the only Reality, an assumption which effectively prevents all realization of the very existence of the spiritual symbol.

It is rational to try to demolish this suicidal idolatry by substituting in the place of the worship of the symbols of this world the real symbol of the most fundamental fact of the world of the soul, viz., that Godhead in His True Form does not in-dwell the physical body or the materialized mind, but has His Eternal Abode in the pure consciousness of the immaculate soul who, in his natural position, is free from all connection with matter and who is our only real self.

Forgetfulness of our true self is perpetuated by any arrangement that is based upon confusion of the physical body and the materialized mind with the soul or self proper. The decorations naturally coveted by the physical body at the instance of the renegade mind entangles the soul in the meshes of worldly wants. The only decoration of the Temple of Godhead is Godhead Himself. But neither His Temple nor Godhead Himself,

Who dwells therein, are symbols of shadows as the empiricists want us to believe, but the Reality Himself Who possesses the qualities of self-conscious, personal and eternal existence which is His perfectly consistent logical connotation.

Candidates for the knowledge of the Truth must be required to prove their bona fide before they are admitted into the Academy of the Truth. This is also imitated by the empiricists in admitting students to institutions of empiric

knowledge. Secular learning, sedulously divorced from spiritual living, is responsible for all the miseries of this world. He is a bad physician who hopes to cure his patient by allowing the disease to be aggravated by deliberate and persistent mal-treatment. It is the duty of the wise physician to act on the less enterprising maxim that the readiness to prevent is always better than effecting a cure. The uncompromising intolerance of mal-treatment fully represents the principle of toleration by its regard for the Absolute Truth. Real toleration may be defined as extreme partiality for the Truth. Toleration and partiality are equally good when they are exercised on behalf of the Truth and are utterly condemnable and terribly mischievous when they are made to serve untruth.

The Lord evinced a very particular pleasure in tearing to pieces and exposing mercilessly the pedantic defects of everybody

One of His favourite Pastimes consisted in caricaturing the language of the people of Sylhet and East Bengal. The infuriated Sylhetese retorted to the jokes of the Renegade Son of a Sylhetese by emphatically reminding the irascible Tormentor of His Own Lineage, telling Him that He Himself, both His parents, in fact every one of His family, belonged to Sylhet. 'What sense could there be', they demanded with a natural indignation, 'on the part of such a Person to get up a hypocritical condemnation of what also equally concerned Himself'. But the Lord was not to be denied His Pastimes by any manner of argument to the contrary and His jocular propensity only increased by every effort to convince Him of its mischievous and self-condemnatory nature. The Lord, indeed, carried the joke to most unseemly lengths, till at last the angry Sylhetese, losing all patience, grasped at the skirts of the cloth worn by the Lord and dragged Him many a day, to the King's Court to have Him punished by the law. The friends of the Lord could extricate Him from the clutches of the law on such occasions only by the greatest exertions. The Lord was equally unreasonable towards East Bengal people. He would lie in wait for an opportunity, and take to His Heels after breaking the Bangali's begging bowl of dried gourd.

The Lord, even while He was following the responsible occupation of Teacher, displayed an irrepressible disposition for every kind of prank, with one and only one remarkable exception. He kept strictly aloof from all association with, or talk about, women. The Lord never looked at women, even by a side-glance. 'Whence, says Thakur Brindavandas, all eminent persons avoid praising Lord Gauranga by describing Him as Amorous Lover. Because although every kind of praise is applicable to the Lord yet the wise sing only what is appropriate in regard to the Distinctive Nature of the Subject of their praise.'

Against this clear warning, conveyed by Sree Brindavandas Thakur, who is the only authority universally recognized by the followers of Sree Chaitanya in regard to the Activities of the Lord during the period of His Householder Life, there has nevertheless sprung up a definite school which calls itself the community of the Gaur-Nagaris (i.e., sweet-hearts of Gaur) on the ostensible ground that Gaursundar is identical with Sree Krishna, and, therefore, the inner meaning of His Activities, according to this school, must also be the same as the obvious meaning of the Leela of Sree Krishna. Such a view is opposed to the Facts of the Narrative described in this work, as also to the specific and explicit testimony of Thakur Brindavandas regarding the practice of the most eminent devotees. The doctrine, therefore, seems to be a concoction of the brains of persons who allow their sensuous imaginations to carry them off their legs even in a matter which lies wholly beyond the reach of our material senses. To such temperaments the Activities of Sree Gaursundar, both as Householder and Sannyasin, must ever remain utterly unintelligible. The only course, that is open to them for getting rid of their error, is to practice unconditional submission at the feet of the transcendental seers and to cherish absolute faith in the truth of their words. Our ribald imagination has no place in the Spiritual sphere. The ordinary rules of empiric history strictly subordinate the function of imagination to reasoning based on dependable evidence. In forming the true idea of the Personality of Sree Chaitanya it will serve no useful purpose to ignore alike the method of empiric as well as that of spiritual history. The latter requires the imagination to be subordinated to Scriptural evidence recorded by the Acharyas. The Gaur-Nagaris are opposed to the Acharyas. They are also opposed to the ordinary method of empiric history. For these reasons they

deserve no hearing either from historians or from those persons who follow the true method laid down in the Shastras. They may be appreciated only by those who want to turn sacred subjects into a means of their own sensuous gratification.

It should be enough to remark in this connection that as a Householder Sree Gaursundar exhibited the Leela of leading the life of the ideal devotee, following the path of spiritual endeavour according to the rules laid down in the Shastras and in accordance of their meaning as expounded by the Acharyas. In the latter half of His Career the Lord put before us the model of the life led by a devotee who has attained the condition of amorous devotion to the Absolute. In both cases His example makes it necessary for us to give a wide berth to association with females as females in the direct or indirect manner.

If it be asked how one is required to conduct himself towards females the answer that is furnished by the Life of Sree Gaursundar is that carnality in thought and deed is to be wholly avoided. We have already had an occasion to discuss this very point in connection with the marriage of Sree Lakshmi Devi with the Lord and in describing the relationship that existed between Her and Sree Gaursundar after the wedding.

We must guard ourselves against the error of begging the question by assuming as an axiomatic truth the opinion that the race requires to be presented and propagated by cautious and systematic exercise of the sexual power. But this in itself need not be considered as necessary, or even as harmless when it is looked at from the absolute point of view. The race may cease to exist in spite of all our endeavour to preserve it. Where is the guarantee that the human race will endure for ever? If one protests against such discussion on the ground that it is profitless for man, such a person may be asked whether he is sure that he is eternally mortal. In discussing the absolute Truth it is necessary to avoid dogmatism prompted by the conditions under which we happen to live at present. Whenever any limit is set to any discussion by means of empiric dogmatism, it ceases to be applicable to the Absolute. Therefore, it is necessary not to pre-suppose the conclusion in a discussion of the Absolute.

The race may lose the re-productive power or the Earth itself may be destroyed by a cosmic disturbance. The Absolute Truth should stand in all circumstances. Sree Gaur Sundar shows the method by which the Absolute Truth can be attained. We may attain to Him if we patiently listen to the story of His Life from the lips of those who themselves realize His true meaning, viz., from the Acharyas. There is no other way. The Gaur Nagaris follow their own unbridled imaginations and pretend to attain to the Absolute Truth by an intensive admiration for the mundane sexual activity and sexual thought. Such practice is wholly condemned by the Acharyas. The Acharyas refuse to accept the argument that the preservation of the human race is the object of human life. They are thus in a position to consider the value of perfect abstention from carnality, without prejudice.

Birth, reproduction and death are the natural condition of all living things in this world. All other worldly functions are derivatives from these. The question before us is, whether it is our duty to perform these functions in the way that may appear to us to be most effective. This, as I have already pointed out, is really begging the question. We should rather ask, if we really want a solution of the problem, 'Why are we reduced to the necessity of undergoing birth, life and death at all'? Once this point has been cleared up we should be able to understand what we have to do.

The Shastras say that we are not subject to birth, nor death, but possess eternal life. It is not necessary for us to try to prolong a state of existence which is not our real life. On the contrary our duty is to get rid of ignorance and to attain to our true life which according to the Shastras is perfectly free from all ignorance and unwholesomeness. The eternal life is both real and attainable. It is not a figment of the deluding imagination. We should try to attain this eternal and perfect life by all means. It is also our duty to use our present perishable life for the attainment of the eternal life. The practice of mundane sexual act and sexual thought is the greatest obstacle in the way of our realization of the Absolute Truth. This is the teaching of Sree Chaitanya exemplified by His Own Life. The subject will be positively considered in connection with the nature of

spiritual amour in a subsequent chapter of this work.

Sexual act and sexual association in every form are definitely condemned. This fact should not be whittled down by explaining the word 'stri' as meaning all forms of worldly enjoyment or worldliness as a whole. The context does not support this otherwise plausible explanation. Sexuality has been specifically condemned. The question whether perfect freedom from carnality is possible in the married state, is beside the point. The sexual inclination may also be present without actually practicing the physical act. If the inclination itself is merely destroyed, it is tantamount to self-destruction. The real spiritual principle, corresponding to carnality, is not condemned. The present unwholesome perversion of outlook is sought to be remedied. Sex in the worldly sense is not valued, but at the same time the existence of the principle in the spirit is admitted. What is asserted is that there should be no confusion between sex in the material sense and the corresponding spiritual principle. The one stands in the way of the realization of the other. The complete elimination of mundane sexual act and thought is not the cause but the inevitable result of the attainment of the spiritual sex. The two can never co-exist. In the spiritual the whole outlook is radically changed. It is not, therefore, possible to understand the nature of the married state of a Vaishnava without taking into account the whole position. It should be enough for our present purpose to state that the Vaishnava loves his wife or husband not as husband or wife but as the spiritual associate of his soul, which precludes the idea of the mundane sex. It is not Platonic love, which is a figment of the imagination and has no substantive existence except by reference to mundane sex. The love, that joins together pure jiva souls, is not and cannot be carnality. Spiritual amour, in the case of the highest souls, is capable of being reciprocated only by Krishna Chandra Himself. The love that forms the bond of union between only the highest souls, is of the nature of affection that is experienced towards one another by the friendly confidantes of the Gracious Mistress of the One Amorous Hero. It is the Mistress's delight which is absolutely and naturally preferred to one's own and for the promotion of which one's own spiritual inclination for amorous association with Krishna is wholly discarded not in the spirit of sacrifice but in the spirit of positive and real exercise of the highest

natural instinct. All this falls flat on those who retain any trace of the taste for mundane sexuality. The purpose of the institution of marriage is fulfilled by the complete elimination of sexuality following on the associated pursuit of this spiritual end by the married couple. They must have no ideal of carnal connection as husband and wife. When this state has been realized the marriage tie ceases automatically to have any sexual import. The Vaishnava has no husband or wife except Sree Sree Radha.-Krishna. This is the necessary disappearance of the apparent on the appearance of the true self and the complete fulfillment of the spiritual instinct reflected in a perverted form in the principle of sex.

The doubt, regarding the questionable kind of society that will result from the carrying out of the idea, troubles us only so long as we continue to confound the soul with the physical body. The soul is neither born nor does he die. When the soul realizes his own nature, his prospects are at once and radically changed. He begins to function on a different plane. The selfish and unwholesome ambition, that necessitated his incarceration in the house of correction of this world, naturally disappears on the attainment of other and purer ambitions and a larger vision. Those things which appear to be vital in this world, e.g., the preservation of the species by the exertion of the reproductive power, etc., etc., are rendered unnecessary in the realm of the spirit, which is the real home of the eternal souls that are unborn and imperishable.

The Lord continued to teach His pupils in the Chandi-Mandap of Mukunda Sanjaya. He sat there in the midst of His pupils expounding the Shastras, while medicinal oil, named after Vishnu, was applied to His Head by some favoured person, to afford relief to the nervous malady which it was His Pastime to manifest. He explained the texts in endless ways. The Lord taught His pupils from early morning till mid-day when He repaired to the Ganges to bathe. He was engaged till midnight everyday in teaching and helping His students to prepare their lessons. All those, who studied at the Feet of the Lord, became Pandits in course of the year by attaining the knowledge of the principles of the Shastras. This was the daily Life of Sree Chaitanyadeva as Professor. The Lord

relished nothing except the sweet taste of learning.

The view, that Sree Chaitanya was never in a perfectly sound state of mind, has been put forward by a few persons out of sheer malice and ignorance. The motive of such unfortunate people is to find, or even invent, a reason for proving their ignorance. If the brain of an insane Person be capable of supplying the clue to the Knowledge of the Reality to the sane ignorant persons of this world the latter need not neglect to be benefited thereby.

Worldly people are never considered to be out of their proper senses by the Allopaths, Homeopaths, Hakims and Vaidyas of this world, who pride themselves on the infallibility of their power of diagnosing all kinds of mental and physical ailments. But if all worldly people are proved to be irrational and deluded should the Medical Sciences condescend to take serious notice of such aberration? Disease is one of the ordinary devices of the Deluding Power of Sree Chaitanya intended by His Mercy to shake the confidence of worldly people in the certainty and value of the pleasures derivable from the hallucinative workings of the medically sound (?) mind and body. A medically. sound mind in a medically sound body is the summum bonnum of the Medical Sciences. Is it altogether impossible for a sound mind in a sound body, which can pass the medical test, to be really utterly unsound (?) What else can be the cause of the impermanence of this particular form of the summum bonnum in the wise Providence of the All merciful? The Deluding Power tries to cure the spiritual malady of the conditioned souls by the device of the bodily and mental diseases which demonstrate conclusively the worthlessness and trivial nature of the ideal that promises to secure for the possessor of a sound mind in a sound body, an abundance of the so-called sensuous happiness obtainable in this world. But the lesson is lost on pedantic medical men whose horizon is straitly squeezed between the earth and sky of the body and mind utterly engrossed in the reckless pursuit of worldly enjoyment. But disease can for this reason neither terrify nor delude the pure soul of the Vaishnava. The nature of the malady of Sree Chaitanya, if rightly diagnosed on the lines indicated, has also the power of curing both the physicians and their patients of the spiritual disease of organized hypocrisy and self-deception willfully nursed by all

worldly people which prevent them from knowing the Truth by subjecting them to the mental delusions of the flesh.

The Lord's Marriage with Sree Vishnupriya Devi took place about this time. A detailed account of the event has been recorded by Thakur Sree Brindavandas. Before we enter upon those details it is necessary to dispose of certain considerations that may naturally arise in our minds in connection with this particular event. The Marriage of the Lord for a second time seems to require an imperative explanation. Strict monogamy on the part of both husband and wife is the highest ideal of marriage, as embodied in the Narrative of Sree Rama Chandra and Seeta Devi. Conjugal love in the worldly sense also seems to be best guaranteed by such ideal which makes it the right-reserved of two particular persons to be the mutual recipients of connubial love. This alone, it is supposed, can make conjugal love both perfect and pure. According to this test Nimai Pandit, if He is to be regarded as an ideal Husband of His First Consort, should have abstained from marrying a second time. He can not be supposed to have been subject in an abnormal degree to this particular frailty of the flesh and should have been able to remain constant to His First Married 'Love' even after Her Departure from this world.

But the nature as well as the object of the Lord's Marriage are altogether different from those made on this Earth. The Lord's Marriage is the only real marriage. The marriages that take place among the people of this world is an unwholesome caricature of the Reality. The proper way of putting the question mooted above would, therefore, be not that the Marriage of the Lord should conform to the human ideal, but that the human ideal itself may be lived down by the realization of the substantive Truth, viz., the Marriage of the Lord, of which it happens to be the distorted, unwholesome reflection. With the attainment of the Substantive Truth the automatic subsidence of the malady of the sensual appetite, the basis of the human institution of marriage, needs must be inevitable.

The Lord's marriage, which is eternally enacted on the spiritual plane, made its appearance apparently under the conditions of limited time and space in order

to effect the cure of the disease of sexuality to which the perverse soul is found to be addicted. Amorous love between male and female, which is cherished as one of the rarest privileges of man and as the source of his highest, purest and most exquisite happiness available on this Earth, is not really a blessing at all but on the contrary may become by its abuse the greatest of all the curses that afflict those who choose to be the temporary denizens of this world. But it is by no means possible to get rid of the distemper even if we could be convinced that it is such a possible evil. The Shastras have recommended marriage in place of promiscuous and unrestrained sexual relationship in order to provide a salutary check on sexual indulgence in the only practicable form. This is intelligible. But it is not perfectly clear while they also direct that the sexual act, which must be practiced with restraint, should also be performed for pleasing Vishnu, and not for the gratification of the sensuous appetite itself. The Shastras declare that by pleasing Vishnu parents as well as their issue will be really benefited by obtaining lasting immunity from the clutches of mundane lust.

But it is very difficult to understand what the Shastras really mean when they enjoin the performance of the sexual act of generation to please Vishnu. Are we to suppose that the sexual act is pure in itself and as such is a fit offering for the Lord? That it is, therefore, our duty to indulge in sexual activity desired by God Himself. This does not however, appear to be the proper meaning of the Shastric injunctions regarding 'satvika marriage.' The object of the Shastras is to discourage sensuality in any form. The sexual act minus sensuality is a contradiction in terms. The Shastras do not plainly tell us so, but they nevertheless clearly leave it to be inferred that the institution of marriage is for the purpose of getting rid of sensuality.

Why is Vishnu dragged into this sensuous affair at all? But how else also is sensuousness to be overcome, if it is desirable to get rid of it? By the Touch of the Lord alone the hold of the flesh on our souls slackens automatically. If one marries really for pleasing Vishnu, the Lord accepts the offering that is sincerely made. The acceptance of the Lord helps the realization of the object of the offering. But when such an offering is made, the person making it should do so in the right spirit. He is instructed as to the right spirit by the Shastras. If his

prayer is offered really to please the Lord, or, in other words, for the purpose enjoined by the Shastras which tell us how the Lord is pleased, the Lord fulfills such prayer by granting its object. The devotee experiences the effect of his conduct in the simultaneous increase of his peace of conscience, the increasing realization of the spiritual existence centered in the Lotus Feet of Vishnu and subsidence of sensuous hankering for the things of this world. It is as if fire had burnt up all impurities by its introduction into the scavenger's heap.

Strength and health of body are coveted, among other things for the purpose that they are necessary for the procreation of strong and healthy children. But is not this a begging of the question to be proved? If I have myself no use for strength of body and mind except its blind, mechanical exercise my condition will be altogether chaotic. Order, specially moral order, is impossible without conscious subordination to one supreme purpose. There must be some intelligible object to which all our faculties may be unhesitatingly directed. That object is the attainment of the Lotus Feet of Vishnu where dwells eternally all highest activity, knowledge and bliss. Strength and health of body are by their nature perishable. We do not really know why they come to us and why they leave us. So we should not be unduly attached to them for their sake. If God permits us to possess them for a time we should use them solely for attaining the abiding shelter of the Holy Feet of the Lord.

There is, no doubt, marriage in the Realm of the Absolute. That is the True Marriage. That Marriage is eternal. There the Lord is the only Lover and Husband and all souls are the recipients of His Perfect Love. This is possible only in the Lord and in the spiritual world. If any mortal attempts to have many wives or mistresses in this world he is warned by the Shastras against the utter folly and wickedness of such conduct. The self-same Shastras declare that the Lord is the only Enjoyer of every creature and that Marriage with the Lord is the summum bonum of the spiritual condition. There is, of course, no room for any mental or physical activity in such relationship. It is the exercise of the eternal relationship of the pure souls, in their spiritual non-material state, with the All-soul.

Conditioned souls, who happen to be under the lure of the flesh, cannot think

of marriage except by reference to mundane sex. But the Shastras enjoin marriage as a help in realizing the life eternal by spiritual co-operation between husband and wife, for living down the mundane sensual instinct. They instruct us to succeed in this by cultivating the effective spiritual desire of pleasing the Lord by our every act. As the Lord can be served under all circumstances and in every externally mundane act, why should the sexual act be an exception to the rule? It should be possible to serve the Lord by the sexual act as by any other form of apparent worldly activity. But the sexual act that is performed as service of the Lord cannot, for that very reason, belong to this mundane plane. It becomes spiritual activity which is absolutely free from all sensuous unwholesomeness. It is better than any negative process.

Sree Chaitanya enacted the Leela of abstaining from all ordained sexual activity during the period of His Married Life. On this point Sree Chaitanya differs wholly from Sree Krishna who apparently begot numberless children and also cultivated unconventional amorous relationships with the milk-maids who were not His wedded wives. In Essence, there is of course no difference between the Two. On the spiritual plane abstinence and enjoyment are alike wholesome and are really un-opposed to one another. The Conduct of Sree Chaitanya need not, therefore be regarded as moral or wholesome in the worldly sense, or as either more or less pure than That of Sree Krishna or than that of His own married followers. On the spiritual plane there is no unwholesomeness or objectionable factor. There is only an infinite range of the most varied excellences and exquisiteness. The Conduct of Sree Chaitanya as Married House-holder is far above the level of that of every other house-holder as setting, in a way that is capable of being grasped by the conditioned soul, the spiritual ideal for his special benefit and safe-guard him from radical misconceptions regarding the Nature of the Union of Sree Radhika with Sree Krishna, the Only. Perfect and Substantive Marriage.

Sree Krishna has really only One sweet-heart, viz., Sree Radhika as Sree Radhika Herself has no other tie except Her Love for Krishna. The realization of Sree Krishna by Sree Radhika is the only Absolute Realization of the Absolute. All other realizations are secondary and derivative but true, and are attainable only by the Grace of Sree Radhika. The secondary realizations are, however, both

possible and perfect so long as they happen to subserve the Supreme Purpose of Sree Radhika. The devotees of Sree Chaitanya attain this dependent perfection of service by following loyally His Teaching as well as Example. Dissociated from either, all souls descend automatically into the sphere of sensuous imperfection.

But the Source of all perfect service is Sree Radhika Who is the Counter-whole of Sree Krishna. Sree Chaitanya personates the Function of Sree Radhika towards Her Eternal Consort, in order to bestow the Loving service of Sree Radhika to conditioned souls who have no taste at all for the spiritual service of the Lord. He is the Ideal Devotee, devoted to His Lord. Such Devotee admits no relationship with anything except the Lord. So long as Sree Chaitanya continued to exhibit the Leela of leading the life of a married house-holder He showed clearly that it is possible to marry in order to serve the Lord which is incompatible with the least attachment or love for anybody ,else except Godhead. He was a dutiful Son, Brother, Husband, Friend, without being attached in the least to Brother, Husband, Friend or Father in the worldly sense. Krishna was all along His sole Father, Mother, Brother, wife, Friend. The devotees were no doubt loved by Sree Chaitanya; as they served Krishna in the same way that He Himself did. He refused to be led by any of His devotees and compelled all who desired His Favour to serve only Krishna. This Quality of Absolute Independence and Aggressive Superiority of His Service of Krishna raises Him above all His associates and followers. But this Superiority must not be imitated by any other person. All other persons should serve Sree Krishna in obedience to Sree Chaitanya; that is to say by submission to Sree Radhika Who is Krishna Himself and Who cannot be disobeyed by His devotees. This premier position of Sree Radhika and its rationale has been made intelligible to souls under the thralldom of Maya by the Career of Sree Chaitanya. The jiva souls should stand to Sree Radhika in the same relation as His followers stand to Sree Chaitanya Himself. Sree Krishna is served independently by Sree Radhika alone, Who employs an infinite army of Her own servants, i.e., either inseparable or separable portions of Her essence in Her Service of Krishna.

Before beginning his account of the Marriage of Sree Gaursundar and

Vishnupriya Devi Thakur Brindavandas takes particular care to mention that the Supreme Lord, Sree Chaitanya never even listened to the name of a female. This precautionary remark is followed up by the observation that Sree Gauranga must on no account be prayed to as the Amorous Lover notwithstanding His identity with Sree Krishna. This salutary and most important and explicit prohibition has been too often deliberately ignored by the Gaur Nagaris by deviating deliberately or through ignorance from the path enjoined by Sree Chaitanya Himself and His most authentic biographer and associates. This Sect, arguing from the fact of identity between Sree Chaitanya and Sree Krishna, persists in regarding Sree Chaitanya as taking delight in amorous dalliances with His Consorts and Sweethearts at Nabadwip. Under the lead of a corrupt duty these misguided people have not even scrupled to invent imaginary stories of Sree Chaitanya's amorous escapades in order to bring His Activities into line with Those of Sree Krishna. This is an unpardonable and immoral travesty of authentic history and an offense at the Holy Feet of Sree Chaitanya and His associates. In fact there cannot be a greater blunder, nor one that is more disastrous in its spiritual and moral consequences, than this open attempt to ignore that very feature of the Career of Sree Chaitanya which constitutes the most characteristic distinction between His Leela and That of Sree Krishna. The Activities of Sree Chaitanya are absolutely free from even the appearance of mundane sexuality.

Let us follow in the footsteps of Thakur Brindavandas in describing the Marriage of the Lord for a second time, and being armed with this basic principle of His Career, try to understand a little more definitely the real significance of the Marriage of Sree Gauranga with Sree Vishnupriya Devi as we proceed with the narrative itself.

The Narrative is presented by Thakur Brindavandas in the following manner. The Supreme Lord was wholly absorbed with tasting the sweets of learning and teaching His students after the Departure of Sree Lakshmi Devi from this world. But Sachi Devi had no other thought than that of finding a suitable maiden to marry her Son a second time. She at last arrived at a satisfactory decision. She had noticed with approbation the conduct of a Young Maiden, Vishnupriya, the Daughter of a well-known father, Rajpandit Sanatan Misra. Sachi Devi had frequently met this Girl at the bathing ghat of the Ganges. Sanatan Misra was a

native of Nabadwip. He was of a most merciful disposition. He was possessed of a frank and generous nature and the highest faith in Vishnu. His occupation consisted in doing good to others and showing hospitality to all chance-guests. He was truthful, self-controlled, born of a high family. He was well to do and had a large number of dependents.

Sree Vishnupriya Devi, Mother of the world, was the Very Self of Lakshmi Devi, the Eternal Consort of Sree Narayana. Sachi Devi had conceived a great affection for the Maiden at the very first sight and regarded Her as worthy of being the Consort of her Son. Vishnupriya was accustomed from infancy to bathe in the Ganges twice and even thrice every day and had no other interest in Her life save devotion to Her father, mother and Vishnu. She daily met Sachi Devi at the bathing ghat of the Ganges and greeted her feet with great humility. The mother also blessed Her with the greatest affection, 'May Krishna bestow on You the Favour of a Worthy Husband., During her baths in the Ganges Sree Sachi Devi conceived the desire of joining the Girl to her Son in the bond of nuptial union. As a matter of fact the very idea had also already occurred to the Rajpandit and his family, and Sanatan Misra was no less anxious to bestow his Daughter or Sree Gaursundar.

It so chanced that one day Sachi Devi, having sent for Kasinath Pandit, requested him to make the formal proposal of the Marriage of his Daughter with her Son to the Rajpandit and also to arrange the same in a definite manner if he was agreeable. Kasinath Pandit immediately made his way to the Rajpandit and after being received with great respect, submitted his proposal. It was to this effect, 'I have a proposal to make to you. I would ask you by all means to do what I am going to propose if you consider it desirable. Give your Daughter to Viswambhar Pandit. I consider the connection altogether suitable. He is the proper Husband for your Daughter as this Best of maidens is also in every way Fit Bride for Him. They suit One Another exactly as Krishna and Rukmini.' On this the Rajpandit held a hurried consultation with the members of his family who also pressed upon him the desirability of unhesitating and immediate acceptance of the proposal. Thereupon the Rajpandit informed Kasinath Pandit that he had no objection to bestow his Daughter on

Viswambhar Pandit. If such a connection could be settled for his Daughter he would regard it as nothing less than the reward of the previous good deeds of himself and his whole family.' He informed Kasinath Pandit to return to Sachi Devi and inform her of his decision. He repeated his assurance that he was prepared to carry out his word by all means. On hearing this Kasinath Pandit with great satisfaction took his leave and laid his information of what had happened before Sachi Devi. The mother was delighted on hearing the success of her endeavour and busily set about making the necessary preparations for the Marriage of her Son.

On learning of the approaching Nuptials of the Lord all His disciples felt the utmost gladness in their hearts. The great Buddhimanta was the first to offer his services in this connection. He said that he would bear all the expenses of the Marriage. Mukunda Sanjaya protested as it would completely shut himself out. Buddhimanta Khan replied that the Marriage would not be celebrated on the paltry scale of the wedding of a Brahmana, but on that of a Prince.

The adhibas ceremony (preliminary to Wedding) was celebrated with great éclat by all friends and followers at the auspicious Moment on the auspicious Day. Huge canopies were hung up and the grounds were enclosed by rows of plantain trees on all sides. Pitchers filled with water, lighted lamps, paddy-grain, milk-curd, twigs of the mango and every other kind of auspicious articles were collected on the spot in huge quantities and the whole ground was beautifully painted with the solution of powdered rice (Ālipana). All Vaishnavas, Brahmanas and other worthy persons of Nabadwip were invited to partake, in the afternoon, the betel-nut of the adhibas ceremony? Musicians duly turned up as soon as it was afternoon and struck up a delightful concert; The music was swelled by the sounds of mridanga, sanai, jai-dhak kartal and other instruments. The 'bards' began to recite the praises of the family and loyal matrons uttered glorificatory ejaculations. The Brahmanas raised the Vedic chant as the Jewel of the best community of the twice-born made His Appearance and assumed His Seat in the center of the assembled people. The Brahmanas, who had congregated, thereupon experienced a great joy in their minds as they sat in a circle round Sree Gaursundar.

Then they brought out the perfumes, sandal paste, betel, excellent garlands and distributed among the Brahmanas. They placed the garland round the head, smeared all parts of the body with the sandal-paste and offered a pot-full of betels, to every single guest. Nadia was but the community of the Brahmanas. There was no end of Brahmanas at Nadia. It was not possible to ascertain the number of the Brahmanas as they continued to arrive and depart. Among them there were also not a few who were extremely greedy and who, after receiving their presents once, returned in a different dress. Presenting themselves in the thick of the crowd these greedy Brahmanas carried away repeatedly sandal, betel-nut and garlands. All were mad with joy. Who could recognize anybody? The Lord laughingly gave the command to give away sandal and garlands three times to every one. By this Command the Lord condoned the offense of those who, having taken once, persisted to take the articles over and over again. The Lord loves the Brahmanas. He thought in His Mind that if a Brahmana was caught in the act of taking more than once he ran the risk of being chide by some careless person. It is however, an offense to take anything by cunning in matters spiritual. The Lord, therefore, provided against all these contingencies by ordering all the articles to be given away three times to every one. All Persons were highly delighted by obtaining them in a triple measure and no one again took anything by cunning. Garlands, sandal, betel-nut and betel that were given away in this manner exceeded all limits. The secret how this was possible no one knew. Let alone what men actually received, that portion of it, which was dropped on the ground in the act of giving away, would have sufficed for five ordinary marriages, if the quantity could be available in the house-hold of any other person. All persons were exceedingly gladdened in their hearts. All said, All praise to this adhibas ! We have seen millionaires in this Nabadwip. No one's ancestor ever performed such a grand adhibas ceremony. No one gave away so ungrudgingly such excellent sandal, garlands, betel-nut and betel.

Presently the Rajpandit arrived with a glad heart and with all the requisites for the adhibas ceremony. He was accompanied by Brahmanas, relations and a great company of merry musicians, singers and dancers. The Rajpandit joyfully put

the tilaka mark on the Forehead of the Lord in accordance with the method enjoined by the Vedas. This joyful Event was acclaimed by a great chorus of the chant of Hari and the singing of hymns of praise. All loyal matrons also acclaimed the Glorious Event. The greatest rejoicings manifested themselves in the form of music and song. Having in this manner performed the adhibas ceremony the prince of Brahmanas, Sanatan, returned home. The kinsfolk of the Lord also went forth and performed the adhibas ceremony of Lakshmi at the Latter's Home in the same way. Both sides also performed with the greatest zeal every other customary rite.

Chapter XVI

—Marriage with Sree Vishnupriya Devi—(Cont.)

On the auspicious Morn following the adhibas ceremony the Lord bathed in the Ganges and performed the worship of Vishnu. Thereafter in the company of all relations and friends He applied Himself to the due performance of nandimukh and other rites.

There was a great uproar of music, dance and song. Auspictory shouts of praise were raised on all sides. Innumerable pots filled with water, paddy-grain, milk-curd, lighted lamps, twigs of the mango, were placed at the doorways, inside the rooms and all about the yard. On all sides flags of diverse colours gaily waved in the breeze. Plantain-trees, to which branches of the mango were tied, were planted in every direction.

Then the mother was busily occupied in the company of all the matrons with the due performance of all customary rites. Having first of all worshipped the Ganges the joyful party proceeded to the site of the goddess Shasthi to the sound of music. Having worshipped Shasthi the mother and her entourage visited the homes of all friends and went through the customary performance at each household. The party returned home after having accomplished these

protracted functions. Sachi Devi made all the ladies heavy presents of fried rice, plantain, oil, betel and vermilion. By the Will of the Lord the articles exceeded all measure and Sachi Devi gave away to every one in five and sevenfold measure. All the ladies literally swam in oil. There was none whose heart's desire was not completely fulfilled. There were similar high rejoicings in Lakshmi's home under the conduct of Lakshmi's mother. In a fit of ecstatic delight the Rajpandit flung away all his resources in these festivities.

After the due performance of all these ceremonies Sree Gaursundar had a respite which He utilized in making presents of eatables and clothing to all the Brahmanas, evincing, in the method, the greatest humility. He accorded the fullest respect to all of them in due proportion of the worth of each. The Brahmanas then returned to their homes for their meals after blessing the Lord with the greatest affection.

As the day wore into afternoon all the people applied themselves to the pleasant function of robing the Lord. This was an elaborate process. The Whole Body of the Lord was anointed with sandal-paste and other perfumes with well-designed interspaces. On the Forehead of the Lord a crescent was painted with sandal inside which was put the charming tilaka mark made of perfume. A wonderful Crown adorned His Beautiful Head. His Whole Frame was covered with garlands. Excellent cloth of the finest grain was worn in the triple girdled style (trikachha). His Beautiful Eyes were painted with collyrium. Paddy-grain, durba grass and cotton thread were tied to His Wrist. Tender shoots of the plantain with the mirror were placed in His Hand. A pair of golden pendants hung down from His Ears. The upper parts of His Arms were bound with dazzling chains of various precious jewels. Whatever decoration was likely to set forth the Beauty of each Limb was put in the proper part by all the people with the greatest delight. All persons of both sexes were fascinated by the Sight of the Appearance of the Lord attired as Bridegroom and in their joy had no thoughts on their own account.

When the last quarter of the day still lingered all people gave their opinion that it was time to make the auspicious start so that the Lord might arrive at the

house of the Bride in the hour of twilight, after perambulating the whole of Nabadwip for the space of one full prahara.

And now Buddhimanta Khan joyfully brought up an excellent litter (dola) which he had specially made for the occasion. There arose a great tumult of song and music. The Brahmanas recited the auspiciatory texts of the Veda. The bards began to recite eulogies. Joy assumed a visible form on all sides.

Then, after passing His mother on the right and having bowed with great respect to the Brahmanas, as Sree Gauranga seated Himself on the dola, there arose all around Him the triumphal shouts of benedictions. The ladies uttered jais. There could be heard nothing but auspicious sounds in every direction.

The Lord first of all proceeded to the side of the Ganges. There He saw the half-moon just overhead. Thousands of lights now began to burn. There was a great variety of fire-works. The soldiers of Buddhimanta Khan marched in front and were followed by his other employees in double file. Behind them marched the bearers of flags of different colours. Pantomimes and clowns in various guises followed. Dancers in innumerable groups danced along with the utmost gaiety. Jai-dhak, beer-dak, mridanga, kahal, pataha, dagarh, conch, flute of reed, karatal, baranga, horn, instruments with five different melodies, in countless number, made up the vast concert. The Lord laughed as He noted with pleasure millions of children dancing along with great merriment in the midst of the musicians. On beholding that great rejoicing not children only but all the wise men joined the procession dancing by discarding all shame.

Having arrived on the bank of the Ganges the party of the Bridegroom halted and performed, for a short while, dance, song and hilarious music. This was succeeded by incessant raining of flowers. After making obeisance to the Ganges the party traversed merrily the whole of Nabadwip. On beholding the equipages of the Marriage that are far above anything mortal, all people experienced a great ecstasy in their minds. The people said, 'We have seen many big marriages. Never did we see such grandeur'. Men and women of fortunate Nadia in this manner floated on the tide of happiness on beholding

the Lord.

All were happy save only those Brahmanas who had beautiful unmarried daughters in their homes. Those Brahmanas gave vent to their sorrows. 'I could not bestow my daughter on such a Groom ! I have no luck; whence could it be otherwise?' Thakur Brindavandas describing the Marriage Festivities of the Lord, in the words quoted above, makes his obeisance to the feet of the residents of Nabadwip who possess the power of beholding beatific Sights like these.

Thus did the Lord merrily journey from one quarter of the town to another of the whole of Nabadwip. He then came to the residence of Rajpandit just in the hour of twilight and was received by multitudinous acclamations which mingled with the tumult raised by the musicians of the parties of Bride and Bridegroom vying with each another. Rajpandit, advancing with great respect, took the Lord in his arms from the dola and conveyed Him to His Seat. The Pandit scattered flowers with his own hands, being perfectly oblivious of his own body by joy on beholding his Son-in-law.

Then having brought out all the requisites of the ceremonial election of Bridegroom the Brahmana seated himself to accept the Lord formally as his Son-in-law. He duly performed this ceremony of election by the offering of water for washing the Feet, the requisites of worship, water to rinse the Mouth, clothing and ornaments. Then his spouse appeared with the other ladies and! began to perform the auspicious rites according to the approved form. The ladies placed grains of paddy and blades of the durba grass on the Beautiful Head of the Lord and waved a lighted lamp, of seven wicks fed by clarified butter, in front of the Lord. They continued to ejaculate the glorificatory note as they cast at Him fried rice and shell. Thus did they perform the customary rites.

And now, having decked Her in all Her ornaments, they brought out Sree Lakshmi Devi, conveying Her on a seat. On this the friends of the Lord merrily lifted Him up by His seat. Then, according to the custom, having put up an

inner screen round the Lord, the Bride was made to perambulate the Lord seven times by keeping Him on Her right. After perambulating the Lord seven times Lakshmi Devi placed Herself in front of Him in the attitude of obeisance.

Then there was a great throwing of flowers; and the instruments of both parties put up a great music. On all sides male and female continued to employ their voices in acclamation. Joy's own self came down from on high in his visible form.

Sree Lakshmi Devi, Mother of the world, made the surrender of Herself by placing the garland of flowers at the Feet of the Lord. Gaursundar, with a slight Smile, took up the garland and placed it round the Neck of Lakshmi. Then Lakshmi and Narayana began to throw flowers at Each Other with great alacrity. Brahma and other gods, remaining invisible, merrily sent showers of flowers. The partisans of Lakshmi and the Lord now got up a violent quarrel, on behalf of the Bride and Groom, with minds delirious with joy. The followers of Lakshmi and those of the Lord seemed to prevail alternately as the people continued with peals of laughter to inform the Lord. A slight Smile played on the Beautiful Face of the Lord. On beholding this all people swam in the current of transcendental bliss.

Thousands of great torches burnt brightly. Nothing could be heard on account of the tumultuous music. The music and acclamations of the charming rite of 'Catching the First Glimpse of Each Other's Moon-like Faces' pervaded all worlds, so great was that mighty uproar. Having thus gaily performed the ceremony of Srimukchandrika Sree Gaursundar took His Seat in the company of Sree Lakshmi.

Thereafter Rajpandit also assumed a seat, with his mind overflowing with delight, for the purpose of making the offering of his Daughter. Having duly offered water for washing the Feet, the requisites for worship, water for cleansing the Mouth he uttered the formula of his decision to offer his

Daughter. The pious father of Sree Lakshmi Devi, desiring only the Pleasure of Vishnu, made over his Daughter into the Hands of the Lord. He then gave expression to his pent-up joy by giving away as dowry goodly cows, land, beds, male and female slaves, in great abundance. He then caused Sree Lakshmi Devi to be seated on the Left Side of the Lord and began to perform the ceremony of offering libation to fire. After performing all the Scriptural and customary rites he conducted the Bridegroom and Bride to the inner apartments. Vaikuntha manifested itself in the house of Rajpandit. At last the Couple sat down to meal. Lakshmi and Krishna remained joyously together during that night unto supreme benediction.

Who can express in words the joy that possessed Sanatan Pandit and his whole family? Sanatan and his family now realized the same high fortune as fell of yore to the lot of Nagnajit, Janaka, Vishmaka, Jambubanta, as the fulfillment of his previous devoted service of Vishnu.

At break of day, the Essence of all the worlds performed the remaining social rites. In the afternoon, as the hour of returning home drew near, there began a great display of music, song and dance. Loud acclamations rent every direction. The ladies shouted jais. The Brahmanas recited blessings and read sloka s from the Veda in keeping with the occasion of starting. Dhak, pataha, sanai, baranga, karata¹, played vociferously, vying with one another.

The Lord, having bowed to the superiors, ascended the dola in the company of Lakshmi. All the people raised the triumphant shout of the Name of Hari as they formed in procession and led away the Jewel of the race of the twice-born.

All those persons, who beheld Them as They proceeded on Their way, praised Them most admiringly and in many diverse ways. The ladies obtaining a Sight of the Pair said, 'This Girl is most fortunate. She must have served Kamala and Parbati during Her many lives.' Some of them said, 'They seem to be Hara and Gauri themselves.' Another lady declared, 'Methinks they are Kamala and Sree Hari.' There were those who expressed the view that the Couple were certainly Rati and Kamadeva. To the minds of others They seemed like Indra and Sachi. Some held that They most resembled Ramachandra and Seeta. Thus said all

those ladies of excellent deeds. Thakur Brindavandas expressed once more his appreciation of the high fortune of the male and female inhabitants of Nabadwip who had power to witness these glories of the Lord. All people over the whole of Nadia overflowed with happiness by the Auspicious Glance of Lakshmi and Narayana.

The Marriage Procession moved along with the greatest merriment, with dance, song and music, amid a continuous shower of flowers. Then in an Auspicious Moment ushered by every blessing Lakshmi and Narayana merrily arrived at Their Home. The mother attended by the loyal matrons most gladly welcomed the Daughter-in-law into the House. As Lakshmi and Narayana entered Their Apartments and assumed Their Seats a mighty acclamation of Praise filled the whole universe.

Thakur Brindavandas, with due sense of the nature of the occasion, writes that the joy that manifested itself is beyond all expression and that no one can describe that Glory. If the eye but once beholds the Glow of the Person of the Lord that fortunate person is cleansed of all his sins and repairs to the Realm of Vaikuntha. All those people had a direct vision of the Marriage of the Lord. The Lord rightly bears the Appellations of 'Merciful' and 'Lord of the humble.'

Then the Lord satisfied all the dancers, bards and beggars, by the gift of clothing, money and kind words. The Lord with His Own Hands merrily gave away clothing to all the Brahmanas, relatives, friends and to everyone severally. The Lord bestowed His Embrace on Buddhimanta Khan whose joy no words can describe. These Leelas have never any interval. The Veda says of Their Appearance and Disappearance. Who can even in a hundred years describe all the Leelas that took place within the space of a single danda? 'Accepting on my head,' says Thakur Brindavandas, 'the Command of Nityananda Swarup, I write the mere summary in pursuance of His mercy.' He concludes the account of the Divine Marriage with the remark that whoever reads or listens to these Leelas of the supreme Lord, verily enjoys communion with Gauranga Himself.

We have attempted to give above the account of the Marriage of Sree Gaurasundar and Sree Vishnupriya Devi in the words of Thakur Brindavandas

himself in order that the reader may have, as far as possible, the actual words of the highest authority, the Vyasa, of the Leela of Sree Chaitanya. It will be our subordinate duty to try to understand this severely compressed account in the light of the commentators. An attempt on this line has already been made in a previous chapter in discussing the Marriage of the Lord with Sree Lakshmi Devi. We shall confine ourselves here to the task of adding a few remarks to what have already been presented to the reader on the same subject at that place.

The Lord makes His Appearance in this world with His Paraphernalia. When the Lord chooses to manifest the Leela of the Devotee He is attended by all His Consorts Each in Her corresponding appropriate role. Sree Chaitanya has Two Consorts, appearing successively One at a time. Sree Lakshmi Devi is that Aspect of the Divine Power Who is termed 'Sree' or 'Beauty' by the Scriptures. She represents Spiritual Law, Who is eternally in attendance on Her Lord. Even when the Lord chooses to appear in this world He is served by the Higher Law of the Spiritual Realm. This does not require to be masked as it is not liable to be misunderstood even by bound souls. But as the Divine Manifestation grows towards maturity the Regulated Service recedes to the background making way for Spontaneous Devotion. This also has to make room for the Highest Form, viz., Service in apparent separation.

It is not the purpose at this stage to enter fully into the subject of the Nature of the Divine Power, and Her various Faces. In Krishna Leela there is no use of any restraint by the Divinity in His Pastimes. The Realm and Consorts of Godhead appear in that Leela as They are in Chaitanya Leela They appear in Their mellower form of Relationship of love for the bound soul. The bound soul is not banished from the Pastimes of Krishna because Krishna makes no difference between one soul and another and is always prepared to deal with a person in accordance with the latter's disposition and according as service is rendered or refused. Sree Chaitanya Leela exhibits the indiscriminate Mercy of the Lord to bound souls. This means that Krishna Leela in the Positive Aspect is not altogether closed to the bound soul. The latter may even serve Krishna by His Grace even in this world by the process of service of the highest order.

The point that is to be specially noticed in this connection is the fact that the bound soul may serve the Lord in exactly the same way as the soul in the state of Grace. The Lord with all His Consorts, Associates, Realm and Paraphernalia is always at the door of the bound soul and ever Willing to offer Him His very Highest Service that is rendered to the Lord in the Divine Realm proper.

The very statement of the above proposition suggests a number of most reasonable objections. If the Lord is with the bound soul as much as He is with His eternal devotees why cannot the former always have the sight of Him and His? The reply is that this is so in order to add a special charm to his service and one that is coveted by even the purest souls but which is not available to all of them although it is unsolicitously open to every bound soul. The very condition, viz., the bound state, helps the most charming realization of the eternal function. The bound soul cannot see Krishna and His eternal devotees as They really are. But the bound soul is privileged to realize that Krishna and His eternal devotees are identical with Sree Chaitanya and His associates whom he can see and serve with his available faculties if he is only willing to do so.

But the bound soul can also see Lakshmi Devi and Vishnupriya Devi, Mother Sachi and Sree Jaggannath Misra, in Their real eternal Forms. This is so because unless they see at least the pure soul as he really is, they cannot understand the relationship of separation from the Lord to which they are doomed by the bound state. This vision is dependent on the fulfillment of the condition of willing acceptance of its real import. But this inclination is rarely, coveted for the very reason that the wish is realized without any difficulty. This is so unbelievable !

If one reads this account without complete acceptance of and faith in its conclusions he will necessarily fail to realize its truth. Hypothetical or tentative acquiescence in certain assumptions, for the purpose of enjoying the charms of an artistic conception based on those assumptions, is not sufficient for a reader of the Chaitanya Bhagavat if one is really anxious to follow the method of self-discipline laid down in the work as the indispensable condition for the proper realization of the substantive Truth. This faith in the only cognisable Forms of

the Reality is not natural to the bound state and is apparently opposed to the same. At this point the help and guidance of sadhus or self-realized souls become an absolute necessity.

The bound soul is ever tending to fly away after the illusive appearances of the Deluding Energy. He is convinced that he will find in such pursuit, in the long run, what his perverted nature most ardently desires, viz., boundless sensuous enjoyment for himself. It is, therefore, almost impossible to expect him to destroy these seemingly sole objects of his heart's desire by his own hands. This is the task that the sadhu has got to perform for him for the benefit of the bound soul. The sadhu is seconded in his efforts by the spiritual Scriptures but is opposed by everything else in this world. This is not inexplicable. The erring soul has to choose between the persuasions of the spiritual Scriptures supporting the sadhu and the dissuasions of the whole phenomenal world, on the very threshold of the spiritual life.

The decisive part is, therefore, played by one's own judgment. It is necessary to exercise one's judgment with a due sense of the far-reaching consequences to oneself that are involved. The Scriptures as well as the sadhus can only persuade but can never compel the bound soul to accept the course of self-discipline that is absolutely necessary for self-realization.

Sree Lakshmi Devi and Sree Vishnupriya Devi are the Eternal Consorts of the Supreme Lord and possess the special capacity of appearing with the Lord for the purpose of being visible in Their actual Forms to the bound souls, in order to effect their deliverance. When it is further explained that Sree Lakshmi Devi is described in the Scriptures as the Power Who is identical with 'Beauty' or 'Law' the reader, who is not sufficiently mindful of the conditions to be fulfilled for the purpose of realizing the proper nature of the Consorts of Godhead, may be disposed to suspect that the Truth is being attempted to be figuratively set forth by a number of cleverly devised allegorical forms and that it should be sufficient to bear in mind in the abstract the principles involved without taking the concrete side into serious consideration. The less skeptical may fall into the opposite inconsistency of attempting to take everything in its literal worldly sense. Both may unconsciously ignore the function of the sadhus being

absolutely necessary for obtaining access to the Reality.

There are, of course, those who may maintain that if the Reality cannot be realized without submitting to a sadhu as the condition of enlightenment how can one be sure that the sadhu and his Scriptures may not also mislead? They may also quote actual instances of persons who have gone astray, by admission of the sadhus themselves, after a course of training with them. The validity of the objection consists in the fact that the initiative in the form of choice of course ever lies, and must ever lie, with the individual soul. The sadhu, if he is not properly served, will remain absolutely unknown to the disciple after the longest period of apparently strenuous and faithful service. The Truth will not submit to the dominating efforts of any individual soul, neither does He accept the compelled service, (?) of anyone. The pure soul accepts the whole responsibility of this position and is accordingly enabled to see the light by which to walk loyally.

The polemic and disbelieving trifler with Truth alone is ever effectively shut out from the Realm of the Absolute. The bound soul is accustomed to submit tentatively to hypothetical courses of instruction and training under hypothetical teachers of apparent truths. He is also insensibly but stubbornly disposed to carry the same procedure into the Realm of the Absolute. It is the function of the sadhu, of his own accord, to warn all erring souls against these confirmed errors of habit. It is for the individual soul himself to accept or reject the advice. Those, who have undue faith in the tentative method, resent the advice which they are naturally disposed to regard as uncalled-for and mischievous. The tendencies never fully eradicated till one stands face to face with the Realty. This is the cause of the risk and uncertainty that have to be faced by the novice, but they are quite inevitable and perfectly in accordance with the Absolute position itself.

So Sree Lakshmi Devi and Sree Vishnupriya Devi need neither be believed nor disbelieved as Consorts of the Divinity by any one prior to understanding the

nature of the relationship in which one is required by the conditions of the case to place himself in order to be enabled to grasp the issue of the advocates of realizable Absolute Truth. The issue need not be confounded with any hollow hypotheses of erring mortals. Nor need it be conceded by one's condescending oral assent to possess the transcendental nature which is neither comprehensible by the intellect of the bound soul nor compatible in practice with any of his worldly interests. For such persons the proper attitude should be to try to understand the preliminary conditions with the help of the Narrative and abstain from all 'opinions' on the Nature of the Divine Power Herself till she has had time to explain what he requires to know further.

These remarks hold also in the case of the Third Plenary Power that ever accompanies the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna Chaitanya whenever He chooses to appear in this world. She bears the name of 'Neela' in the Shastras and is no other than the Abode of Godhead, (Sridhama). The 'Place' where the Lord appears in this world is His own Plenary Power, or Eternal Consort. This would dispose of the gross and profane speculations of the sensualist schools regarding the subject of Divine Amour, the relationship that subsists between the Lord and His Plenary Powers Sree Bhu and Neela Who bear the names of Lakshmi, Vishnupriya and Nabadwipdhama in the transcendental vocabulary of the Scriptures Whose Natures are realizable only by the devotees of Lord Chaitanya.

All this at the first sight cannot but appear to be 'bizarre' and unsettling, to all persons contentedly moving on the plane of three dimensions. Such persons may even affect to regard the statements as the 'products' of a diseased imagination and their own 'fool's paradise' as the undoubted abode of sanity and wisdom.

But such a view does not remove every difficulty from the path even of those who choose deliberately to shut their ears to the pleadings of the rational instinct. The so-called mundane 'positivists' want a real standing-ground for their perverted speculations. Those wise persons cherish the wild faith that by putting the cart before the horse greater results are to be gained than by the

ordinary method of obeying the voice of humdrum reason and bitter experience.

The names 'Lakshmi', 'Vishnupriya', 'Nabadwip' are not words denoting anything limited or worldly. Neither are they mere symbols or conceptions of any worldly entity. They are the Divine Consorts Themselves. The Transcendental Nomenclature is inconceivable except by Their Grace identical with the Mercy of Godhead Himself Who ever acts through His Plenary Powers in His Dealings with jivas who are dissociated emanations of the Pure Essence of His Marginal Potency.

As a matter of fact the Activities of the Lord, even when He chooses to Appear in this world, remain absolutely unintelligible to the conditioned soul as long as the latter persists in the attitude of refusal to seek the help of the Plenary Spiritual Power of Godhead for realizing the same. For understanding the Leela of Sree Gauranga it is necessary to approach the subject by willing, convinced and active submission to real Sadhus who are the eternal servants of Sridhama Nabadwip, the Eternal Realm of the Divinity, Who alone can confer the service of Lakshmi Devi and Vishnupriya Devi Who serve Sree Gaursundar with Amorous Devotion of the most distinctive delicious types that are comprehensible to conditioned souls only by Their Grace. This comprehension is the only proper goal of all individual souls gone astray and is identical with the service of Sree Sree Radha-Govinda attainable in the unalloyed spiritual state.

For these reasons we abstain from dealing with this subject more specifically at this place. The Doings of the Lord as Householder can be understood only in the light of the practice and teachings of the Lord as a Sannyasin after His apparent Renunciation of the world. The object of sitting at the Feet of Sree Krishna Chaitanya, the Practicing Ascetic Teacher of the Absolute Truth, is to be enabled to understand, through the practice of service taught by Himself by Example and Precept, the Absolute Truth as He is realizable by souls who appear to His loyal disciple in the Form of Sree Gaursundar dwelling eternally in Sridham Nabadwip served with Amorous Devotion by His Consorts Sree

Lakshmi Devi and Sree Vishnupriya Devi by the method of loving separation. Such realization can alone enable a conditioned soul to attain the highest service of the Divine Pair Sree Sree Radha-Govinda on the termination of his wrong connection with the mundane plane.

Chapter XVII

—Triumphs of Learning—

The Lord taught His pupils in all places. His usual resort for the purpose in the evening was the side of the Ganges. On His arrival there He took His Seat, as at the Academy, in the midst of His pupils. The Performances of the Lord as Teacher on the bank of the holy stream remained indelibly impressed on the memory of all beholders. Sree Brindavandas Thakur searched all the Scriptures to find an analogy by an event of the triple universe. He rejected the following suggestions after due consideration of their claims. The analogy of the Moon surrounded by the stars of Heaven was rejected on the ground that the Moon is spotted-and. subject to the processes of waxing and waning whereas the Nature of the Spotless Subject of comparison is Eternally 'Full'. Brhaspati, teacher of the gods, does not furnish a proper analogy in as much as he happens to be a partisan of the devas, whereas our Lord is the Partisan and Help of all sides. Cupid god of worldly amour, does not offer the requisites of a proper analog. The mind in which he makes his appearance is distracted, whereas on the Appearance of the Lord in one's mind all other bonds are snapped and the mind attains the state of supreme purity and satisfaction. In the same way all other analogies also appeared to be seriously defective. There could be found only one exception. There is real analogy with the Pastimes of the Son of Sree Nanda, surrounded by the cowherds, on the banks of the Kalindi (Yamuna). It seemed to all people as if the Selfsame Krishna Chandra, in the company of those very cowherds, having put on the Form of the twice-born, now re-enacted His Identical Pastimes on the bank of the Ganges.

All those, who were privileged to have the Sight of the Lord discoursing to His pupils on the bank of the Ganges, experienced a gladness that baffles all description. They were no less impressed by the display of His Power, and everybody secretly opened his mind to others on this subject. Some said, 'Such Power does not belong to man'. Some declared that the Brahmana was the Integral Portion of Krishna Himself. Others said that 'He seemed to be the Person of the prophecy that a Brahmana will be King in Gau_a, and held that his conclusion was confirmed by the fact that He had all the Bodily Signs that prognosticate the King of Kings. Every one made these remarks regarding the Lord in accordance with one's own particular bent of mind.

The Lord expounded the Scriptures on the bank of the Ganges, adversely criticizing the teachers. He exposed the falsity of their interpretations by establishing their contradictories and, after refuting all different opinions, re-established them all. He challenged every one to disputation with Himself and promised to recognize as a real scholar every one who would fairly meet Him only once. He denied that any one possessed the power of holding his ground in controversy against Him even by accepting the very interpretations that He offered. Thus did the Lord make His Boast and His Bragging Words destroyed all vanities of every one who listened to them.

There was no end of the pupils of the Lord. They formed themselves into innumerable groups and pursued their studies at many different places in the town. Every day ten or twenty Brahmana boys prostrated themselves at the Feet of the Lord and begged to be allowed to study under Him. They prayed for His mercy that they might have the good fortune of being enlightened by Him to the least extent. The Lord laughed at their words observing that what they said was most excellent. The number of the Lord's pupils went on increasing apace every day in this manner.

Thus the Lord held His learned sessions surrounded by His countless pupils by the side of the Ganges. It was a most edifying Sight that was witnessed by His fortunate contemporaries.

The whole of Nabadwip was rendered free from all cause of sorrow by the Holy

Influence of the Supreme Lord and all those, who were privileged to witness the learned Performances of the Lord, were regarded in subsequent years as persons of rare good fortune the very sight of whom had power to free one from the bondage of the world. Sree Brindavandas Thakur laments his misfortune for not having been born at that time, and cherishes the hope that he might retain his recollection of those Activities of the Lord at every birth and be born as His servant wherever Sree Chaitanya and Nityananda manifest Their Divine Activities

The above, from the pen of His first biographer, who had his information from Nityananda Himself, un-contradicted by any other writers of that or subsequent period, proves conclusively, apart from the evidence of His associates and followers regarding the Substantive Teaching of the Lord, that Sree Chaitanya enjoyed an extraordinary reputation as Disputant and Exponent of the Shastras among His contemporaries. Those contemporaries were specially given to the cultivation of the Science of Polemics which had been perfected at Nabadwip to a point never rivaled anywhere else either then or since. Lest this fact fail to be sufficiently grasped by posterity Thakur Brindavandas repeats it over and over again and in a most definite manner. As for instance he gives prominence to the fact that the Lord was never chary of denouncing the interpretations of other Professors, although Nabadwip was at the time full of a countless host of the most eminent teachers, proverbially jealous of their scholastic reputation to whose ears the denunciations of the Lord were sure to be carried in no time. But no Professor in all the different branches of learning, which were cultivated with equal zeal at Nabadwip, ever dared to meet the Lord in open controversy on any issue. Every one was terribly afraid of Him, showed the greatest deference to His Views and avoided any direct disputation with Him. And if the Lord was pleased to speak kindly to any one that fortunate person became at once His most devoted servant. All the people were fully aware of His Extraordinary Cleverness even from Infancy and all dreaded and obeyed Him. They also knew that no one had really the power to excel or teach Him anything new. Yet no one suspected that He was any other than an ordinary mortal.

The language of Thakur Brindavandas, coming from one who, although an admirer of the Lord and using the poetic diction, and after making every allowance for so-called oriental hyperbole that is supposed by unimaginative empiric thinkers of this country and elsewhere to specially characterize all religious literature, makes it plain that Sree Chaitanya was not a particularly submissive kind of a person, nor did He seek to serve Godhead in the current manner, but was certainly not an opponent of rational, or even empiric inquiry on any subject. He was also at the same time a scoffer of all self-sufficient superficial pedantry. These qualities were misunderstood by the orthodox Vaishnavas also, among whom were persons distinguished for their secular learning as well as piety. This Incomprehensible Nature of the Young Professor, Who scorned everybody and submitted to none, marked Him out as a most extraordinary Person and extorted the unwilling admiration of friends and foes alike. That it was not willing admiration in all cases we shall know from the sequel. His uncompromising attitude and hostile talk gave deep offense to the learned pedants, who only waited for the opportunity of indulging their furious animosity against the dreaded Scholar Whom they could not meet in honest controversy.

The attitude of the learned circles of Nadia demonstrates the radical defect of empirical intellectualism which does not at all realize the gravity of the misfortune of its divorce from the Absolute Truth. Its abstract idealistic speculations are a sorry refuge from the dangers of the grosser forms of materialistic positivism. This material world is not an illusion. The idealist, who affects to look down upon it, is bound to be brought to grief in no time by the actual force of the very circumstances that he pretends to condemn. The scientific instinct revolts from the sterile and fictitious triumphs of the mere idealist. It seeks to satisfy the need of our nature for the substantive Truth by creating opportunities of expanded materialistic activities in defiance of barren idealism. Sree Gaurasundar, however, did not meet the idealists with the weapon of grosser materialism. He was content to point out the glaring defects of their synthesis with the help of empiric logic itself, as they could not fail to understand such argument. By the very nature of the case it is possible by

means of empiric logic to demolish its own false constructions and to demonstrate the necessity of a change of method of investigation for the attainment of the Real Truth.

The difficulty begins after this critical juncture has been reached. Even those, who are prepared to admit their defect in controversy, do not always realize the necessity of accepting the conclusions of their victorious enemy. The out and out sincerity of judgment, that would lead to such acceptance, is very rare and implies to an attitude of causeless devotion to the Truth for His Own sake. The pedants of Nabadwip did not care to learn the Truth from Sree Chaitanyadeva. Neither is this an absolute and immediate drawback for progressing in empiric knowledge. A person can improve his empiric knowledge by self-application unassisted by any other person by the study of books. Sree Gaur Sundar led His campaign against the futility of this method for attainment of the knowledge of the Absolute. Such knowledge, He contended, can only be obtained by submitting to receive it from person who is in possession of it.

The necessity of personal mediation of the teacher for attainment. of the Knowledge of the Absolute introduces a condition which it is not possible to establish fully by the method of empiric logic. The necessity of the acceptance of the principle of personal subordination is also consistently enough denied by the empiricists in respect of their own achievement. Their misunderstanding is due to the fact that they cannot realize the identity of the Teacher of the Absolute with the Message itself. They want to accept the Message by leaving out the Bearer of the Same. They have evidently less respect and necessity for the servant than for the Master. Their own logic should be able to tell them that the Absolute must by His nature be unattainable by any form of conditional submission. The mundane egoistic reservation is to be completely discarded if one is to approach the Presence of Sree Krishna. The Bhattacharyas and Misras of Nabadwip, proud of their learning and fallacious self-sufficiency failed to understand the necessity and duty of absolute submission to the real teacher of the Word of God.

They preferred to continue on the path of admitted ignorance and sinfulness. This course appeared to them to be less intolerable than absolute submission to the servant of Krishna. Such persons are by temperament doomed to eternal perdition and the only method that was applicable to their case was that of merciless castigation in the form of elaborate exposure of their sophistries, by which method alone they might be prevented from misleading less wicked foolish people from the path of the pure service of the Lord. The fact, that the Bhattacharyas and Misras were not redeemed by Sree Gaurasundar, has been used, by dishonest pedants who are not on principle prepared to inquire with an unbiased mind into the nature of the issue itself that divided the two parties, as a circumstance that proves the unconvincing nature of the position taken up by Sree Gaurasundar. There cannot well be a grosser form of impiety under the garb of piety than the unholy assertion that the suffrage of the ignorant people of this sinful world establishes the claim of the Absolute to our unconditional allegiance to His Holy Feet. Such perversity of judgment is the punishment that justly overtakes all insincere natures who, while professing to seek the Truth, are willfully bent upon amassing the means for the gratification of their own ignorant vanity. To those abnormal people the uncompromising attitude of Sree Gaurasundar's advocacy of the Truth appeared to be only an instance of ignorant arrogance greater than their own. They were so completely blinded by their insatiable passion for sensuous gratification that they were unable to distinguish between their own selfish vanity and the Arrogance of Sree Gaurasundar which their own vanity necessitated and which was intended to break their impious perversity, or at any rate, to lessen the same, or prevent it from grossly misleading innocent people to the utter ruin of both.

This Attitude of Sree Gaurasundar was also in glaring contrast to that of the other Vaishnavas who did not care to oppose in this drastic manner the pretensions of those graceless atheists; but it was none the less best calculated to promote-the real well-being of all those who are disposed to draw a distinction between arrogance directed to the service of the Absolute and humility practiced with the same object in favour of the latter, make out difference which does not really exist. Real humility, that submits

unconditionally to the Absolute, never submits to minister to the pleasures of the atheists. When those, who are not disposed to submit to the Absolute, pretend to be humble in their relations with worldly people, they do so for gaining the reputation of humility. The really humble person has no selfish ambition and is, therefore, in a position to serve the Truth and nothing but the Truth under all circumstances. The true and constant servants of the Absolute alone are privileged to understand how Godhead may be best served by loyal arrogance and most basely betrayed by self-seeking show of humility. Godhead is never served by external conduct. Good manners in themselves have no value. They have their value in and through perfect loyalty to the Truth, which is the one thing needful. Good manners, practiced by worldly people, are but a snare and a most insidious form of gross impiety.

The above considerations enable us to understand that no one can know the Lord unless the Lord makes Himself known to him of His Own accord. Sree Gaur Sundar, during all this period while He was engaged in the task of silencing the proud scholars of the centre of learning of the Age by exposing their utter ignorance of all subjects, failed to be recognized as the Lord of all learning alike by pious Vaishnavas and the atheistical teachers of Nabadwip. But we need not suppose that His Activities were, therefore, less important or a lesser evidence of His highest beneficent Mercy. The Lord is ever full of unlimited beneficence; but He reserves the right of manifesting the true Nature of His Divine Activities only to such persons Whom He chooses to favour. During all the time that Gaur Sundar was indulging in these learned Pastimes not a single person in the whole Nabadwip recognized His Divinity, although these Performances were most extraordinary even from the point of view of empiric scholarship. In this connection the following remarkable incident, which took place at this time deserves our most attentive consideration.

A great scholar of the name of Keshab Bhatta came to Nabadwip. He was a famous controversialist and had assumed the proud title of 'Conqueror of all quarters' to proclaim His victories over the scholars of all parts and also as an open challenge to the learned whom he summoned to recognize his superiority if they did not venture to engage in open discussion through fear

of public exposure of their inferiority. It was the traditional ambition of the Pandits of this country to seek the proud distinction of being the recognized superior of all learned persons, or as the Conqueror of all quarters, (digvijayi). The conditions, that such a claim gave rise to, were that the vanquished had to put down in writing the fact of their defeat and hand over to the victor their written confession of inferiority.

Keshab Bhatta, after defeating in controversy the Pandits of other parts of the country, appeared in Nabadwip, which was then reputed as the greatest center of learning in India, with the object of compelling the great Pandits of Nabadwip also to admit his superior scholarship. Keshab Bhatta was fully confident of his ability to defeat the Pandits of Nabadwip for the reason that he had ordained the assurance of the goddess of learning herself to the effect that he would never suffer any defeat in controversy. Keshab Bhatta had discovered that all the Shastras appeared on the tip of his tongue without any effort on his part by the grace of the goddess of learning, and the questions, that constantly suggested themselves to him, were such that no antagonist was ever in a position to offer any satisfactory reply. His questions alone were sufficient to silence his adversary, and it never came to a discussion at all. When the fame of Nabadwip reached his ears he hastened thither in great state, escorted by a numerous retinue mounted on richly caparisoned horses and elephants, defeating in controversial encounters all those Pandits who met his challenge on the way. His arrival at Nabadwip caused a great fear to fall upon the community of the Pandits who took counsel together apprehending the imminent loss of the prestige which they enjoyed in the learned world if this 'Conqueror of all quarters' from afar succeeded in carrying off the laurels of victory by defeating them in their very stronghold. They were unnerved by fear at the prospect of contending with one whom Saraswati herself had been pleased to grant the boon of invincibility in controversy. All the leading Bhattacharyas of Nabadwip left off all work and racked their brains over their impending discomfiture.

On every side the ominous cry was loudly expressed that the occasion had arrived which was to settle what gift of intellect the Pandits of Nabadwip really possessed. The students soon carried the tidings to Gauranga. 'A certain

Conqueror of the quarters (digvijayi), having won the favour of Saraswati, is touring all places and vanquishing in controversy all Pandits. He has in his possession the certificates of his victories from all the vanquished. He has a large following of horses, elephants, litters, attendants. He has recently arrived in the town and is actually settled in Nabadwip. He wants to engage in controversy any rival who may offer himself. If no antagonist is prepared to take up his challenge he demands that every learned association must forthwith supply him with written confession of their defeat.

On hearing this the Lord laughingly told the truth to His pupils. Listen to Me, brothers. I am telling you the real truth. The Supreme Lord in no way tolerates self-conceit. The Lord always takes away whatsoever intoxicates a person to indulge in excessive vanity. Humility is the constant nature of the fruit-bearing tree as of a person endowed with all good qualities. Have you not heard of the fate of all the mightiest Conquerors of old such as Haihai, Nahusha, Bena, Bana, Naraka, Ravana ? Was there ever any person whose vanity was not brought low? Godhead never tolerates excessive conceit. For this reason I assure you that all the pride of his learning will be completely humbled at this very place,.

Having said so, the Lord came on to the bank of the Ganges in the evening with His disciples and, having touched with reverence the holy water of the Ganges and made His obeisance to the sacred stream, Divine Gauranga assumed His Seat in the center of His pupils. The students sat round Him in many different groups, and a brisk and cheerful discussion went forward regarding many a topic on dharma and the Shastras. As the Lord was seated in this joyous manner He thought of a plan of conquering the 'Conqueror of all quarters'. He did not like the idea of defeating him in open controversy in a public assembly, as such defeat would kill outright the Brahmana who was so much puffed up with inordinate vanity by reason of his victories which had filled him with the notion that he had no equal in the whole world. Moreover such defeat would also expose him to the jeers and violence of the populace who would fall upon him and plunder his belongings. If the Brahmana were vanquished in a private encounter he would be cured of his vanity without suffering the terrible pain of a public exposure. While the Lord was maturing

His plan 'the Conqueror of all quarters' himself came to the very spot that evening.

What ensued after the arrival of 'the Conqueror of all quarters,' has been graphically described in all its bearings by Thakur Brindavandas. The night was most beautifully illuminated by the gorgeous splendours of the clear moon of Bengal. The Bhagirathi wore her most hallowed aspect of indescribable glory. The Supreme Lord, Whose Beauty captivates the hearts of everything, was Himself Present with all His disciples. The charming Face of the Lord was constantly lit up with a Gracious Smile and His Two Beautiful Eyes wore the Eternal Look of Divine Benediction. His Fine Teeth, set between His Ruddy Lips, scorned the beauty of pearls. His Whole Frame was most delicately soft and overflowed with kindness. His Beautiful Head wore a profusion of the most charming curls of the Finest Hair. His Neck was posed like the Lion's. His Shoulders were broad as that of the elephant. His Attire was in keeping with His Figure. The Holy Form was of the most generous dimensions, with a most Beautiful Bosom which was encircled by Sree Anantadeva in the Form of the sacrificial thread. His Fine Forehead was marked with the long beautiful tilaka pointing upwards. His Exquisite Hands reached to the Knee. The Lord wore His Cloth in the style of the yoga patta and, being Seated with His Right Foot placed in the loop of the Left Thigh, was engaged in expounding the Shastras, establishing the contraries of all negative and positive conclusions. All His disciples were seated in many a group, on different sides of Him, and formed a most picturesque Assembly.

'The Conqueror of all quarters' was much surprised on beholding this wonderful Sight and thought within himself, 'Is This perhaps Nimai Pandit?', and, stopping unnoticed, gazed on the Beauty of the Lord without taking off his eyes for a long time. He then inquired of one of the disciples, 'What is His Name?', and was told in reply, 'He is, indeed, the Great Nimai Pandit Himself'. Thereupon, making his obeisance to the Ganges, 'the Conqueror' made his way into the midst of the Assembly of the Lord. A Slight Smile played round the Lips of the Lord as He welcomed him with cordiality, inviting him to take his seat.

‘The Conqueror of all quarters’ was of a most fearless disposition. But nevertheless he experienced a feeling of great awe at the Sight of the Lord. The Lord, after exchanging a few words with the Brahmana, began to be inquisitive in His Joyous Mood. He began by observing ‘that the poetic powers of ‘the Conqueror’ were boundless and there was no subject to which he could not apply his powers with success. That they would all be delivered from their sins if he would favour them with a poetic account of the glories of the holy Ganges.’ On hearing these words of the Lord ‘the Conqueror’ began immediately the praise of the Ganges in verses composed on the spot and with such facility and in such varied figures that his recitation appeared to possess the amplitude and dignity of the voice of the clouds. Saraswati herself was present on the tongue of ‘the Conqueror,’ and, therefore whatever he said was perfect in every way.

No human being possessed the power of impeaching the same or even comprehending the full extent of the profound learning that marked his utterances. All the students of the Lord, who were counted by thousands, were astonished by listening to the description. ‘Rama, Rama,’ they ejaculated, ‘It is most wonderful! Can such words come from any mortal?’ The description was most richly laden in every part with all the rhetorical embellishments conceivable for adorning the human speech, that are to be found in the whole world, and to such supreme perfection that even those, who were deeply versed in all branches of the Shastras, found it most difficult even to follow him. In this fashion ‘the Conqueror’ poked on for the space of a quarter of the night and did not yet finish.

When ‘the Conqueror’ at last ceased Sree Gaursundar said laughingly ‘that the real purpose of the words, woven into the verses by him, was not intelligible to them unless he himself was pleased to explain. He would, therefore, request ‘the Conqueror, to supply the explanation of his own words which were undoubtedly perfect in their import.’ These sweet Words of the Lord induced ‘the Conqueror’ to an attempt to explain his own verses. But no sooner did he begin to expound the Lord began to criticize at every step. The Lord said in effect ‘that the words that had been employed by ‘the Conqueror’ apparently

transgressed against all the established principles of the Shastras and that it was, therefore, necessary to know all other special purpose which 'the Conqueror' had in view in using them.'

The great 'Conqueror of all quarters,' the pet child of the goddess of learning, the victor of a hundred controversies, was powerless to offer any explanation, and all his intelligence seemed to desert him at this crisis. The Brahmana began to talk at random, but could establish nothing; and Sree Gauranga was most prompt in pointing out all the defects of his arguments. All the genius of 'the Conqueror' forsook him and he did not understand what he himself had said. Then the Lord asked Him not to mind it but give them something fresh. But 'the Conqueror' found that he no longer possessed his former power of impromptu composition.

When 'the Conqueror of all quarters' was in the throes of the agony of his decisive defeat the pupils of the Lord made a gesture of laughter at his expense. But the Lord forbade all incivility and spoke kindly to the Brahmana. 'The Conqueror' had made an exhausting effort by composing those wonderful verses and was naturally very much fatigued by his exertions. The night was far advanced. So the controversy might be postponed to the next day. Let them all part for that night with mutual good-will and 'the Conqueror, should return to his lodgings for rest without feeling discouraged,. The Lord was ever tender to His opponents in His Dealings with them. Those, whom He vanquished in controversy, did not experience any sorrow. The Lord behaved in the same way towards all the Professors of Nabadwip. Although. He defeated them all, He pleased them all by His Conduct after His victory. 'Let us,' He would say, 'Go home to-day and look up our authorities so that we might be in a position to answer everything correctly tomorrow.' The Lord never broke the spirit of the vanquished. Hence all were pleased with Him. Such were the Pastimes of the Lord. It was for this reason that every one, of all those Pandits who lived at Nabadwip, was in his heart of hearts well-disposed towards the Lord.

The Lord made His way home in the company of His disciples. 'The Conqueror of all quarters' felt extremely ashamed at heart. In his distress the Brahmana thus mused within himself, 'Saraswati herself gave me this boon. I have met in controversy all those who were well versed in Nyaya Shankhya, Patanjala, Mimansa, Vaiseshika and Vedanta philosophies. I found none in the whole world who could even advance a plausible view in opposition to mine.' The question of their ability to defeat me was, therefore, necessarily remote. But such is the contrivance of Providence that this Brahmana, Who is merely a teacher of Vyakarana which is a subject for infants, should be able to actually defeat me! The boon of Saraswati herself would seem to be unsure ! There is good cause for the greatest anxiety in this. Some offense against the goddess must have been engendered in myself and due to this the power of my genius has been lessened. I must find out the cause of it this very day., Thinking thus the Brahmana sat down to the recitation of the mantra and, having finished the due quota, betook himself to his bed with a sorrowful heart. In his dream Saraswati appeared before the Bipra and, casting her merciful glance on the fortunate Brahmana, began to tell him secrets that are most carefully hidden in the Scriptures. Saraswati said,, Listen, good Brahmana. I am going to tell you the hidden secret of the Vedas. If you disclose this to any one your life will assuredly be cut short. He, at Whose Hands you have suffered defeat, is most assuredly the Lord of the endless universe. He is, indeed, the Self-same Lord Whose Lotus Feet I ever serve. I feel ashamed of myself even to appear before Him. My function is to delude all creatures into the vanities of the false ego. This function has no admission into the Sphere that is lighted up by the Glance of Vasudeva. It is I who speak through your tongue. But I have no power in His Divine Presence. It is not merely my little self who feels so helpless but even the Divine Sheshadeva Himself, Who expounds the Vedas by His thousand Mouths and is the Worshipped of Aja, Bhaba and all the great gods, is bewildered in the Presence of the Supreme Lord Whom you have seen face to face in the Form of the Brahmana. He is Transcendentally Great, Eternal, Pure, Indivisible, Irredible and is Present in His Fullness in the hearts of all. From Him proceeds work, knowledge, learning, all good and evil, the visible and the invisible, in fact everything which it is not possible for me to fully recount to you. All the creatures from Brahma downwards who are

subject to suffering undergo tribulation by His Command. All the Avataras, such as the Fish, Tortoise, etc., of Whom you have heard, are no other than He. It is the Same Lord Who restores the world in His form of the Boar, the Same Who protects Prahlada in His Form of Man-lion. He is the Life of Bali in His Form of Vamana Whose Lotus Feet are the Source of the holy Ganges. It is He Who Appeared in Ayodhya and killed the wicked Ravana by His Endless Wonderful Activities. Him we call the Son of Vasudeva and Nanda. He is at present, as the Son of Brahmana, actively engaged in the Pleasures of learning. Not even the Veda Himself is aware of His Appearance in the world. One can know Him only if He makes Himself known. Who has power to know otherwise? All the mantras, that you have recited to me up till now, are not really fulfilled by yielding as their fruit the status of 'the Conqueror of all quarters'. The real fruit of my mantra you have at last obtained only now, in as much as you have had a Direct Sight of the Lord of the countless worlds. Bipra, go quickly to His Feet and surrender your body to Him. Don't consider these words as an idle dream. I have divulged to you the hidden knowledge of the Vedas under the influence of the mantra. Saying this the goddess Saraswati disappeared and the Brahmana woke up from his sleep.

The Brahmana immediately made his way, at early dawn, to the Presence of the Lord. The Bipra made prostrated obeisances to the Lord Who thereupon lifted him up into His Arms. The Lord asked, 'Brother, what is the meaning of this behaviour?' The Bipra made reply, 'Even so is the Merciful Glance of Thy eyes'. The Lord asked, Being yourself 'Conqueror of all quarters' why do you behave in this way to Me? 'The Conqueror' said, 'Deign to listen, Prince of Brahmanas' All work is fulfilled by serving Thee. Thou art Narayana in the Form of the twice-born in the Kali Age. Who has power to recognize Thee? The suspicion grew in my mind the moment my power of speech deserted me as Thou questioned. Thou art declared by all the scriptures to be the Breaker of all worldly vanity. I have truly experienced this undoubted truth. Thou overcame me three times and yet preserved my reputation. Is this possible Otherwise than by the Power of the Supreme Lord Himself? Wherefore it is most certain that Thou art Narayana. In all the learned societies of the world, in Gauda, Trihut, Delhi, Kasi, Gujrat, Vijayanagar, Kanchipuri, Anga.

Vanga, Tailanga, Odhra and other places, there is no scholar who could even understand my words, far less find fault with them. I, who am so clever, failed to establish anything in Thy Presence. Whither did all my wits depart? This Feat of Thine is not at all wonderful. The goddess of learning herself told me that Thou art her Lord. Most auspicious, indeed, was the planetary conjunction under which I let my foot at Nabadwip, that I, so sunk in the deep mire of the world, have obtained the Sight even of Thyself. Bewitched by the wily entanglements of ignorant selfish desires I have long wandered astray, utterly deceiving myself. By good fortune I have now obtained the Sight of Thee. Be pleased to deliver me by Thy Merciful Glance. It is Thy Nature to do good to all. There is no one except Thyself Who is the Refuge and Who is Truly Merciful. Be pleased, Great One, so to instruct me that there may never again arise any evil desire in my mind.

The 'Conqueror of all quarters,' most humbled, praised the Lord in many various ways, in terms of sincere penitence. On hearing the fervent words of the Brahmana Sree Gaurusundar smiled as He thus Replied, 'Listen, illustrious Brahmana. You, on whose tongue Saraswati herself abides, are, indeed, most fortunate. The use of learning does not lie in conquering all quarters. That scholarship alone is genuine which serves the Supreme Lord. Consider this well and attentively. When a person leaves his body his wealth or any human qualifications never accompany their quondam possessor. It is for this reason that all who are pure-souled, apply themselves with a firm purpose to serve the Supreme Lord, discarding every other occupation. Therefore, Bipra, giving up all evil ways make haste to worship the Feet of Sree Krishna without delay, and continue to serve Krishna with firm conviction until you are overtaken by death. Know for certain that the only due fruit of learning is obtained if one's mind and work continue to abide thereby at the Lotus Feet of Sree Krishna. I declare to you the highest advice. Devotion to Vishnu is the one thing that is true in all these countless worlds'. Having said so, the Supreme Lord being pleased with the Brahmana, embraced him. Being favoured by the Embrace of the Lord of Vaikuntha the twice-born was released from all his worldly fetters. The Lord said, 'Brahmana, give up all vanity. Betake to the service of Krishna by being merciful to all beings. Whatever Saraswati might have told you,

never divulge to any one else. By speaking out the Hidden Truth of the Scriptures the span of life is cut short and such a person verily suffers the bad consequences of such conduct in the next world.'

The great Brahmana, on receiving the Command of the Lord and after making many prostrated obeisances to Him and repeatedly doing homage to His Lotus Feet, departed thence, having thus obtained the highest fulfillment of all his endeavours. By the Command of the Lord that very instant devotion, want of attachment to things mundane and the true knowledge manifested themselves simultaneously in the person of that Brahmana. The vanity of being 'Conqueror of all quarters' completely disappeared. The Bipra became humbler than a blade of grass. After bestowing on fit persons the gift of every earthly possession that he had, his elephants, horses, conveyances, wealth and all equipments, that 'Conqueror of all quarters' set out on his journey companionless. Such is the Pastime of Sree Gaurisundar. It is the Natural Quality of His Mercy that a person, who obtains it, betakes himself to the occupation of begging, giving up the kingly state. In this Kali Age Sree Dabir khas bore testimony to the truth of this by preferring the retreat of the forest to a princely position. Wealth and power, which are coveted by all the world, are discarded by the servant of Krishna after having been gained. The state of a king and such other temporal things, are deemed pleasant only just so long as one is ignorant of the bliss of devotion. Even the pleasure of emancipation from all the miseries of the world is considered by the devotees of Krishna as trivial, not to speak of such happiness as accrues from the possession of kingdoms and other coveted things of this world. Nothing is of any worth except the Kind Glance of the Supreme Lord; for which reason all the Scriptures proclaim only the service of the Lord.

Thus did 'the Conqueror of all quarters' obtain his final deliverance. Such is the wonderful Career of Sree Gaurisundar. The news of the Lord's victory over 'the Conqueror' quickly spread to all parts of Nadia. All the people were overwhelmed with astonishment and instinctively realized 'that Nimai Pandit was undoubtedly a Very Great Scholar. They had not yet heard of another scholar who could have defeated 'the Conqueror'. They confessed that Nimai Pandit had every justification for His Pride and it was only now that the Real

Greatness of His Learning was made patent to all. Some said 'If He had only read Nyaya He could have easily attained the position of Bhattacharyas'. Some proposed 'that all the people should join together and confer on Him the title of Vadisimha (Lion of controversy).' These estimates, says Thakur Brindavandas, show the triumph of His Deluding Power who prevented the people from recognizing His Divinity, even after they had seen all this. Thus all over Nadia all the people discoursed about the Achievement of the Lord. The citizens of Nabadwip are worthy of the homage of everybody inasmuch as they are privileged to witness these Activities of the Lord. Those, adds Thakur Brindavandas, who listen to this Narration of the Victory of the Lord over 'the Conqueror of all quarters', never have any further occasion of suffering defeat in their own case. We reserve the treatment of this remark of Thakur Brindavandas for the next chapter.

Chapter XVIII **—Significance of Scholastic Triumphs—**

I have tried to reproduce almost verbatim the account of Sree Thakur Brindavandas in describing the controversial triumph of Nimai Pandit over 'the Conqueror, of all quarters'. Technical details of the controversy also have been handed down to us in the Narrative of the same event in the immortal work of Sree Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami. The shloka which was condemned by Sree Gaur Sundar runs as follows:—

mahatvam gangayah satatamidamavati nitaram
yadesa shree-vishnoshcharana kamalotpattisubkaga
dvitiya shree lakshmiriva suranarairarchyacharana
bhabanibharturya shirasi bibhavatyad bhutaguna.

Sree Gaur Sundar pointed out in detail the defective disposition and use of words and the incorrectness of rhetorical embellishments used in the shloka,

while admitting specific excellences. He observed that the five principal defects pointed out by Him were the most prominent ones; but there were also other and numerous minor defects. He said that the productions of the greatest poets such as Kalidas, Bhababhuti, Jayadeva, etc., were not also free from all defects; and so it was not necessary for 'the Conqueror' to be discouraged, inasmuch as he certainly possessed the poetic genius which is so rare.

The power of learning, that ever serves the Supreme Lord, does not mislead any one; but worldly learning always misleads her votaries. This is not the Age-long controversy of Theology versus Natural Science; as both of them are equally the products of the erring reason of man. The issue is the higher one. Is the Absolute attainable by empiric knowledge ? Nimai Pandit held the view that empiric knowledge is necessarily defective, i.e., untrue, by the standard of the Absolute. Instead of helping us to find the Truth empiric knowledge produces a delusive belief in the sufficiency of itself, and thus acts as an obstacle in the way of the search of the Truth.

All mental speculation as a matter of fact is non-spiritual by its unavoidable neglect to make due allowance for inherent limitations. It is never possible for the reason of man to discover the Absolute Truth by its unavoidably limited speculative efforts. 'The Conqueror of all quarters' was, however, aware of this. He knew, what ordinary scholars will be hardly prepared to admit, that it was the goddess of learning who was the cause of his genius. If this were fully admitted by everybody then all differences, detectable in such knowledge, would be proved to be fictitious, and be at once seen as due to the operation of an invisible controlling Power who also produces and keeps up the idea of human merit as the resultant of human effort. The Conqueror' was aware of the conditional nature of his knowledge. But 'the Conqueror' himself had not realized the utter delusiveness of all worldly learning. He accordingly aspired to the fame of being the acknowledged leading scholar of the world. The greatest theologians and the greatest scientists are but puppets in the hands of the goddess of illusion, if either of them suppose that they can know the Truth by their limited effort.

Sree Jiva Goswami prabhu is not a controversialist of the mundane stamp. His arguments can never be really grasped by even the greatest Or empiric thinkers of this world. Sree Jiva Goswami refutes his antagonists by arguments that are intelligible to empiricists for overthrowing the conclusions of a faulty system. He however, knew that he was actually the channel of communication of the one Living Indivisible Knowledge to all impartial understandings in the Form of the Articulated Transcendental Sound. Sree Jiva Goswami's sole ambition was to serve as the unobstructive medium of the Divine Communication. He is, as a matter of fact, not in the scale of comparison with the empiric scholars of this world. All comparison between one empiric scholar and another is mundane and delusive. The futile speculation of one man is by its nature challengeable by the equally abortive rival speculation of another man. This opens the way to the vicious cycle of the endless and inconclusive controversy that passes in the name of theology. All this controversy is untrue and never takes us an inch in the direction of the Truth. In the picturesque language of Srimad Bhagavatam it is futile to expect the discovery of the grain by thrashing the empty chaff. Empiric knowledge has not legs to stand upon. It rests on unproved and unprovable assumptions. It assumes the principle of limitation itself as the basis of its search for the Unlimited! Can there be conceived a greater or more absurd form of self-deception than this?

'The Conqueror' was the favoured protégé of the goddess of the delusive empiric learning. All the empiric sciences accordingly yielded up their whole wealth (?) of hypothetical truths (?) to him, without any acquisitive effort on his part. The ideal of the empiric quest is the unrealizable wild-goose of the fable. Let us suppose that it is possible for one to know everything that it is possible or desirable for one to know and whenever one is in actual need of such knowledge. Will the possession of such power yield, or produce in such a person the inclination for, the Absolute Truth? If I could attain every facility that is conceivable to the human reason as desirable possession without any effort, would it be the really satisfactory state of existence that it is conceived to be? This was the actual condition of 'the Conqueror of all quarters.' But he felt as solitary as Faust himself 'in his bad eminence'. But there is no Tempter

except one's own boundless vanity of the hankering for empiric knowledge. The attempt to shift the responsibility of our sons to the shoulders of a third party, is most disingenuous since it is so easy to explain our own responsibility for our sins without the profanity of any such deliberately dishonest assumptions!

The paltry reason of man, when it takes upon itself to shape its own course, finds itself reaping the harvest of its deliberate folly. It could foresee well enough the inevitable consequences of its attempt to dominate the world, if it could only properly exercise the sense of its responsibility for its acts, which it undoubtedly possesses. The exercise of the egotistic principle, on the part of a being with limited faculties of knowledge, is bound to lead to discord and misery. The plea is sometimes advanced that the miseries of this world are unreal. They do not really affect those who possess sufficient firmness of disposition. This is the Stoic's philosophy. But it is the most fatal form of all delusions. It is hardly prepared to deny the reality of misery in the case of those who do not possess the required imaginary firmness of disposition. It finds itself occupied in applauding the qualities of the unfeeling stone and the hardened criminal. This mechanical 'unconcern' is not capable of being recognized even by the limited intellect as the ideal of human perfection. The miseries of this world are not really ended by such suicidal policy. It is necessary to seek out the true cause of our miseries for effecting their real and lasting cure. Empiric science is, at any rate, free from the killing vice of callousness of the Stoics. Its defect is not that it at all undertakes to search for the Truth; but that it deliberately undertakes to do this in the evidently wrong way. The empiric optimist is, however, nevertheless cousin-german of the empiric pessimist. The forte of both is an egregious egotism which both of them mistake for the principle of their coveted individuality and personality and for which they heroically prepare themselves to take all fictitious risks. This is no doubt rank atheism. Which is the antagonist against whom all this preparation is directed. There is no Satan in this world except one's own avoidable egotistic vanity.

'The Conqueror of all quarters' was happily disillusioned and gave up all

worldly ambition to follow the true spiritual path. It is necessary to consider the means by which such a result was produced, as also the nature of the change itself. This great change was wrought by the Mercy of Sree Gaursundar. The goddess of learning directed 'the Conqueror' to the Feet of Nimai Pandit. The same goddess was thus performing a double and apparently contradictory function. She had herself hitherto produced the delusion from which she now chose to rescue her victim. For the previous sufferings of 'the Conqueror' the goddess was not to blame at all. She is ever contriving to save the perverse soul from the consequences of his suicidal folly, without allowing him to succeed in actually destroying himself. Her function is like that of the wise mother who deludes her wayward child with toys that have no intrinsic worth in order to wean the naughty child from the consequences, present and prospective, of his wantonness. The culpable egotistic sentiment is inherent in free cognition and is controllable only by the conviction of its possessor that it is wrong. This is at once the privilege and the danger of the soul of man poised between the spiritual and mundane worlds. The jiva possesses as his birthright perfect freedom to abuse his cognitive liberty. The empiric sciences of this world provide the scope for the abuse of his liberty. The sciences themselves are not to blame for this. As a matter of fact they are never created by, but are only communicated to, the mind of man. 'The Conqueror' had realized this truth. Modern scientists, as a rule, do not admit this. Nor do they admit its corollary that the empiric sciences only serve to conceal the Truth more effectively. This last fact was also unknown to 'the Conqueror'. But inasmuch as he was fortunately immune from the more fatal of the above two defects he proved to be of a more governable disposition. Mother Saraswathi accordingly directed him to the Lord Who alone could deliver him from his ignorance. It is only by the positive Appearance of the Truth that untruth loses its power over us.

The Supreme Lord is the Sole Director of all the power of learning. We want our so-called acquired learning to serve our own selfish purposes, and not for serving the purpose of the Lord. But learning refuses to serve any one except the Lord. When she seems to serve us she only puts on a deceptive appearance, in order to delude us for our benefit, by the Will of the Lord. This deception is continued as long as we retain the least inclination to be her master. As a

matter of fact we can never be her master. We serve her even when she seems to serve us although this is contrived by her with such consummate skill that we find ample scope for serving her purpose even by our vanity of being her master. It is our own irrational attitude that is solely responsible for the deception, that is thus provided by the Mercy of the Supreme Lord for our redemption.

The goddess of learning ever serves the Supreme Lord and she serves only Him. This is inconceivable to our limited understanding. We are ever striving to learn the so-called deluding secrets of Nature. Such striving would be meaningless if we didn't expect to be rewarded with success in the shape of the attainment of material results yielding worldly facilities. The power to be able to compose impromptu verses is one of such facilities. The verses actually composed by 'the Conqueror' were in praise of the holy Ganges; and such performance might, therefore, appear to have been of a spiritual nature. But 'the Conqueror' was praising the Ganges only in order to win fame for himself. Every learned activity of empiric reason necessarily aims at some such definite selfish result. Empiric learning has its face always and necessarily directed towards the selfish interests of its ignorant victim.

The so-called disinterested pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, so loudly advertised by the empiric pedants, is a misnomer as applied to the inductive and deductive processes of the mental principle professing to engage itself in unraveling the so-called mysteries of the mundane world. It is not at all disinterested.. Behind it all lies the insincere conviction that knowledge will bring power to its possessor. It is the possession and enjoyment of power over Nature that can be the only logical goal of all worldly learning. However proud we may be of this learning it is permissible to question the conclusion that it has any real use for us. Is not the whole affair an example of repeating a foolish experiment even after its exposure? We are apt to assume that our knowledge is the cause of the so-called progress of mundane civilization. We are punished and disillusioned by the ever-present possibility of the wheels of this worldly civilization irrevocably going back at any moment. If knowledge has to be kept up to the teaching of experience

by the process of its constant revision, is it not thereby proved to be always really inapplicable to any event? If what we are pleased, on insufficient grounds, to call the cause of an event, turns out to be no such thing, can we blame anybody excepting ourselves for neglecting this foregone conclusion?

The laws of Mathematics, we say, have proved perfectly reliable ever since the dawn of human civilization, and are accordingly inferred to be absolutely true; and it is also expected that they will remain true for all time. There are certain so called fundamental principles which are also supposed to be true. All this is, on the face of it, self-contradictory. What then is the real value of this experience? The whole position is entirely relative to the nature of our present senses and shares all their defects. The senses do not give us the correct information. Our unbiased reason tells us that they cannot also give us the true information, as the temporary have no capacity of apprehending the Absolute Reality. The knowledge, that our senses yield, is one of the changing phenomena of this world. It cannot understand itself.

If it were possible to know the Truth would we still have the temporary use of our empiric knowledge? 'The Conqueror'. at any rate, gave up once for all any further acquisitive effort. He must have realized the utter uselessness of such knowledge. We learn that he lived to write theological works that have come down to us embodying his reasons for forsaking the empiric quest. So his activities did not stop altogether. But a race of theological writers and priests by themselves do not supply the ideal state of worldly existence. The world is sufficiently bad as it is. But it would be worse by such a change for the reason that even material civilization is preferable to fanatical barbarism. But are we absolutely sure that material civilization or material barbarism is producible by the effort of the will of man? The philosophical answer should be in the negative.

But if we change the form of the question and ask, 'Is the knowledge of the Absolute Truth attainable by man?' we at once find the right track. 'The Conqueror' was evidently satisfied that it is possible to know the Truth. Our responsibility in the matter is very great indeed. If the Truth is knowable we

cannot be excused if we deliberately neglect to find Him. It is said that the Truth is to be found in the Scriptures. This is denied by the Upanishads which declare that there are two kinds of learning or knowledge, viz., (1) the transcendental knowledge, and (2) knowledge that is not so. The Vedas and all branches of study are classed as the text books of non-transcendental learning. The transcendental learning is declared to be that by which the Transcendental Truth is known. The Bhagavatam declares that if a person, who is thoroughly versed in the Scriptures, be not conversant with the transcendental, then his efforts in the acquisition and preservation of such learning have no more value than the labour that is wasted in tending a dry cow. A distinction is made between the phenomenal and the transcendental. Learning as such, whether in the form of Theology or otherwise, is lumped together as non transcendental. The knowledge of the Scriptures is not differentiated from that of any other branch of study. Neither is knowledge condemned. It is declared that non-transcendental knowledge is subordinate to the transcendental and that the possession of the transcendental knowledge automatically and perfectly settles our relation to non-transcendental knowledge and teaches us the proper use of empiric knowledge. We need not be haunted with the impertinent fears of a conspiracy for the suppression or preservation of material civilization. The question at issue does not affect our material prospects which are quite safe in the hands of Providence. But the method to be pursued seriously concerns the prospects of the individual soul for regaining his natural spiritual condition.

Transcendental Knowledge cannot be acquired by the inductive or deductive empiric processes. The first step that is to be taken in the direction of the attainment of such knowledge, is to try to be convinced of the necessity of submitting to receive Him at the Hands of the Supreme Lord. Godhead Himself is the Absolute Knowledge. He alone can make Himself known to us. He is Free in His Choice to make Himself known to us. We also may or may not want to know Him. We do not really want to know Him so long as we do not want to serve Him. The Supreme Lord may be known only by the method of complete submission. Perfect submission is an indispensable

condition of the attainment of such knowledge. The necessity and nature of complete submission is not conceivable except by the Mercy of the Lord. The Lord is spontaneously All-merciful. We come under the Influence of His Mercy the moment we are at all really inclined to submit to Him. This inclination is sometimes produced by the shock of utter worldly humiliation. It was so in the case of 'the Conqueror'. It came to him as the consequence of his defeat in controversy by the Lord.

The Mercy of the Supreme Lord often comes in the shape of defeat and humiliation. No one except the actual recipient of the Divine Favour can perceive His Appearance. We gather all this from the writings of Keshab Bhatta himself who was favoured by the Supreme Lord.

The goddess of learning ever serves her Lord. She directs the erring empiric scholar to the Real Knowledge when he is at all inclined to serve the Truth. The endless experiments with the finite, that now-a-days absorb all intellectual efforts of man, are not undertaken for the purpose of finding the Truth. Very few of those who busy themselves with the acquisition of worldly learning and fewer still of those who attain fame and success(?) in such pursuit, attain to the inclination to suspect the utter worthlessness of empiric scholarship in itself. They seldom seriously put the question to themselves, 'What shall we do with this deluding and changing knowledge?' Most people take it for granted that empiric knowledge is desirable because it is valued by all people of this world. It is supposed to increase our chances of happiness (?) It is only those, who do not feel sufficiently satisfied by the prospect, who ask the further question, 'What is the value of the proposed happiness itself?'

It is in this last form that the call for the quest of the Absolute makes its first appearance to the individual consciousness. So long as the lure of worldly prospects continue to dominate the mind one can hardly be expected to pay any serious attention to the voice of the higher reason that is always speaking to everybody from within. It is only when a person actually shapes his external conduct in conformity with such prompting that he is in a position to obtain

the realized Mercy of the Supreme Lord. Vanity in all its forms stands in the way of our real conversion to the free spiritual service of the Absolute.

Sree Gaursundar showed His Extraordinary Mercy to 'the Conqueror of all quarters' by defeating him in controversy in such a way that the vanquished was enabled to realize, for the first time in his life, his own utter helplessness in the Presence of a mere Boy Who taught nothing higher than vyakarana. This proved to be an exceptionally favourable spiritual conjunction for 'the Conqueror' who was actually enabled to realize its supreme significance for himself by the grace of the goddess of learning whom he had worshipped so long for a vain purpose.

It is likely that really great scholars may be in a slightly better position than others to be able to realize the utter worthlessness of all empiric scholarly achievements. But it is rarely that this saving truth is rightly grasped and acted upon by any one in this world of his own accord. The spiritual instinct, the effective hankering for the unalloyed Truth, is not the result of any worldly merit or demerit. But as soon as the first dim reflection of the light of Truth begins to irradiate the dark chambers of the mind, it automatically drives out the desire of all worldly possession. The mind realizes that the Truth has made His Appearance, not as the result of the intensity of its professed quest for the Truth of Whom it had no idea previously, but in spite of its bungling activity calculated to shut Him out altogether.

The process of spiritual enlightenment is not of the nature of the last term of a continued mathematical series, neither does it result in the destruction of all previous experience. It should rather be regarded as the fulfillment of all previous activities. With the Appearance of the Absolute, however, there is an end of all deficiency, unwholesomeness and ignorance we now know the Full Truth, and, in this sense, enlightenment is its own fulfillment. It also disillusionizes. The whole body of the old knowledge is seen to be utterly insubstantial and positively delusive. The shadow had all along been mistaken for the substance. The nature of the shadow is truly realizable only after one's

acquaintance with the substance. There is then no more chance of the shadow being mistaken for the substance.

It is no doubt a rude shock to be awakened in this manner. 'The Conqueror' confessed that the first suspicion that he had of the actual Approach of the Truth, was caused by his absolute collapse at the very Sight of the Lord. The darkness, which had been so fondly cherished, was found powerless to oppose the Advent of the Living Light. The first experience of the transcendental requires to be carefully distinguished from the invasion of hallucination. The transcendental is not anything that is opposed to the laws of physical Nature. It is not any thing abnormal. It is not a monstrosity. It neither confounds nor stupefies, but enlightens. It does not destroy anything except ignorance. We understand for the first time the real meaning of all those things with which we had been already familiar. All this happens without any initiative on one's part and by the mere Sight of the Truth Who is no other than the Divine Person Himself.

The goddess of learning told 'the Conqueror' that he had at last gained the real reward of his devotion to her by obtaining the Sight of the Lord. But, as a matter of fact, Sree Gaursundar was being actually seen by all the people of Nadia, who failed to experience any such spiritual consequences. There is a difference between worldly seeing and spiritual seeing. The term 'seeing' has to be used to express the new process in order to make the fact at all intelligible to the ignorant people of the world: But spiritual seeing is very different from although certainly analogous to the process of worldly seeing. In the former the Object to be seer takes the initiative, while in the latter the initiative seems to lie with the person who sees. That, which we seem to see on our own initiative, is the shadow. In such seeing we approach only such objects that are bound to show themselves to us the moment we choose to look at them. The object has no option but to be seen. Nay, it is bound to submit itself to the inspection of our senses as soon as we are in a position to choose to inspect. This process of knowing applies only to matter, limited existence or the shadow. The substantive Reality is spiritual and possesses the initiative.

Why do we never see the soul of man ? Because we are content with the sight of the material case which seems readily enough to submit to our sensuous inspection. The material eye sees, can see, only matter. The soul does not see matter as substance. He is not under the necessity of curtailing or distorting his naturally perfect vision. One is no loser if his faculty of vision ceases to be eclipsable by the interposition of an opaque body. The soul sees, through all obstacles, the object. He sees the obstacle as the enveloping shadow of the substance. There is thus no loss of cognitive power by the spiritual process.

The soul, in his normal state of uneclipsed spiritual condition is privileged to have the sight of the reality. This privilege he forfeits the moment he begins to function in this material world. His faculty of vision is eclipsed, as he now sees through the coloured glasses of the material eyes, which function is on the level of the plane of this world. But he is no gainer by the change as his knowledge of his own self is also correspondingly obscured. The conditioned soul functions in this world by allowing himself to be personated by a material substance which he is compelled to mistake for himself. But his adventitious second self is not really his servant, but always behaves as his master and makes him undergo in proxy the disappointments of his unnatural identification with its insubstantial existence. It is no privilege or widening of existence for the substance to be reduced to the serfdom of a shadow.

The All-soul is never subject to any such obscuration. It is only the jiva soul, who is a detachable particle of the Potency of the All-soul, who is liable to succumb to His limiting Power. ‘The Conqueror’ had the spiritual vision of the Lord. The people of Nadia also saw the Lord but with their material eyes and necessarily as an entity of this world. But ‘the Conqueror’, no sooner did he see the Lord, then he believed Him to be more than human. In fact the Lord made Himself known to Him at the very first sight. No one can recognize the Lord unless He makes Himself known. This applies to all spiritual entities. They have an unstinted sight of one another in the Lord so long as they serve the Lord by the boundless measure of the perennial requirements of such service. The Lord strictly reserves the right of

remaining unrecognized by all till He chooses to make Himself known to any one out of His own causeless mercy.

As soon as the Lord permitted 'the Conqueror of all quarters' to have the real Sight of Himself all the learning of which he supposed himself to have been the master, came forward in the living form of the Spiritual Power that ever serves the Lord, and made Herself known to him as She really is. The goddess of learning is that Power whereby the Lord makes Himself known to the cognitive faculty of the jiva. She is part and parcel of the Divinity Himself. But she is not Herself the Master. She is Power and not Possessor of Power. She is, however, Power with Personality and Function under the Supreme and Exclusive Direction of the Divine Will. In this She resembles souls in the state of Grace. 'the Conqueror' had been unable to know Her Real Nature as long as he had been trying to make use of Her for purposes other than the service of the Lord. But when the Lord was pleased to be merciful to 'the Conqueror' the goddess, by the Will of the Lord, instead of misleading now, made known to 'the Conqueror' the Real Nature of the Lord, which is, indeed, the legitimate function of all learning. 'the Conqueror', who had supposed that he was master of all the Shastric learning, now discovered that he had misunderstood everything. He also realized the fact that no one can know the Lord by one's own aspiring efforts.

The Goddess directed Her votary to make his unconditional submission to the Lord without delay. When the Lord asked him why he, 'the Conqueror of all quarters', had chosen to submit to Him, Keshab Bhatta replied that everything is fulfilled by serving the Lord. The spiritual service of the Lord, resting upon the principle of complete submission, is the summum bonum. This is realized only by the causeless Mercy of the Lord as conditioned souls are naturally disinclined to unconditional submission to another's personality. This was also the stumbling block in the way of the scholars of Nabadwip. They did not believe in the Personality of the Lord. But unless the Lord is a Person how is it possible to serve Him at all? The Lord, of course, is not a person like conditioned souls. The empiric idea of

personality is that of a limited and erring mind joined to a gross physical body. It is not, therefore, at all surprising that there should be a sincere and universal repugnance, on the part of empiric thinkers, to admit such personality in the case of the Supreme Lord. But the Personality of the Lord and of His servants are neither material nor mental. Therefore the objection does not apply.

The Goddess of Learning did not also direct 'the Conqueror' to submit to an abstract principle, which would be a fraud. The so-called submission to an abstract principle is rendered to a variable concoction of one's own erring mind. When we pretend to submit to an abstract divinity (?) we thereby only make a show of submitting to our own pedantic fantasies. As a matter of fact we are disinclined to submit to a real person as such submission appears to us to be incompatible with a free rational individual existence.

So submission to the Supreme Person is equivalent neither to submission to an abstraction nor to a conditioned soul. The Personality of the Supreme Lord is such that by submitting to Him we are delivered from the necessity of following the indeterminate abstract concoctions of our own sensuous minds and the similar fancies of others. We have in this world no choice but to submit to one of these two alternatives and we choose to call the process by the epithets of liberty (?) and rationalism (?) against the elementary principles of our own logic. Actual unconditional submission to the Transcendental Personality of the Supreme Lord is the only cure of this misfortune to which we are thus necessarily subject in the conditioned state.

Keshab Bhatta admitted that the Personality of the Lord is inconceivable to the empiric reason and is the Truth of all the Scriptures Those empiric philosophical systems, which try to establish the Nature of Godhead by the process of inductive reasoning based on the experience of this world, can really arrive at no definite conclusion. Keshab Bhatta realized that he had known nothing by his so-called erudition, and that it was not possible for him to know the Truth except by the Mercy of the Lord. He also realized that he was now enabled to understand, against the conclusions of all

empiric philosophy, that the Son of Sree Jagannath Misra is the Supreme Lord, that his own past profession of submission to the Supreme Lord had been a terrible self-deception, that it was only now that he was privileged to obtain the chance of really submitting to the Supreme Lord Himself in the Person of Sree Gaursundar, that such submission was at once the cause and the result, the indispensable concomitant, of spiritual enlightenment by the Grace of the Lord.

The episode of the defeat and conversion of 'the Conqueror' is the first-recorded instance of the deliverance of a conditioned soul by the mercy of Sree Gaursundar. We would, therefore, be well advised if we try to consider carefully how this Mercy was obtained. The process has been described above in detail by the grace of Thakur Brindavandas. We have seen that the Mercy of the Lord was not earned by any worldly merit. It was altogether causeless. We can, therefore, obtain some sort of the idea of its nature by the careful consideration of this actual instance. Does such knowledge help us in any way in attaining the spiritual life? It does so negatively, by destroying current misconceptions on the subject, if we give the Narrative an impartial hearing and thus prepare our minds for receiving the Truth when He actually makes His Appearance in the person of the devotee of the Supreme Lord, who teaches us the Truth by his own conduct. We can, however, understand the words of the bona fide devotee by the method of personal submission to him. Sree Gaursundar is the Supreme Lord Himself. He appeared in this world in the character of His devotee in order to establish the necessity of submission to the servant of the Lord if one really wants to obtain spiritual enlightenment. The episode of 'the Conqueror of all quarters' will have, therefore, served its real purpose if it establishes to one's satisfaction the necessity of this procedure to be followed even by those who are supposed to be masters (?) of all the knowledge of this world. But how is it possible to recognize the transcendental personality of the devotees of the Lord? This, of course, depends entirely on the Mercy of the Lord Himself, which can be secured by serving the Goddess of Learning not with the object of gaining any worldly advantage but for the purpose of receiving spiritual enlightenment. In the case of 'the Conqueror' he had all

along been using his learning to procure reputation and wealth. He was now disillusioned by the causeless Mercy of Sree Gaurasundar. The devotees of the Lord are ever engaged in endeavoring to reclaim all conditioned souls from the state of bondage to the limiting Energy. The bondage is devised by the punitive Power of the Lord, who is the negative aspect of His Beneficent Power. The devotees of the Lord are the agents of Positive Beneficence of Divine Power, appearing in this world to deliver all bound souls by affording them an opportunity of actual submission to the agents of the Lord, i.e., to themselves. The bound jiva is seldom inclined to-submit to any person other than himself. The inclination to submit to a devotee may be produced by attending carefully to the Narrative of the Activities of Sree Gaurasundar as interpreted by His associates and followers for the benefit of all conditioned souls.

It was only after he had submitted to the Feet of the Lord that 'the Conqueror' attained the spiritual life. He became a devotee of the Lord. 'The Conqueror of all quarters' was freed from his accumulated ignorance and at last became really learned by learning the service of the Lord.

Keshab Bhatta belonged originally to the school of Nimbarkacharya and is the author of 'Kramadeepika' in which work he lays down the principles of the service of Sree Radha Krishna in conformity with the Teachings of Sree Gaurasundar and the verses of the 'Dasa-Sloki' of Nimbarkacharya. He was followed by Gangalya Bhatta and other disciples. At a subsequent period, Keshab Kashmiri, who is not to be confounded with Keshab Bhatta, and others gave up the path of Sree Gaurasundar and established an independent school. But Sree Sanatana Goswami and Sree Gopala Bhatta Goswami, in recognition of the fact that Keshab Bhatta was enlightened by Sree Gaurasundar, have collected material for the Vaishnavite canon from his work, the 'Krama-deepika' referred to above.

As the result of the Mercy of Sree Gaurasundar, Keshab Bhatta was enabled, by the operation of the Spiritual Power of the Divinity, to be simultaneously endowed with all excellences in the shape of devotion to the Lord, realization of the Divine Nature, and aversion to anything other than the Lord. Keshab

Bhatta now became humbler than a blade of grass, discarding for good' all the vanities of 'the Conqueror of all quarters'.

The followers of Sree Gaursundar adopt the conduct that is prescribed by the Scriptures for the truly enlightened viz., the genuine Brahmanas. They give up all military, economic, or other worldly ambitions, and, in fact, all hankering for fame and honour, accepting thereby in their hearts the ideal of the Tridandi Bhikshu. This conduct should not also be misunderstood. The achievements of this world also appear in their true perspective to one only after he realizes his own spiritual nature. They cease to have any direct attraction for such a person who gets disentangled from the progress or decay of material civilization. He is freed from the influence of the hopes and fears of this world. But he is constantly engaged in serving the Lord by means of those very entities on the transcendental plane. The attitude is everything and is spiritual. The external conduct of the devotee is not properly intelligible to worldly people as it is not directed to any worldly object for any purpose that is intelligible to worldly people. The conduct of the devotee, however, is neither sentimental nor visionary, but part and parcel of the Eternal Reality Himself.

Those, who imagine the pursuit of sensuous enjoyment to be the sole object of life, naturally regard the dedication of learning, health, wealth and other qualifications for the augmentation of such enjoyment as their legitimate and successful use. But the insignificance and ephemeral character of the result achieved is clearly demonstrated by the phenomenon of death. Death snatches its victim from the scene of his enjoyment and shifts him to an unknown and unknowable destination. As soon as one is enlightened in regard to the real nature of his self he is enabled to realize the triviality of his so-called happiness and possessions of this world. Such a person is privileged to understand the unwholesomeness of all worldly knowledge and activities as a help for such enjoyment. One is enabled to realize the self and his proper relationship with the ephemeral objects of this world by the Mercy of the Supreme Lord. On the appearance of self-knowledge one automatically understands the nature of the transcendental service of the Lord as being the only proper function of the soul.

From this moment he is enabled to be constantly engaged in such service and to dedicate his learning, health and wealth and every other qualification to this purpose.

It is not the duty of the soul either to be addicted to the things of this world or to renounce them altogether, as both courses lead nowhere. The duty of the soul is to try and find out the everlasting plane and to learn to function on that plane by giving up the fleeting prospects of the Epicurean and Stoic alike. Such course is the only one that exactly suits the requirements of the soul. The soul can be satisfied with nothing less than the immutable reality. The fact, which the soul in the state of bondage does not realize, is that the immutable reality is not to be found by the pursuit of fleeting worldly enjoyment, nor by simply abstaining from such pursuits. There is a third and the real method viz., that of service of Godhead.

The nature of this service has to be learned from those who are themselves well-established on the spiritual plane. It can be learned by all persons who are sincerely desirous of knowing it and are prepared to give a really patient hearing to the exposition of methods and duties constituting the mode of endeavour for such enlightenment. This attitude is not possible in one who is not convinced of the unsatisfactory character of the correlated methods of enjoyment and renunciation of the things of this world, that are consciously or unconsciously followed by all conditioned souls including the pseudo-religionists. Only one who is thoroughly sincere will be disposed to accept the method that is laid down in the spiritual Scriptures and all that such a method necessarily implies.

When the spiritual plane is actually attained one is in a position to realize for himself, in a clear and conscious manner, the true nature of the cosmic and super-cosmic processes and his own place and function in the whole scheme of the Universe. The realization of this should be possible in this life if one is prepared loyally to undergo the necessary training. It cannot of course be equally easy of attainment for all. There are very few persons who are fully prepared to accept the Truth on His Own terms. On those who are really so

prepared the communication of the Truth acts with wonderful suddenness, because they really offer no resistance to His Entry into their hearts. But most of us are not really prepared to welcome the Truth even when we profess to cherish Him. This is the condition of the average honest person of this world. It is claimed in these pages that such persons are sure to benefit by listening patiently to the exposition of the Career of Sree Gaursundar from the lips of the real devotee.

They will thereby gradually acquire the effective desire for living up to the Truth. No worldly merit or demerit can either help or retard the process of spiritual enlightenment. It is situated wholly beyond the range of every form of worldly conviction and is, indeed, likely to be more easily grasped by those who are less under the sway of their formed convictions.

Those who have absolute faith in worldliness and perpetual ignorance are enamoured of the deeds of the heroes of this world. But we have also the testimony of all teachers of the Religion to the utter hollowness of all worldly achievements. A child may oppose the reconstruction of a house that is uninhabitable on the ground that the masons are plotting its destruction. But he is nevertheless necessarily wrong. Our worldly life requires to be thoroughly overhauled and reconstructed on a sounder basis. Those who are unduly attached to the rotten house by reason of either ignorance or malice, need not be regarded as wise. Empiricists are engaged in the attempt of trying to live safely and comfortably in the badly built falling house by opposing the process of imperative reconstruction. They do so partly for the avowed reason that it will be impossible to retain any measure of rottenness in the edifice after it has been thoroughly overhauled. They are right no doubt; but they are less alive to the consequences of their perversity. The policy is sure to bring the whole house down and crush them to death. There is absolutely no chance of their being able to live safely and comfortably in the rotten structure at any time.

The deceptive triumphs of material civilization have failed to solve the old problem of the uncivilized times why everything of this world is fore-doomed to pass away. Those savages were not content with the conditions of their

existence any more than we are with ours and also mainly for similar reasons. If an enchantress is pleased to provide us with an endless stock of the most beautiful things that make their appearance only to pass away, should we suppose that our requirement has been really fulfilled? It is no less necessary for us than it ever was for those savages to pause and consider well whether the achievements and convictions of material prosperity have any real value in the scale of our absolute requirements. The quest of the Truth is not for those who are content to remain ignorant by the lure of the dissipating enjoyment of the moment.

The defect is not one of intellect, it extends to all the faculties which also have their due share in the performance of conscious activity. The self-imposed sway of empiric knowledge, which supplies no definite answer to our fundamental questionings, is responsible for all the misfortune of humanity. Empiric knowledge does not take man an inch towards the Truth. On the contrary it leads its votaries by an accelerated pace towards sin and death by its justification of the false ideal of a life of dissipation alternating with that of barren asceticism, the twin forms of egotistic worldliness. It ever whispers into the ears of man, that in this present depraved condition he seems also to like so much, that he need not depend on nor submit to any other authority than his own, that he is the master of his body and mind and through them of all things of this world which, he is assured, have been intended solely for ministering to his corrupt pleasures. These conflicting ideals of empiric knowledge require to be smashed as the first step in any plan for rescuing fallen humanity from the fell clutches of the Enchantress.

This was being done by Sree Gaursundar during the period of His Professor-life at Nabadwip and also in the subsequent period when He traveled for this sole purpose all over the country as a Sannyasin. Those who suppose that it is against principle of humility to oppose the untruth or neglect to vindicate the Truth, are the emissaries of the Deluding Power. The attitude of humility is to be practiced by all means because we cannot know the Truth by our own unaided effort. Empiric knowledge errs by ignoring this basic principle of spiritual conduct. By, submitting to empiric knowledge not humility but

insolence in its undiluted form is practiced. Those, who are loyal servants of the Truth, are necessarily opposed to empiricism which is verily the embodiment of insolent denial of the supremacy of the Truth. Worldly people practice this masked insolence under the name of humility for deceiving themselves as well as their victims. But it should be easy to distinguish between true humility and the counterfeit ware. The uncompromising assertion of the principle of real humility is to be found in the resolve not to tolerate any of those countless insincere shifts devised by suicidal worldliness, under the connivance of empiric knowledge, for ruining humanity by masking them in the borrowed phraseology of Godliness.

This was admitted by 'the Conqueror of all quarters'. He was satisfied by being defeated in controversy by the Lord Himself. This extraordinary result would not have been produced if he had been worsted by an ordinary mortal. The process of controversy itself would have been a quite different one. 'The Conqueror' realized that his untruth had been confronted by Truth and was, therefore, utterly powerless to assert itself. He felt that he had been dabbling with words which might please and amuse but were really mere empty sounds signifying nothing. This utter hollowness of all so-called worldly knowledge is demonstrated to all sincere persons by Truth Himself in the form of the words of the devotees of Truth. On the lips of one who really serves the Absolute it is the Absolute Truth Himself Who makes His Appearance in the Form of the Divine Transcendental Sound. Divinity as Sound has Power to convey the knowledge of Himself to a soul who is prepared to receive Him as Sound against every specious obstructive argument.

The arrogance of the devotee of the Lord is thus the perfection of true humility. Those who realize this are freed from the fetters of the Deluding Energy inasmuch as they are thereby proved to have no interest of their own as against the Truth. Those, who can be angry with the follower of Truth under any circumstance, are necessarily under the spell of empiric untruth which always differentiates the external conduct and the internal motives. But a votary of Truth is always necessarily above duplicity of this kind. This is realizable only by those who are themselves also wholly sincere.

Impertinent fears for the future of the world never disturb the devotee of the Lord nor deflect him from the constant service of the Truth. This detachment should not be confounded with idleness or indifference to duty. The alertness and industry of the 'worldling' neither help nor retard the march of events of this world which is wholly controlled by a very much superior Power called in our shastras 'Maya' or the limiting Potency of Godhead acting in perfect obedience to the Will of the Supreme Lord. The empiricist, in his childish atheistical folly, chooses to imagine, against the clear impartial testimony of his own rational faculty, that he is the creator and controller of the forces of Nature. On the basis of this sacrilegious folly he builds up a science of conduct in keeping with this basic principle. It is the business of the devotee to strike at the very root of this folly in order to demolish the flimsy structure which has power to draw to itself so unaccountably the whole attention of most people of this world. There is no rational ground for doubting that a structure which is built on Truth is sure to prove a more suitable arrangement than one which is reared on untruth backed by insincerity. It is a fatal delusion, indeed, which has led rational beings to the strange conviction that they can manage to live well without Truth and that it is, therefore, their duty to oppose the Truth on the plea of possible (?) damage to the existing systems of untruth.

The devotee is sent into this world by the Lord in order to establish spiritual conduct by demonstrating the instability of the worldly life, its prospects and achievements. It is never possible nor rationally, desirable to try to build our lasting home in this world. They are mistaken who suppose that this life has to be lived for its own sake. Such people are sure to be surprised by death in the midst of their preparations for settling down in right earnest. This life is a preparation for the eternal life and should be lived accordingly. That conduct is fatal which in any way obstructs or delays the process of spiritual enlightenment. We should not allow ourselves to be diverted from the true purpose of this life by the temptations and disappointments provided by the Deluding Energy of the Lord, which are intended to help the process of our spiritual training if only they are rightly understood.

Chapter XIX

—Thakur Haridas, before his meeting with Sree Gaurasundar—

It will not be out of place at this stage to introduce the great personality who is the practising teacher (acharya) of the chanting of the Holy Name, the special Divine Dispensation for the Age of discord (Kali Yuga), the establishment of which is one of the Purposes of the Appearance of Sree Gaurasundar in this world. Thakur Haridas is the eternal associate of the Supreme Lord and appears in the Company of the Lord whenever and wherever the Lord Himself chooses to make His Appearance. Thakur Haridas plays a different role in the different Avataras of the Lord. In this Avatara he is the acharya of the Holy Name.

The Holy Name is both the Method and Object of worship of every pure soul. In the Kali Age nothing less than the Name Himself can effect the deliverance of fettered souls. This Teaching of Sree Gaurasundar is exemplified by, the life of Thakur Haridas. In order, therefore, to be able to understand the method and object of worship that can alone be acceptable to a highly controversial Age like the present, which is least disposed to take anything on trust, it will be necessary to follow attentively the events of the life of the acharya

The fashionable theology at Nabadwip, which was the cultural center of Bengal at the time of the Appearance of the Lord, was frankly atheistical. The Philosophical School of the New Logic (Naba Nyaya) may be described as the attempt of our empiric reason to deny the necessity, as well as practicability of all worship. The jiva is himself discovered to be both worshipper and worshipped. Worship itself is supposed to be but a concoction of the jiva's own erroneous speculations. The position to which one of the most highly developed system of the Philosophy of Logic led the people of Nabadwip, at the time of the Appearance of the Lord, and through them was accepted by people

all over the country was exactly what was specifically the worst fitted for understanding the uncompromising pure form of worship which it was the Will of the Lord to propagate by the life of Thakur Haridas. Whatever name might be borne by the different system of speculative philosophy they are in common agreement as regards the logical-necessity of atheism. Even the Gîta and the Bhagavatam were taught at Nabadwip at this period as Scriptures of atheism. It gives us an idea of the audacity and range of activity of the New School of Logic of Nabadwip that it could devise interpretations even of the unambiguous texts of the Bhagavatam itself in favour of their theory of rankest atheism. It is only to be expected in these circumstances that the Scholarship and acumen of Bengal should be generously recognized in all parts of the country and abroad and even by the atheistical Vedantists of Benares, who have always claimed for themselves the theological leadership of philosophical atheism in India. Thakur Haridas made his appearance in the village of Budhan in the District of Jessore in East Bengal. This has made that part of the country since then a center of the worship of Godhead by means of the Kirtan. Thakur Haridas was born in a Muhammedan family. He comes into the light of our definite narrative under his changed name of Haridas, which means literally 'the servant of Hari'; Hari being the Name of Godhead in the Scriptures. So Haridas must have given up his family and society in some manner that is not definitely known to us, had been the recipient of the mercy of a Vaishnava and had already made extraordinary progress on the path of pure devotion, although he was in the first flush of youth when he is found living as a recluse in the forest of Benapole in his native District of Jessore. In the depth of the forest he resided in a solitary hut, worshipped the holy Tulasi, chanted daily the Holy Name three lacs (3,00,000) of times night and day and ate food cooked in the homes of Brahmanas, which he obtained by begging.

The Hindu Chief, who was in charge of the Local Administration of that part of the country, bore the name of Ramachandra Khan. He was one of the greatest of atheists and a hater of the servants of Vishnu (lit. the One All-pervading Lord). Haridas was treated with great reverence by the people. Ramachandra Khan found this intolerable. He could not rest till he had actually devised a plan for effecting the humiliation of Thakur Haridas. For this purpose he did not

hesitate to stoop to be basest of devices.

Ramachandra Khan, finding that Haridas was reputed to be absolutely free from all vices, hit upon a plan of creating in him the vice by exposing which he hoped to accomplish his ruin. He summoned to his help the most famous harlots and told them to destroy the chastity of Haridas who was under the vow of continence as an ascetic. One of the harlots, who was young and possessed great beauty, undertook to effect his ruin in course of three days. Ramachandra Khan pressed her to take an armed footman (paik) who was to catch him red-handed and bring both of them for punishment. But the harlot proposed that she should at first go by herself and after being with Haridas once take the paik to capture him on her second visit.

That harlot, having put on her best attire, then presented herself at nightfall at the solitary cell of Thakur Haridas. After making her obeisance to the Tulasi she went up to the entrance of the cell and bowing to the Thakur remained there standing. She then sat down at the door-step, exposing her body to the view of Haridas, and made confession of her uncontrollable passion for him praying to be favoured by his intimate society.

Thakur Haridas agreed to fulfill her wish after he had finished chanting the due number of the Name, bidding her in the meantime to wait and listen to the Sankirtana of the Name chanted by himself. The harlot on this assurance remained seated there as Haridas went on with his loud chant of the Holy Name til break of day. The harlot came away disappointed when it was morning, and informed Ramachandra Khan that Haridas had promised to enjoy her society and that the promise would be carried out when she met him next night.

As the harlot presented herself before Thakur Haridas on the second evening he expressed his request that as on the previous occasion he could not keep his promise to her for the reason that he could not complete the chant of the due number of the Name, he would certainly fulfill her desire after the chanting of the due number of the Name had been completed, and he accordingly bade her wait there and listen to the chanting of the Name. The harlot made obeisance to

the Tulasi and the Thakur and sat listening to the chanting of the Holy Name. But she naturally grew restive as the night was drawing to a close. The Thakur, noticing her impatience, told her that he had taken the vow of chanting a crore of the Name in course of the month. He had expected to finish the full number that night but could not do so although he had chanted 'Him' the whole night. The number would be certainly completed by the next night and then the vow would be fulfilled and he would be in the position to enjoy her company. The harlot reported accordingly to Ramachandra Khan.

On the third evening the harlot duly made her appearance and, after making obeisance to the Tulasi and the Thakur, sat at the entrance of the cell listening to the chanting of the Holy Name, chanting the Same herself, till the close of that night. The mind of the harlot was changed by chanting the Holy Name all night in the company of Thakur Haridas. She now fell prostrate at the Feet of Thakur Haridas and confessed to him everything regarding the plot of Ramachandra Khan. She said she had committed endless sin as she was a harlot by trade. She begged the Thakur to save her, who was so vile, by his mercy.

Haridas Thakur replied that he knew everything about the Khan and would have left the place three days ago. He had delayed his departure by three days on her account. The harlot then prayed that he might mercifully instruct her as to how she was to get rid of the miseries of the worldly life. Thakur Haridas then tendered her this advice. 'Give away everything of your household to the Brahmanas. Come and stay here in this cell, chant constantly the Holy Name. Worship the Tulasi. You will then obtain the Feet of Krishna in no time'. After saying this and instructing her in the Holy Name the Thakur rose up and left the place, chanting the Name of Hari.

Then that harlot on obtaining the command of the Guru gave away to the Brahmanas all the wealth that she had. With shaven head and a single piece of cloth for wrapping her body she lived in that cell and took the Holy Name three lakhs of times in course of every night and day. She worshipped the Tulasi, ate uncooked food by chewing, and often fasted. The senses were controlled and love of Godhead manifested itself. She became a famous devotee and a great

spiritual teacher; and Vaishnavas of the highest order often came thither to have a sight of her. The people were astonished by this wonderful behaviour of the quondam harlot and bowed with reverence whenever they spoke of the greatness of Haridas.

As the above theme is the subject of the highest importance to the present Age, I have tried to keep scrupulously to the words of Sree Kaviraj Goswami in describing this famous event of the life of Thakur Haridas. The chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna imparted by a pure devotee rescued a youthful harlot who had tried to seduce the saint at the instigation of a most profligate atheist. By this process the harlot was not merely rescued from a life of shame but became a devotee of the Lord fit to lift others to the plane of perfect purity.

The chanting of the Holy Name can, therefore, reclaim the worst of sinners. The Holy Name has to be heard with reverence from the lips of a pure devotee. The Holy Name has to be received as a Sacrament from a pure devotee by complete submission at his feet. The Holy Name so received has to be constantly chanted by being free from all offense. The Tulasi has to be worshipped. All earthly possessions and all association with worldly people, especially in matters of food, clothing and residence, must be disowned. By this method, in a short time, the highest spiritual state is realizable. That state consists in serving exclusively the Feet of Krishna. This is the special Divine Dispensation for this Age of discord announced by the spiritual Scriptures and promulgated by the Supreme Lord, Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, through His eternal servant, Thakur Haridas.

The obvious objection to the above, that is likely to suggest itself to those who are too much addicted to the concerns of this world, is that it does not sufficiently appeal to the rationalistic imagination. The scheme seems to be dry and sterile. It also appears to be both meaningless and impracticable. Every admittedly futile speculation, despite its futility, seems to be more worthy of the serious consideration of the worldling than any transcendental proposition. Appearances are decidedly against the acceptance of the teaching of Thakur

Haridas by the average merely intellectual worldling.

In the first place Thakur Haridas seems to ignore wholly the life that is ordinarily led by people all over the world. The new life, that is proposed, has apparently no point of contact with the life previously led by the disciple after election. This is not likely to appeal to those to whom the theory of materialistic evolution has become as it were the very breath of their nostrils. 'Is a real gap or abrupt revolution possible in the world of life?' 'Can there be any such thing as the absence of proper purpose anywhere on the part of anybody in this fair world?' Such and similar questions are bound to rush into the brain of all mental speculationists the moment they are asked to take the Holy Name of Krishna to the exclusion of every worldly function. The proposal seems to be so puerile and so queer and so utterly destructive of all that is near and dear to the heart of the average man!

It is for this reason that the sadhus are on principle opposed to discuss spiritual subjects with persons who do not really seek the Truth. Those, who think that for them there is no driving necessity for such quest, are not likely to follow seriously any elucidation of propositions that have nothing to do with anything in which they feel really interested. The complete denial of any place to empiric conclusions, in the life that is proposed for the novice, is a staggering blow to most people who feel instinctively that they should refuse to listen to what obviously amounts to nothing short of an incitement to the commission of suicide.

The spiritual purpose itself cannot, however, be explained away nor whittled down by means of clever interpretations. The actual doings and saying of Thakur Haridas stand in the way of those who try to do so. The Thakur literally acted as he taught. He acted also in accordance with the plainest meaning of his words. So there can be no ambiguity whatsoever.

The harlot's condition was not essentially different from that of any other worldling. The irrepressible desire for complete renunciation of the world, is

the natural and inevitable result of the appearance of any real inclination for the spiritual life. The awakened worldly mind understands the necessity of committing mundane suicide in order to be reborn as the immaculate soul for the purpose of realizing the life eternal. The material mind is not a figment of the empiric imagination. It is a real envelope and has to be completely discarded. It will not do to imagine this enveloping darkness as possessing anything in common with the light. The material mind is like a sheet of impenetrable darkness that completely shuts out the light of the soul. The soul is by his nature self-refulgent and has nothing to do with the material mind which acts as a screen to cut off the light of the soul from the view of the observer who uses the mind for such purpose. This is fact and not a hypothesis like the so-called 'truths' and 'facts' conceived by the material mind in the vanity of its ignorance. The spiritual realization of the categorical difference, and relation of utter incompatibility between mind and soul is the first unique experience on the threshold of the awakened spiritual life.

The harlot was not 'converted' by speculative arguments addressed to the mind but simply by listening to the Name of Hari from the lips of Thakur Haridas and chanting the Same herself in his company. She had apparently the advantage of possessing at the very outset a natural regard for Thakur Haridas and for his advice and also for the holy Tulasi. This was the only antecedent condition of her redemption. Was it, therefore, blind and traditional faith that actually saved her in this crisis?

The answer must be in the negative. Those, who are most officiously given to the cult of blind faith, are not necessarily attracted towards the actual devotee. The affinity for the true soul is itself a spiritual, that is to say perfectly self-conscious, impulse. It must be most carefully distinguished from the blind, material impulse which is so common and which, as a matter of fact, is the worst form of obstacle in the way of the realization of the spiritual life. The instinctive affinity of the harlot for Haridas is an activity of the soul and as such is, therefore, perfectly moral, perfectly self-cognizant and categorically different from sensuous sentimentality that ordinarily passes in this world as blind, faith. Faith is the instinctive attitude of the soul towards the Truth and can, therefore,

never be blind. It is the blind who in their blindness confound true faith with the counterfeit ware with which alone they happen to be, unfortunately for themselves, only too familiar.

Real faith can alone lead one to the presence of the pure soul. The material mind cannot reach the proximity of a Sadhu. The harlot possessed the spiritual faculty by which it was possible for her to really approach Thakur Haridas. The Shastras say that this true instinctive reverence for sadhus is the result of previous unconscious association with the pure devotees of the Lord.

For the proper unconscious association with sadhu also sensuous sentimentality is often the chief hindrance. The sensuous sentimentalist seeks the gratification of his own senses. He, therefore, is least disposed to serve the sadhu on the account of the latter. It is going against his grain. The sadhus accordingly keep away from philanthropists as these are not willing to learn to get rid of their sentimentality. A pseudo-devotee, who parades his false sentimentality, readily enough obtains the cheap reverence of all worldly persons as his due, by misunderstanding of the purpose of the Scriptures. Such a person is not likely to bow to the sadhu, as he really wants to be served himself. Plain worldly people are likely to be more easily benefited by the process of unconscious association with the sadhus. Those who bring with them any previously formed notions regarding the nature of the sadhus, find it difficult to get rid of those false sentiments which stand in the way of their associating on a proper footing with the real sadhus. The only natural way of associating with the devotees of Godhead consists in doing whatever the sadhu wants one to do and in the way that he advises, without expecting any desirable or undesirable result to oneself therefrom. The harlot possessed something like this natural faith in sadhus by reason of her previous unconscious association with the devotees of Godhead.

The immoral life, that was being actually led by the harlot did not stand in the way of her redemption. The point is made absolutely clear by the fact that she went to Thakur Haridas for the purpose of seducing him. This shows also that her instinctive faith in sadhus was not colored by any conventional moral sentiments. This was an advantage. Too rigid empiric morality obstructs spiritual awakening more effectively than even confirmed immorality. This is due to want of humility and spirit of submission to the sadhu that is sure to be

engendered more or less by the dogmatic professor of conventional morality. True morality is never possible prior to spiritual awakening. That which passes as morality in the society of worldlings, is only a hypocritical, and, therefore, more dangerous form of immorality. The moral instinct proper, which belongs to the soul, must not be confounded with this hypocritical immorality and its conventions. The harlot was not hampered by the conventions of a hypocritical morality. She possessed an open mind with a natural liking for the society of really pure souls, although she herself was actually leading a life that is condemned by moralists. But as it is not possible for a person to be really and fully moral before he realizes the nature of his true self, the case of the harlot, instead of being worse, was in certain respects better than that of the conventional moralist who is rigidly committed to the casuistical defence of the unspiritual life that he actually leads.

It is not, of course, intended to undervalue the principle of morality in anyway. That instinct, in its pure form, as in the case of every other instinct, belongs to the soul. The form, in which it passes current in the world, is only the perverted reflection of the real principle and is not conducive to spiritual life. Its apparent advantages are strictly confined to this perverted existence. Whatever tends to reconcile us to the worldly life, stands self-condemned for that very reason. Empiric morality is fully open to this charge of pandering, to the unspiritual life. As a matter of fact neither conventional morality nor conventional immorality are praised by the sadhus, as, by themselves, they stand without any relation to the Truth. As soon as our conduct gets related to the Truth it assumes its natural state which has nothing to do with either the conventional moral or immoral principle of this world. To call the spiritual conduct as merely moral in the ordinary conventional sense of the world, would, therefore, be wholly misleading. The spiritual conduct is no doubt perfectly wholesome, being free from all affinity with the unwholesome things of this world. The so-called 'moral' conduct based on worldly experience owes all its value to its worldly utility. This fact categorically differentiates spiritual 'purity' from worldly morality. There is, of course, no possibility of immoral conduct on the spiritual plane. In the absence of all possibility of immorality there is no scope for worldly morality in the realm of the Absolute. The

Kingdom of Godhead accommodates all varieties of conduct by endowing all of them with perfect wholesomeness. Can such conduct be appropriately called 'moral' in the conventional sense of the term?

For instance the trade of the harlot is in this world generally held to be utterly immoral. Is it possible for the 'ethical' mind to conceive of a state of existence that is infinitely higher than any conceivable worldly moral excellence ?

Those fanatics who, grossly misunderstanding the nature of the subject treated by the spiritual Scriptures, set up as orthodox and uncompromising 'believers' in the 'letter' of the Scriptural texts and try to 'reform' the 'abuses' of this world by immoral regulations that are profanely attributed to Godhead Himself on the strength of such silly and mischievous interpretation, deserve to be put into the pound in the company of those 'innocent' creatures that are mercifully denied the quality of voicing their 'notions' for harming everybody. There are hypocritical pedants who, affect to hold up their nose at the very sound of the name of a harlot and forthwith prescribe penitential punishment of the most atrocious kind for reforming their morals in 'obedience' to the injunctions of the Holy Scriptures. The Devil is also permitted to quote the Scriptures for his purposes.

Fanatics and hypocrites were in possession of the stage of the tragic drama of worldly life at the time when Thakur Haridas emerged on the bewildered vision of those pseudo-religionists and began to supply by his actual conduct the real explanation of the only purpose of all the Scriptures, by electing the harlot as the fittest and the very first object of the Divine Grace. He was naturally opposed by the renegade Brahmana Ramachandra Khan who, in order to exploit the letter of the Scriptures for the accomplishment of his villainy, gave it out as his 'duty' to put down by all means a Muhammedan who had the temerity to set up as the expounder of the Shastras of the Hindus!

This brings us to the principle of hereditary caste. The teaching of the Shastras belongs exclusively to the twice-born. The Shastras themselves lay down elaborate rules by which to constitute the community of the Brahmanas who are to be the only teachers of them. This last part of the system had been

allowed to pass out of the memory of the people, and, in its place, had been substituted by gradual and insidious steps and by general connivance, the principle of heredity. The hereditary Brahmanas by the strict Shastric test are no Brahmanas at all. Ramachandra Khan was the champion of this corrupt system, not for any real regard born of sincere conviction for the merits of the system itself or from any knowledge of the Shastras, but, as it always happens in such cases, from malice and insolence.

If Haridas Thakur would practice the function strictly reserved for hereditary Brahmanas then the whole system of caste based upon the principle of heredity is challenged at its source. If a Muhammedan can become a Brahmana, the present social system of the Hindus, which is claimed to be part and parcel of the Religion, is utterly demolished. This was bound to agitate profoundly all caste-Hindus.

Nor was this all. The chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna was also practiced with a loud voice. This was an entirely novel mode of worship to the Hindus of that time. The new out-caste apostle of the eternal religion, in opposition to all current rituals and forms of worship, was declaring to admiring Hindus an apparently new form of worship as the one enjoined by the Shastras

Could all the contemporaneous Hindus be so utterly mistaken that they required to be imparted ab initio the knowledge of the fundamentals of their own religion by a Muhammedan, against the teaching of all the hereditary Brahmanas, the exclusive teachers of the same by the rules of the Shastras themselves?

It is quite easy to imagine the intense consternation and hostility that were naturally aroused in an Age of casuistical fanaticism by the preaching of the simple doctrines of the Religion of the Truth. The chanting of the Holy Name of Godhead is the only sacrament of the true religion prescribed for the present Age. This simplification is in keeping with the spirit of all the other sacraments authorized by the Shastras. The other sacraments are not suitable for this Age which is too much addicted to skeptical argumentation ad nauseam. As soon as one realizes the true nature of the soul all his activities are thence forward

naturally and necessarily performed on the spiritual plane. The narrow ceremonial view of the sacrament is due to the imperfect spiritual vision of the observer. The sacrament may, therefore, differ in the different Ages in its external appearance, which, is however, the only view that is open to the notice for whose special benefit it is ordained.

The chanting of the Holy Name is liable to the least objection even as sacrament, from a casuistical Age. The Mercy of Godhead must be sought willingly, nay with the keenest hankering that is born of positive liking, for obtaining real touch with him in order to serve Him by means of the spiritual senses of the pure soul.

The sacrament implies a real mutual personal relationship between the Lord and His servant. It is definite, concrete and loving, but in the spiritual (not abstract, notional or concocted i.e., purely mental) sense. The personality, senses and functions of the soul are not comprehensible to, nor admissible by the mind. The mental refusal to recognize the substantive existence of the soul, is the greatest curse of this Age of dogmatic empiricism. This piece of dogmatism must be got rid of.

The empiric reason is confronted to a fight at its own weapons when it is summoned to admit the rationale of the worship of Godhead by means of His Name only. The Name of Godhead must not also be supposed to connote or denote anything of this world, in no shape, neither as precept nor concept. This should, in all conscience, more than satisfy the passion for abstraction of even the Moslem iconoclast.

The next point is that the Name of Godhead must be admitted as true and not as a mere concoction of the material mind. The Scriptural Name of Godhead is not a thing of this world. The Scriptural Name is Himself Divine. The Scriptural Name requires to be served with the tongue by an attitude of humble supplication for manifesting His Divine Nature to the pure serving, essence of our soul. Even the most rabid iconoclast need have no cause of complaint against such service. It is this pure service that was practiced by Thakur Haridas, which, he maintained, was the only sacrament enjoined by the Scriptures as suitable for this Age of wrangling sophistry (Kali Yuga.) The

implications of this position will be more fully developed in course of this Narrative at the proper stages.

As the service of Godhead is the eternal function of the individual soul in the state of grace, it transcends all mental and physical activities. The Shastras accordingly reserve the service of Godhead to those who are twice-born. The terms Brahmana (one who has knowledge of Godhead as the Great) and Dwija (twice-born) applied to persons who are eligible for the service of Godhead, refer to the individual soul in the state of grace and not to caste. If Thakur Haridas be regarded as a Moslem born, it is then the physical body that is denoted by the Name Thakur Haridas. If Ramachandra Khan claimed to be a Brahmana on the strength of his seminal birth in a Brahmana(?) family, he also supposed his physical body to be Brahmana. The objection of Ramachandra Khan to Thakur Haridas, on the strength of such foolish interpretation of the Shastras, was met by Thakur Haridas by pity and indifference. Ramachandra Khan did not possess the good fortune of the harlot, whom he made the dupe of his deviltries, to be enabled to listen to the Holy Name of Godhead from the lips of Thakur Haridas. A Brahmana, who claims to be such by right of seminal birth, is less fit for spiritual service than even an open minded harlot.

From Fulia Thakur Haridas moved off to Chandpur. The village of Chandpur was situated in the present District of Hughly in the neighbourhood of Tribeni (Saptagram-Tribeni). Balaram and Jadunandan Acharyas, the purohits (family-priests) of Hiranya and Gobardhan Mazumdars of Tribeni, had their residence in the village of Chandpur which lay to the east of Tribeni. The word 'Mazumdar' is the equivalent of 'Majumadar,' the title of an accountant of the royal revenues under the Nawabs. Balaram Acharya was the disciple of Thakur Haridas and regarded himself as his servant. Haridas stayed with Balaram acharya in the later's house. Balaram Acharya with great care made arrangements for the residence of the Thakur in the village. Haridas lived there in a hut and accepted the alms of food at the house of Balaram Acharya. The boy Raghunath Das son of Gobardhan, was at this time studying under Balaram Acharya. Raghunath used to go to Thakur Haridas for a sight of the saint. Haridas was merciful to the boy. Thakur Haridas's mercy was the cause of the

subsequent attainment of spiritual enlightenment by Raghunath Das. The following event occurred while Thakur Haridas was staying at Chandpur.

One day Balaram Acharya, by his humble supplications, induced Thakur Haridas to repair to a gathering at the house of the Mazumdars. The two brothers stood up on seeing the Thakur and, falling at his feet, offered him a seat with great respect. There was present in the assembly a very large number of Pandits, Brahmanas, and other worthy people. The two brothers Hiranya and Gobardhana were also very learned persons. All present spoke highly in praise of Thakur Haridas. This met with the hearty approval of the brothers. It was known to all that the Thakur recited the Holy Name three lakhs of times daily. The Pandits accordingly talked about the greatness of the Name as Thakur Haridas assumed his seat in their midst.

Some of the Pandits said that the cure of all sinfulness automatically results from uttering the Name of Godhead. Others expressed the view that the individual soul (jiva) is freed from the miseries of this life by uttering the Name. Haridas declared that those two were not proper fruits of the chanting of the Name. Love to the Feet of Krishna is aroused by taking of the Name. Haridas said that the condition of a person who realizes such love is described in a sloka of the Bhagavatam (Bhagavatam 2-35). 'A person, who is habituated to serve Krishna in the ways enunciated above (viz., hearing, chanting, etc., loses all control over his mind and, by reason of realizing the quality of love by chanting the Name of Krishna, experiences an anxious restlessness of the heart. He loses all consideration for the opinion of the people and laughs, cries, shouts, sings and dances at intervals. Salvation and destruction of sinfulness are only attendant results— 'Just as the rising of the Sun dispels all darkness, so also no sooner does the Name of Hari manifests Himself than He forthwith destroys all the sins of the person who utters His Name.'

Haridas requested the Pandits present to explain the above ½loka. All the Pandits desired Thakur Haridas to elucidate its meaning to them. Haridas who had recited the sloka now said that even before the Sun actually begins to appear darkness is dispelled by his approaching light and the fear from thieves,

ghosts and demons is also destroyed; and, on his actual appearance, all useful activities begin to be performed. In like manner sins and other evils are destroyed by the reflected light of the approaching Sunrise of the full manifestation of the Name; while, on the actual appearance of the Name, love to the Feet of Krishna is aroused. Salvation is a trivial result which is effected by the dim reflection cast by the Name as His Appearance draws nigh. The devotee does not wish to accept salvation which is at first offered by Krishna. Haridas quoted the two following Blokas of the Bhagavatam in support of his contention (Bhagavatam 2-42; 5-19-12). 'If the dying Ajamil could attain to the realm of the Vaikuntha by calling upon Hari, which happened to be the name of his son, who can estimate the effect if the Name is chanted with faith?, 'My own,' says Krishna, 'Never accept the different forms of salvation, e.g., attainment of My realm, attainment of power and wealth and fame similar to Mine, the privileges of dwelling near Me, even the favour of becoming one with Myself; all of which privileges I offer them unreservedly. They covet nothing except My service.'

Gopal Chakravarti was a Brahmana who belonged to the household of the Mazumdars, being employed to carry letters and money to the king. He had to go up to Gauda and appear before the Padishah himself in connection with the discharge of his official duties. He used to convey twelve lakhs of rupees annually to the king. He was, in his early youth, very handsome and a very good scholar. Gopal lost his patience on hearing that salvation can be obtained by the dim reflection of the Name. He then spoke in great anger.

“Pandits who are in assembly here,” said Gopal, “All of you have heard the conclusion announced by one whose trade is to amuse people by dance and song. Emancipation, which is unattainable by means of knowledge of the Brahman in crores of births, is held by him to follow automatically the manifestation of the dimmest reflection of the Name.”

At this point Haridas entreated Gopal not to entertain any doubt on the subject, as the Shastras themselves declare that liberation from the bondage of the world results at once from the appearance of the dim reflection of the Name. The bliss of liberation is utterly trivial in comparison with the happiness of loving

service. It is for this reason that the devotees do not accept liberation. The Thakur then quoted the sloka of Hari Bhaktisudhodaya (H. Bh. S. 14-31). 'Teacher of the universe, to me, immersed in the pure ocean of bliss by meeting Thee, the bliss of the attainment of the knowledge of the Brahman (the Great Nourisher) appears to be as contemptible as the tiny speck of water filling a whole in the ground indented by the hoof of cattle.'

The Brahmana now became furious. He shouted out that he would assuredly cut off his nose if liberation does not result from the dim reflection of the Name. On hearing the blasphemy the members of the assembly gave vent to their sorrow at the behaviour of Gopal. Mazumdar reproved him severely. Balaram Acharya expressed his indignation by remarking that the offender was a fool fit only for hair-splitting sophistry and was perfectly ignorant of the principle of devotion. How could he go the length of insulting even Thakur Haridas! He was doomed to perdition beyond all help.

Haridas rose to leave the place as he heard the words of the Brahmana. Mazumdar forthwith severed all his official connection with Gopal and with all the assembled persons fell prostrate at the feet of Thakur Haridas. Haridas smiled and spoke sweet words. He said, "None of them had done anything offensive except that Brahmana. The Brahmana was also not to blame. His addiction to controversial discussion was the cause of his strange behaviour. The greatness of the Name is not realizable by futile discussion. How could he, therefore, understand those principles?" He then bade them depart to their homes in peace, expressing the wish that no one might come to grief by his connection with himself.

Hiranya das came back to his house after receiving this assurance of pardon and forbade Gopal to cross his threshold. In course of three days the offending Brahmana was attacked with virulent leprosy. His very prominent nose rapidly melted away. The fingers of his hands and feet, rivaling the champaka buds in their delicacy, all shriveled up and dissolved away by the corrosive force of the malady. On beholding this all the people were filled with great wonder. They praised Haridas and made obeisance to Him with reverence.

Sri Krishna Kaviraj Goswami concludes the above account with the pregnant observation that although Haridas did not feel offended by the conduct of the Brahmana yet did Godhead award the offender the punishment due to his transgression. It is the nature of the devotee of Godhead that he ever pardons the faults of the ignorant. It is Krishna's Nature that He cannot bear any calumny of His devotees even through ignorance.

Haridas was grieved at heart on hearing of the misery of the Brahmana, He apprised Balaram Acharya of his intention to leave the place and proceed to Shantipur.

The account is prefaced by Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami with the remark that the event narrated is most wonderful for the reason that it contains the clear elucidation, from the lips of the Acharya himself, of the Divine Dispensation of the present Age. The reader must not forget the point, which is the center of interest of the whole narrative detailed in this work, viz., that Thakur Haridas is the Acharya or the practicing teacher, authorized by Godhead to promulgate the congregational chanting (Sankirtana) of the Holy Name, which is the mode of worship that alone can demolish the worst form of atheism in the name of 'free' thinking that is unfortunately so prevalent now-a-days all over the world and which is the terrible but inevitable natural consequence of the exclusive worship of Mammon by all the resources of mind and body.

The world is gratuitously assumed by a pseudo-rationalism to be the only reality and the attempt is, therefore, made to ascertain the methods by following which we can attain the gratification of the senses which function appears to be the relationship naturally subsisting between ourselves (?) and the world. The senses are assumed to be an integral and undetachable part of ourselves. The mind is identified with the senses on the one hand and the soul on the other. The senses connect the mind, or the soul, by this assumption, with the external world. The senses are the eyes of the whole system. All pain and pleasure suffered by the mind are due to the way in which the mind directs the senses in their-relations with the world. The mind cannot apparently know by intuition, at any rate ordinarily, all the consequences of any particular mode of employment of the senses. The mind can, indeed, try to guess about them.

But it can never be quite sure about any occurrence till after actual experience. This uncertainty is supposed to be reducible to certainty if it could be possible to know from experience the uniform 'laws' that are assumed to govern all phenomenal occurrences under all circumstances. This hypothesis of the uniform operation of the 'laws' of Nature has been built up by the accumulated 'experiences' of the race. But as the occurrences themselves present an infinity of complications it has not been possible to attain to anything like certainty in isolating the single threads of the web in order to be certain of our hypothesis in every case by being enabled to reproduce an the occurrences of nature in the Laboratory.

Assuming that the above object of scientific endeavour will be realizable in practice in the long run, its success should make it possible for us to prolong the possibility and scope. of sensuous enjoyment ad infinitum. If we fail to be perfectly 'happy' by the complete elimination of 'pain' by the proper employment of the 'forces' of Nature in the way that is calculated to produce such a result under the then known 'laws of Nature,' our labours should still have really no abiding value for ourselves. But has our 'experience' up to the present moment taken us an inch towards the realization of unmixed or lasting pleasure? Is 'pleasure' really different from 'pain,? Or is it only different by circumstance? That which is food for the goose is food for the gander, is not found to be more true than most hypotheses. Variation, which is sought to be eliminated, is found on close inspection and analysis to be the indispensable condition of the pleasures itself. We are, therefore, left inevitably to the present condition of necessary and complete ignorance in order to have any 'pleasure' at all by our dealings with the world by means of our senses.

It is argued that pleasure and pain might themselves be enriched, deepened and broadened by more experience and that it is worth our while to help this process in a conscious manner. To this the answer would be that the better and more detailed realization of our utter ignorance, in the midst of the mockery of a civilization that is claimed to be based upon knowledge, would be a self contradiction that is not likely to appeal to the assorting instinct of our rational nature and is calculated to make our condition no better than it is. Civilized wickedness and filth are not preferable to any nuisance of the uncivilized state. Satan, who may be allowed to possess the perfection of worldly culture, is

probably more miserable than the uncivilized Gond. It would be difficult for the unbiased reason of man to choose between materialistic savagery and materialistic civilization.

'Ignorance is misery,' says one of the wisest of proverbs. Increase of ignorance is not any decrease of misery. Ignorance is supposed to be the state of all empiric knowledge which is improperly assumed to be alone available to man. Our very nature is sometimes supposed to be incapable of real enlightenment. This axiom of pessimism is exploited for advising man to turn a deaf ear to the Teacher of the Absolute. It is even more disastrously utilized for condemning the devotees themselves.

It cannot be otherwise. The soul is in this case identified with the mind-cum-body. Abandonment of the mind, therefore, appears as equivalent to the abandonment of the soul, or to self immolation. The mind seems to be our all. Groping in perpetual ignorance appears as our inevitable function miscalled 'Search for the Truth.' Empiric enthusiasts imaginatively describe this process as the 'eternal quest'. These metaphors and denunciations do not, however, help us in anyway; but, on the contrary, they only tend to obstruct the process of the real quest.

Gopal Chakravarti is a typical Brahmana of the pseudo Vedantic School of Sankara. He has no doubts regarding the goal of the Vedanta. According to him the attainment of the Knowledge (?) of the Brahman, Who possesses no distinctive function at all that is capable of being defined, is the goal. By the attainment of the knowledge of the real Nature of the Brahman, the individual soul is freed from all the miseries of his apparent existence which only seems to be limited and is, therefore, only supposed to be miserable. As there is only One Entity, viz., the Brahman, Who is ever (?) free from all defects and all merits, the goal can be no other than complete absorption (?) into the One. On the attainment of this desirable goal there is no difference between the devotee, devotion and the Object of devotion. The service (?) of the Brahman is thus only a temporary means to a final end, which means being different from the end and is, therefore, necessarily terminable with the attainment of the goal. It is the highest form, of religion to try to realize, by the appropriate methods, the knowledge of, and absorption into, the undifferentiated Brahman. When the

individual soul becomes one with the Brahman the state of separate existence and necessity for any kind of distinguishable function terminate together. According to Gopal Chakravarti and his associates this knowledge of the Brahman is higher than service and the termination of both (?) knowledge and service is the highest goal. Gopal is quite sure that this is the only teaching of the Scriptures. It may be observed at this place that Sankara does not discard the principle of worship, but declares its tentative necessity which is terminable on self-realization which, according to him, is identical with complete absorption into the One.

Thakur Haridas distinguishes between devotion, work and knowledge. The soul in the bound state desires one of two alternative functions. If he is optimistic he wants greater scope for enjoyment. If he happens to be pessimistic he hankers for emancipation from the misery of mundane existence.

The latter, viz. , the pessimist, sometimes thinks that real emancipation is impossible so long as the consciousness of one's being different or separate from the One, persists. It is to this extreme school of atheistic Vedantists, advocating unification with the Brahman, that Gopal Chakravarti, like most cultured people of his day as well as of this, happened to belong by his empiric predisposition. According to this school fruitive work leads to empiric knowledge and the latter to the third position of inexpressible oneness with the Brahman. Devotion or service is classed under fruitive work, which is assigned a lower position than empiric knowledge. The process of advance to the goal of complete unification with the One, according to this school, is devotion (blind faith rendering possible utilitarian work of a low order) (Bhakti?) leading to work of a higher order (Karma), which, in its turn, leads up to empiric knowledge of the uselessness of all knowledge and all activity terminating in perfect absorption into the one (Brahm-laya) .

Haridas is neither a pessimist nor an optimist. He is an absolutist. He is convinced that the theory of complete absorption into the One is logically unsound and opposed to the real teaching of the Scriptures. The alternatives of enjoyment and abstention from enjoyment exhaust indeed, the possibilities of function of the mind and body; but they have no application to the soul which

is located beyond the reach of body and mind. The soul is substantially different from the mind and body. The soul is the substantive reality while the mind is only his perverted reflection in the mirror of limited existence. The mind is the material shadow so to say of the soul who is the spiritual substance. The mind is a material phenomenon galvanized into the appearance of self-consciousness by the impulse communicated to it by the deluded soul. Mind is the shadow of the perverse soul mirrored in matter. This description is, and can be, but an imperfect and misleading analogy of the relationship that actually subsists between mind and soul. The shadow of the material substance is not categorically different from the substance itself, both of them being material phenomena. The shadow of the soul in this case is, however, categorically different from the soul, being a material phenomenon pure and simple. The soul in his spiritual or natural conditional is categorically different from material phenomenon. The soul is self-consciousness itself. There can be no such thing as ignorance in the soul. There can be no such thing as genuine self-consciousness in the mind which is non-soul. The apparent self-consciousness of the mind is really a state of complete ignorance which is given its shape and colour by the qualities of matter, viz., grossness, limitation, perishability, changeableness, etc. These unwholesome traits are non-existent and impossible in the soul. The soul is capable of forgetting his real nature mistaking himself to be a material entity. The soul is not above one possible weakness, viz., willful rebellion against the Truth. It is a real blunder on the part of the soul to choose to be a rebel. But the soul is perfectly free to refuse to serve the Truth, i.e., Godhead. He thereby proves deliberately false to his own substantive nature, because it is the constituent function of the soul, in his natural state of perfect spiritual existence, to be the exclusive servant of the Truth. The soul who rebels against Godhead is punished by his exile to the phenomenal world and by incarceration in the double material case of mind and body. The point will be further elucidated later.

Fruitive work and empiric knowledge are functions of the mind and, therefore, purely material phenomena. By means of such work and knowledge the deluded soul cannot realize his natural function for the plain reason that they are not his proper function at all. By means of work and knowledge the Soul

only moves in a vicious circle of material existence which is seemingly conscious but really one of absolute ignorance. This is the explanation why by means of the undifferentiated knowledge of the Brahman freedom from the fetters of work and knowledge of this anomalous existence can be attained by crores of years of endeavour. This is what Gopal says. The delay is, however, not due to the complexity of the process, as he supposes it to be. So long as a person continues to suppose that an impersonal all-pervasive Entity is the goal of knowledge one is not yet freed from the real ignorance of his spiritual function. This must be so because Truth is not impersonal.

Neither is Truth a person in the sense in which the mentalists, including Sankara, apparently want us to understand the term. Spiritual personality is categorically different from the distorted empiric notion of the same. Until the nature of the personality of the Truth is properly grasped one continues in the deluded state which is also the state of limitation (bondage). Therefore Gopal Chakravarti is right, although he is unaware of it, in holding that the chance of emancipation of a person who has attained to the notion of Godhead as an impersonal and inactive, although all pervasive and transcendental, Entity, is very slight. Gopal does not understand that his ideal person is also necessarily no less deluded than himself if he supposes his condition to be the goal.

The interpretation of the text relied upon by Gopal Chakravarti, said Thakur Haridas, is that of a person who does not understand the Nature of the Name by reason of his having no access to Him. The deluded person is no longer consciously contradicting himself and is not, therefore, insincere in the sense of being double tongued. He is certainly to be pitied. Neither can his conduct be regarded as sincere inasmuch as it is opposed to his real nature of which he only happens to be ignorant by his own conscious perversity. The empiric casuist who affects to believe in the impersonal nature of the Truth is only pushing his conscious perversity of the choice of untruth to its logical conclusion. If the deliberate error is not ignored his conduct cannot be regarded as consistent being altogether untrue.

Gopal Chakravarti's source of error lay deeper than the plane on which he

stood and was, therefore, naturally incomprehensible to him in his condition of cultured perversity. The Vaishnavas, who alone understand the real cause of the worldly ailment, alone possess the true spirit of toleration. Thakur Haridas showed his toleration of the rank atheism of deluded Gopal Chakravarti by abstaining from disturbing him further. This toleration really means the withdrawal of his causeless apparently aggressive mercy from a deluded soul whose opposition to Godhead is likely to be increased by the process. It is the greatest possible misfortune that can befall a conditioned soul to miss the special mercy of the Vaishnava by his successful opposition to the Truth. The apparent intolerance of a Vaishnava is as helpful to a person as his tolerance of evil. The Vaishnava never co-operates with the offending soul in his sinful activities. He does not agree to be false to himself and his eternal Master to please the confirmed apostate. Such sympathetic toleration of evil is a grave offense against the Truth notwithstanding the significant fact that it alone is relished by the pantheistic school of the pseudo-Vedantists.

The point reached marks almost the limit of rational discussion towards the spiritual issue, that is open to the empiricist. He cannot proceed further without discarding the method of empiricism by giving up completely the process of his unaided effort. It was not possible for Gopal Chakravarti to retrace his steps by any other method. That he was not at all prepared for this is proved by his offensive conduct towards Thakur Haridas who had, therefore, no other alternative but to leave him to the mercies of Maya. But the actual goodwill of Haridas towards the offender bore its fruit in the swift punishment, that could be intelligible to the sufferer himself, that smote him in the form of leprosy. Gopal was, thereby, afforded an excellent opportunity of revising his impersonal doctrine. But he was of course free to avail of it or not.

The Godless attitude is an attitude of absolute confidence in one's own judgment and power. The atheist is not at all disposed to submit to another in any circumstances. He has to be compelled to submit to non-God because he can consistently submit only to compelling force. Such submission alone is appreciated in the state of sin and ignorance which is a radically false position and necessarily entails constant irrational conduct on a really rational being

unnaturally disposed to accept the same through the no less unnatural fear of punishment. The Holy Name of Godhead is not a thing of this world. The Name of Godhead is identical with Godhead Himself. The Godhead appears in this world in the Form of the Name on the lips of His pure devotees. He appears as the transcendental Sound on the spiritual lips of the soul in the state of grace.

The Name of Godhead appearing on the lips of a pure devotee as the Transcendental Sound, is perceptible as such only to the spiritual ear. These statements are likely to appear absurd and puerile to the dogmatic impersonalist. Can the soul, he will persist to ask, have lips and ears ? Can the soul have senses ? But can the empiricist know, even if he has?

The transcendentalists maintain that the soul has an infinity of senses of which the physical senses, are a perverted reflection. There cannot even be the shadow of existence of the physical senses if there were no substantive spiritual senses. But there are also the spiritual senses themselves as distinct from but not unrelated to their corresponding shadowy reflections in this phenomenal world. This is involved in the very definition of the Absolute. The spiritual sense is categorically different from the physical sense. The spiritual senses are perfect and self-conscious, there being no interval or barrier of time or space between the sense and its possessor. The spiritual body is indivisible and perfectly self-conscious in every part and is identical with the owner of the body. All this is incomprehensible to us although it is perfectly consistency with the fundamental principles of indivisible substantive existence, that are also acceptable to the empiricist. The empiricist, although he may sometimes under pressure of his own logic, seem to agree with the conclusions of transcendentalism, finds it impossible to adopt them in practice. The absolute conduct is not possible on the mundane plane to which he finds himself strictly confined by his own postulates backed by the real Deluding Potency.

If one is merely disposed to regard any sound as transcendental, such wish alone will not make the sound of his choice to become really transcendental. Similarly if a person is disposed to regard a transcendental Sound as an

occurrence of the mundane atmosphere such attitude will not also affect the subjective nature of the transcendental Sound. There is real difference between the transcendental Sound and mundane sound. The transcendental Sound is identical with the object denoted by the sound. The mundane sound is separated from the object denoted by it by the intervals of time and space. To hear the mundane sound of the name of a Lion is not the same thing as to see the beast. On the spiritual plane the very word 'Lion' is identical with the animal. The animal is fully realizable by and in the hearing of his name. Whereas the real nature of the mundane animal, denoted by the mundane sound, ever remains a thing unknown.

The Name of Krishna is identical with Godhead. But the Name of Krishna does not manifest Himself on mundane lips nor to the mundane ear. The Name Krishna appears in His Form of the Transcendental Sound on the spiritual lips of His devotees and is heard by the spiritual ear of the submissive soul by the Grace of Krishna. The Name Krishna is identical with the Possessor of the Name. The Name Krishna appears to the listening ear, as He is, only by degrees. As soon as the dormant soul catches the first faint reflection of His Light he is at once completely free from the bondage of ignorance and sin. It is the Name Who comes of His Own accord to our fettered soul. The bound jiva. has no access to the Presence of Krishna on his own initiative. Krishna's Approach is heralded by the harbinger of Light whose first glimmerings on their appearance put an end to all misconception regarding the categorical difference between light and darkness.

Unless and until the soul becomes aware of the true nature of spiritual existence by being so enlightened by the Source of all consciousness, he is sure to mistake the mind for his real self and the mental function as the only knowledge. If at this stage he does not willfully shut his eyes but keeps them turned towards the growing Light he gradually and in due course obtains the sight of the concrete Source of all light. This is the mode of Appearance of the Holy Name. The sight of Krishna is alone capable of inspiring love for Krishna. This is the position of Thakur Haridas as explained by himself to the Pandits who were in assembly at the house of the Mazumdars.

Thakur Haridas mercifully explains that the different concrete forms of the so-called 'liberation' concocted by the mentalists as their unknowable summum-bonum are the outcome of the desire for sensuous gratification. If one could live in the happy realms of Krishna described in the Scriptures, the empiricist supposes that such a person should be enabled to enjoy more good things than are available on the Earth if his condition is really worth having. The same desire for extended opportunities of sensuous enjoyment happens also to be the real motive behind the formulation of the other 'forms' of the empiricist's 'saved' existence. The grossness of the ideal of liberation is fully unmasked when one is told that the salvationist's 'final' form is to become the equal of Godhead by merging with the Object of his worship?

It is to this unnatural and profane position that the unchecked speculations of the mentalists are logically bound to lead in the long run. Thakur Haridas ascribes the grossness of the ideal to the attitude of the empiric thinker, viz. the insatiable desire for sensuous pleasure.

The desire to enjoy is categorically different from, and wholly incompatible with, the desire to serve, to love. If one feels a real desire to serve Krishna he would lose all taste for his own enjoyment. All impurity, unwholesomeness and misery are fortunately and mercifully ordained by the Lord as the inevitable consequence of the insatiable desire for selfish enjoyment. But the soul who turns away from immediate enjoyment by considerations of greater prospective enjoyment in the sequel, cannot also for that very reason realize the condition of loving devotion to the Feet of the Lord, however strongly impressed he may profess to be of the desirability of such a state. He is, no doubt, free to think that he really desires it; but at the same time he is wholly incapable of ever attaining to it by such desire. But, says Thakur Haridas, he may nevertheless attain to love for Krishna by the Chanting of the Holy Name, by the Grace of the Holy Name Himself. This is the special Dispensation for the Age which is so irremediably speculative; and there is no other way open to the Age of attaining to the loving service of Krishna.

Haridas refers to the texts of the Scriptures to prove the truth of his statements. This is the only proper use of the Shastras. The Shastras bear witness to the Truth of the realizations of all really pure souls.

There is one other fact which is worthy of our notice. The Pandits of the learned assembly, headed by Hiranya Mazumdar the master of the house, took the side of Thakur Haridas. They not only strongly censured the conduct of Gopal Chakravarti in the open assembly but Hiranya Mazumdar thought it his duty to renounce all further connection with a Brahmana who could be guilty of an act of discourtesy to the devotee of Godhead. Nevertheless the Pandits and Mazumdar himself felt themselves involved in the sin of Gopal Chakravarti by the unhappy circumstance of their having had to hear most reluctantly the blasphemous words uttered by Gopal in their presence. For this sin the only expiation, prescribed by the Shastras, was to seek in all humility the pardon of Thakur Haridas, not for the offender but for themselves. This is not mere courtesy but an unavoidable necessity if one really wants to serve the Truth. Any association, deliberate or accidental, with untruth tends to obscure our vision of the Truth, Who is, indeed, a very Jealous Master. Those who are disposed to serve the Truth with causeless, loving devotion, throw to the winds all considerations of ignorant propriety or ignorant justice and are never satisfied by serving the Truth by all their senses at all time and in all circumstances. By the grace of Thakur Haridas this instinct of loving devotion actually manifested itself in the conduct of those who had listened with faith to the Absolute Truth from his pure lips.

Sree Raghunath das Goswami was a child at this time. He used to visit the Thakur in his hut during his stay at Chandpur. The boy was the fortunate recipient of the mercy of Thakur Haridas. This is considered by Shree Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami as the real cause of Raghunath Das's subsequent unique devotion to the Feet of Sree Chaitanya. The mercy of a sadhu acts equally on all persons, irrespective of age, sex or condition, all of whom have an equal chance of being benefited by associating with a real sadhu. The interests of the soul are not capable of being adversely affected by any worldly conditions. The boy's soul has no defect of immaturity any more than that of an old man the advantage of maturity. Such maturity or immaturity has no

relevancy in one's associating with a sadhu. The boy's soul, eventually with the Soul of the old man, may or may not be disposed to listen to the words of a Sadhu for the genuine purpose of acting up to the same. It is as necessary for a child to associate with a sadhu acts for an adult; but in neither case one can be sure of obtaining the mercy of the sadhu. with whom he may choose-to associate. The sadhu is kind to one who is really inclined to serve Godhead. It is the function of a sadhu to foster one's inclination for the service of the Lord by means of his conduct and words. The articulated sound is, however, the sadhu's unambiguous weapon to fight all ungodliness. It should puzzle the muddled brain of the whole race of self-conceited empiricists to understand why and how the sadhu need have no other work except talking about almost anything to whom he likes. Any person, who is spoken to by a sadhu even for the tiny space of a second, has every chance of attaining the real object of life which is unattainable by infinite endeavour by any other method. Nay, it is our duty to listen to a real sadhu, if we are fortunate enough to meet him, in preference to all other duties which are not only of secondary importance but a positive obstruction on the path of the highest and only good.

Chapter XX

—Thakur Haridas before his meeting with Sree Gaursundar— (contd.)

From Chandpur, Thakur Haridas came to the village of Fulia on the Ganges near Santipur, the home of Sree Advaita Acharyya. Haridas was thereby enabled to associate with Acharyya Gosain who roared with delight on gaining the company of Haridas. Haridas, remarks Thakur Brindavandas, floated on the ocean of the mellow quality (rasa) of Govinda (Cowherd Krishna) by obtaining the society of Advaita.

The last sentence mentions an important truth. The philanthropic

sensualists (prakrita sahajiyas) affect to believe that Thakur Haridas had no access to the Amorous Pastimes of Sree Krishna, being exclusively devoted to the chanting of the Name. this shows ignorance of the real Nature of the Holy Name as well as of the transcendental amour. It is repeatedly declared by the Shastras that the Name of Krishna is identical with His Form, Quality, Activity and Servitorship. The Bhagavatam (11-2-40) bears out the statement of Sree Rupa (Bh. R. Sindhu P. L.: 3-11) that liking for the chanting of the Name is the conclusive sign of the first appearance of spiritual amour. Those, who are addicted to sensuous pleasures, have no liking for the Name of Godhead. Those pseudo-ascetics, who do not chant the Name of Krishna, are really indifferent to the service of Godhead. Thakur Haridas could possess such an overpowering inclination for chanting the Name of Krishna by reason of his real love for the Lord and consequent real detachment from the pleasures of the world. Thakur Haridas, who was acquainted with the mellow quality of the Name of Krishna, is the greatest of teachers as he is alone authorized to admit one to the meaning of the Shastras treating of spiritual amour. The mellow quality of amorous love for Krishna is realized as the effect of the chanting of the Name of Krishna by the method that is free from offense against the Name. The philanthropists are effectively shut out from all access to the experience of the real nature of the spiritual quality of amorous love by their offensive taking of the Name of Krishna. By reason of their excessive addiction to sensuous enjoyment, which is aggravated by chanting the Name without trying simultaneously to avoid committing such offense, the philanthropists fall into the most heinous blunder of supposing that the spiritual amour is identical with gross sensuality. The only way of getting rid of the lust of the flesh is by chanting the Name of Krishna by avoiding the ten offenses against the Name.

These particulars should enable the unbiased reader to realize the nature as well as the cause of the misunderstanding that is commonly entertained by both liberationists and elevationists in regard to the efficacy of the chanting of the Holy Name. Those who believe in the superiority of fruitive work and empiric knowledge, or, in other words, the average men of the world, find it impossible to sympathize with those philanthropists who teach by their preaching and practice that the taking of the Name Krishna, without really

giving up or endeavoring to give up the life of worldliness, is the highest and only duty of all persons. The philanthropists have forfeited the sympathies of all honest well-wishers by leading a dissipated life of idleness and debauchery which is bound to result from taking the Name without abstaining from the commission of offenses against the Name. The philanthropists are opposed to those restrictive injunctions of the Scriptures that endeavor to put down immorality and worldliness. They find it convenient to suppose that it is possible to approach the Presence Divine with a heart deliberately bent upon sinfulness. They are profane enough, as the result of such habitual commission of offenses, under the guise of piety, against the Name, to dare attribute even carnal desires to Sree Krishna and His eternal Consorts against the gravest and clearest warnings of Sree Rupa Goswami who is admitted by all as the Divinely authorized exponent of the nature of spiritual amour. We shall return again and again to this all-important subject as the narrative develops.

The life that was led by Thakur Haridas while he was living in the cave at Fulia, is described as follows by Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami and it forms the authoritative refutation of the practices and arguments of the philanthropists. Haridas kept constantly walking along the bank of the Ganges chanting aloud the Name 'Krishna'. Haridas surpassed all ascetics in his aversion to the pleasures of the world. All praise to his holy mouth which was ever full of the Name of Krishna. He did not experience a moment's disinclination to the Name of Govinda. His appearance underwent a constant and novel transformation under the influence of the mellow quality of devotion. Sometimes he danced all by himself. Sometimes he made a sound like that of a maddened lion. There were times when he cried in grief with a loud voice. Sometimes he would indulge in a mighty laughter that was haughty and deliberate. At times he shouted forth ejaculations of sorrow with a deep voice. Sometimes he would lie prostrate in a swoon. He would sometimes shout forth, in the hearing of the people, sounds that belonged to another world and would then explain the same in the most excellent manner. Shedding of tears, horripilation, laughter, swooning, sweating—the spiritual perturbations that are expressive of devotion to Krishna—manifested themselves all together in his holy form the moment Thakur Haridas entered the dance. The flow of the

stream of joy was such as to drench all limbs. Even the worst of atheists (pashandas) experienced a great pleasure on beholding the same and the wonder of the series of the beautiful horripilation of which the sight is coveted even by Brahma and Siva. All the Brahmana residents of Fulia witnessed with rapture those holy manifestations. A deep faith took possession of the minds of all those people. In this manner Thakur Haridas lived on at Fulia. After bathing in the Ganges he rambled all over the place, chanting with a loud voice the Name of Hari.

The activities of the devotees of Godhead are perfectly incomprehensible to the material mind of man for the simple reason that they do not target anything of this world. The mind cannot understand super mundane activities. It supposes that it has a right to be able to understand every occurrence that comes within the range of its perception. Thakur Haridas appeared to the people of that time as a man living among men. He appeared to them to possess a physical body and senses. He was being fed in the ordinary way everyday at Advaita acharyya's. He used his senses apparently in the same way as any other man. He might have probably been supposed to be a good man and as comparatively indifferent to the comforts of the body. But he did not as a matter of fact also really neglect anything that is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of life. There was nothing super-mundane about all this. Would it be proper to regard such a person on such testimony as a supernatural being? Even if we choose to consider him as supernatural on such evidence would we not be led from one mistake to another by such untenable concession to superstition? Would it not be a still greater folly to try to follow the life and conduct of such a person and ask others to do the same under such a notion? Is it feasible to follow with a clear conscience a person of whose conduct the true meaning is not at all possible for us to understand?

It would be both possible and useful to accept the mode of life of another person if by doing so our own existing interests and convictions would have a prospect of being demonstrably improved instead of being wholly suppressed. If all persons began all of a sudden to chant the Name of Hari night and day and to depend on others for the supply of food which is necessary for them for

being able to perform the said function, would not such course tantamount to an idle and suicidal folly?

The life of the devotee should have no value if it is not capable of helping us to perform our ordinary duties in a better way. The life must not only be practicable in itself but a distinctive and intelligible improvement on the one that it is to be allowed to replace. The life of Thakur Haridas as depicted above seemed to satisfy neither of these essential conditions.

As a matter of fact we shall see subsequently that Sree Chaitanya was regarded as an unbalanced sentimentalist by even the leading Vedantist Scholar of Benares, the recognized head-quarters of Shastric culture of that day and this. Persons who devote their intellect to the study of the Shastras in a systematic way, need not thereby be rendered devoid of ordinary common sense. The absence of common sense is the usual charge that is brought by utilitarian thinkers against such scholasticism. The empiricists accept without reservation physical Nature, as it appears to their senses, as the Reality in its immediately available form to be understood for the purpose of deducing conduct that is proper for us to adopt in regard to the world. If the knowledge that is acquired has an evident likelihood of making ourselves unsuccessful in the struggle for physical existence the utilitarian have no patience for such knowledge.

The error of Vedantism, or rather of its interpretation by Sree Sankaracharyya, from the point of view of the utilitarians, consists in this that it does not really provide for the needs of the life that one and all are under the necessity of actually leading in this world as the basis of all possible activities. It may not be possible for the utilitarians to refute the position of Sankara by means of metaphysical arguments. But it is their contention that the theoretical strength of Sankara's position is no refutation of its practical weakness. A Sankarite cannot himself be in love with the life that he recommends others to live. This is too grave a defect to be overlooked. It is even necessary to oppose Sankara in the interest of everybody including his followers. One must be forced to live, and live efficiently, against every other consideration to the contrary. The arguments of Sankara consequent," are appreciated by the

utilitarians but only as a speculative theory of existence that was never intended to be acted upon in practice. Are we required to have a similar attitude towards Thakur Haridas also? Are we to suppose that what is perfectly proper and natural for Thakur Haridas is perfectly improper and unnatural for every other person? The path of devotion followed by Thakur Haridas is, however, not merely a beautiful conception of the human brain to be admired from a distance but which cannot and must not be followed in practice. Thakur Haridas actually led the life which he tells us is not only practicable but whose full acceptance is the only thing needful for its own sake.

Love for Krishna is the one thing needful. Amorous love is the highest form of such love. The realized practice of love for Godhead is the only natural function of the free soul. It is possible for all souls to attain to it. Whoever possesses this spiritual love towards Krishna must be offered, as being a most loyal servant of the Lord, our unconditional homage. It is, however, not possible for the mind of man in the fallen state to understand the real nature of spiritual activities. This is the point of departure of the teaching of Thakur Haridas from that of Sankara, or rather from the current interpretation of the system of Sankara.

It is, says Thakur Haridas, practicable for a person in the state of sin to attain to the spiritual plane by the Grace of the Holy Name of Krishna, but the Grace of the Name can be gained only by serving the Name in the proper manner. It is at once easy and difficult to understand how the Name is to be served. The Name is Krishna Himself. He Appears on the tongue of His devotee in the form of the Transcendental Sound. Listening to the Holy Name from the lips of a sadhu is the way in which He is to be served. The Name does not Appear on the tongue of a person who is not a sadhu. A sadhu benefits all by his chanting of the Name. One must be a sadhu in order to be able to serve Krishna by chanting the Name for the benefit of all.

The only way in which it is possible for a sinful man to become a sadhu is by serving the Name by his ear. The Name Appears in the form of the Transcendental Sound on the tongue of His devotee. This sound is identical with Godhead, the only object of our worship. The mode of worship of the

Name consists in listening to the Transcendental Sound by means of the spiritual ear, because the fleshy ear cannot hear the transcendental sound.

The spiritual ear belongs to the soul, but in the case of the conditioned soul it is in the dormant state. Its function is then delegated to the material ear. But the soul should like to resume his own function if he likes and he is also likely to like to do so when he understands that it is necessary in his own interest to do so. In the state of willful transgression the soul is forgetful of himself and his natural function. The sadhu (i.e., the pure soul in his natural state) possesses the power, delegated to him for the purpose by Krishna Himself, of making the transcendental sound be heard by the forgetful soul. As soon as the fettered soul hears the transcendental sound the function of his spiritual ear is re-awakened and the enlightened soul is then fit to serve the Name by his opened spiritual ear by the method of submissive spiritual hearing.

It is, therefore, necessary to submit to hear the Holy Name from the lips of the sadhu on his own conditions. Till this duty is properly performed we can have no access to the plane of the activities of the real devotee. Sankara is silent about all these details which really matter. His so-called followers are as a rule opposed to all spiritual activity. It is our function to introduce the reader to the nature of the spiritual activities of the soul in course of this narrative. Our Hero is Sree Gaursundar, the Supreme Lord Himself. He is at once the only Source and the only Object of all worship. We have seen that the Divine Master and Lover appears in Gaursundar in the role of His Own Servant and Mistress to teach us how to love Him by making the experience available to us by Himself tasting the Love for Himself.

But up to the point of His career that has yet been reached, the Lord has not set up openly as teacher of the Religion. Sree Gaursundar, to the eyes of His contemporaries of this world, was as yet no more than a dutiful and learned Brahmana householder, assiduous in the performance of all those duties that ordinarily fall to the lot of a God-fearing Brahmana. There was as yet nothing unusual or extraordinary about Him. Had His career terminated at this point He might have been regarded as having confirmed by His conduct the mode of life led by the Brahmana householders of Nabadwip of that period. We now know

that this was by no means His purpose. But His real purpose had not yet been divulged to anyone. That purpose was not understood, even when it was subsequently fully divulged, by most of His contemporaries.

The reason of such misunderstanding is plain. Sree Gaurasundar's Life can be understood only if we submit to be spiritually enlightened. Thakur Haridas is the teacher, authorized by Sree Gaurasundar Himself, from whom we have to learn how in this Iron Age we are to receive spiritual enlightenment. The purpose of Sree Gaurasundar is not to teach personally the method that is to be followed in this Age, by those souls who are in the state of bondage, for attaining the spiritual life. That function is not directly exercised by Sree Gaurasundar or Sree Krishna. It is the function of Nityananda, but not even his main or direct function. Nityananda or Baladeva is the second Self of Sree Krishna (or Gaurasundar) and they represent the Supreme Lord in His aspect of the possessor of all-majesty, all-power and all-grandeur. Baladeva is the Source of all service of the Divinity in the outer hemisphere of the transcendental world. It is the indirect function of one of Baladeva's secondary selves to direct the service of the Lord in this lower, phenomenal world. This particular secondary self is styled Maha Vishnu in the Scriptures.

But even Maha Vishnu does not come in direct contact with the material mind or anything mundane. That function is delegated to Vishnu who is a secondary self of Maha Vishnu. Vishnu Himself also is located outside this mundane world. All the secondary selves of the Supreme Lord, issuing ultimately from Sree Baladeva or Nityananda, are absolutely spiritual in all their Divine activities.

The connection between the two planes, viz., the spiritual and material, is established by Siva whose nature is most difficult to understand. It is a mixed one being both Divine and non-Divine. Brahma, the first progenitor of all the creatures of this phenomenal world, is associated with Siva in carrying out the will of Vishnu, who is the direct Divine Master of this phenomenal world.

It is the object of both Siva and Brahma, who are the servants of Vishnu, as

their highest function to divert the minds of fettered souls to the service of Vishnu. Brahma appears in the transcendental Pastimes of Sree Gaursundar in the form of Thakur Haridas who is delegated the function of promulgating the Dispensation of the Age, viz., the chanting of the Name of Krishna. This function which belongs ultimately to Sree Gaursundar, is exercised directly and fully by Thakur Haridas as his authorized function.

The function thus Divinely Delegated to Thakur Haridas is by no means an unimportant one. It is, on the other hand, the one thing needful not only for souls in the state of bondage but for all souls. It is the only function of all souls who of course vary in their degree of its realization. There is no higher function than love for Krishna. Thakur Haridas teaches how the conditioned soul may attain to the love of Krishna in this Age of sophistry by chanting without offense the Holy Name of Krishna. The life of Thakur Haridas presents us with the career of a pure soul who practices the chant of the Holy Name of Krishna without offense. The life of Thakur Haridas at Fulia, described by Thakur Brindavandas in a few pregnant words, is for this reason one of the most important parts of the present Narrative in as much as it introduces the reader, if it is rightly understood, to the true meaning of the other parts.

It will be our endeavor to establish, by the grace of Thakur Haridas, the truth of the proposition that the method of chanting the Holy Name of Krishna, in the manner that is free from offense, is the only perfect service of the Lord having the unique quality of being both the means and the object of all spiritual endeavor. As means the Name is accessible to the worst of atheists especially to that stubborn species that belongs to the present Age who are fortified against the spiritual function by all manner of sophistries. Access to the Name is closed to none who are prepared to recognize the name of Krishna as identical with Krishna Himself and not as a mere passing sound of the mundane atmosphere ; and that the Name does not, therefore, manifest Himself on the material tongue of the physical body which cannot serve the Divinity. The Name can be served when He manifests Himself on the spiritual tongue as the Transcendental Divine Sound. The spiritual service is possible only on the Appearance of the Name, in the Form of the Sound, on one's tongue. The Name first Appears to the listening ear of a person who submits to receive Him as He Appears on the

lips of a sadhu.

The Name of Krishna appearing on the tongue of a sadhu as transcendental sound is not a figment of the imagination. He is the only reality, being the absolute person Himself. If the Name is served by the method of perfect submission under the direction (of a sadhu, by such service love for Krishna is obtained. By no other method one may be enabled to realize the love for Krishna. It is for this reason that the Name is the Highest and Only Means. It is quite in keeping with the conclusions of our unbiased reason that Krishna in His Own Form can also be the only Means of His highest service.

But against this if it be urged that as the Form, Quality, Activity and Servitorship of Krishna are also identical with Krishna how may the Name be regarded as the only means? This is true. But to the soul who happens to be under the thralldom of matter the Name alone is accessible. The Form, Quality, Activity and Servitorship, are attainable in the order of enumeration by the method of taking the Name without offense. This is not against reason because the Holy Name alone is least liable of being wholly misunderstood by the fettered soul who submits to receive Him from the lips of a sadhu for the purpose of serving Him in the manner that is free from offense.

It is for this reason that the question as to what constitutes the act of offense against the Name, becomes all-important. The philanthropists who confound the soul with the material mind necessarily imagine that the Name and the sadhus are also phenomena of this world and, therefore, they are as a matter of course comprehensible by the material mind. This attitude of virtual refusal to recognize the Divine Nature of the Holy Name makes the recital of the Name of Krishna by the philanthropists a meaningless mundane process which bears only an external resemblance to the service of the Holy Name by the devotee. The difference is of course not perceptible to the material mind but it is, and must be, necessarily self-evident to the pure soul who has access to the Substantive Reality.

It is also for this reason that philanthropists, who profess to be Vaishnavas, suppose that everyone has a right ab initio of realizing the Form, Quality and

Activity of Krishna and his own distinctive relationship to Him as His servitor. On this supposition they engage in gross and sensual idolatry under the persuasion that it is identical with the religion enjoined by the Shastras and sanctioned by the actual practice of the most eminent devotees. From this error, if it has already taken a deep root, it is very difficult to extricate the offending soul. All the gross immoralities that are practiced in the name of religion in different parts of the world by certain classes of people, who are very anxious to keep their activities screened from the view of those who do not belong to their secret brotherhoods, are due to their neglect to chant the Holy Name of Krishna, heard from the lips of a real sadhu in the manner that is free from offense and under the direction of sadhus.

The chanting of the Transcendental Name is the only admissible form of religion to fettered souls as He is not capable of being grossly misrepresented. It is of course also possible to chant the Name of Krishna in the offensive manner. But once we are put on our guard against the deliberate commission of such offense we would naturally be unwilling to honour a person as a real sadhu unless he fully satisfied, at any rate to our judgment enlightened by the chanting of the Name, this crucial test of sainthood. The offense against the Name is nothing short of willful misapprehension. We must not understand that the Name or hearing or chanting of the Name is a material phenomenon. We must insist on being fully satisfied that it is not really a material process that is being offered to us by any person wearing the external garb of a sadhu. We must always refer to the texts of the Scriptures which uphold the spiritual view in the most uncompromising manner. Thus fortified it should be possible for a sincere soul to detect every form of mischievous attempts of the cheats and hypocrites.

A person has to thank only himself for being a victim to pseudo-sadhus. A person is similarly to blame only himself if he fails to find the real sadhu, or neglects to seek for him. When once a person attains the condition that entitles him to sing the Name of Krishna in the manner that is free from offense, he finds that all his wants have been automatically fulfilled. For example he is freed from all anxiety on his own personal account. He realizes that he is not any limited entity and that he is located beyond the jurisdiction of birth, death

and wants. He obtains the vision which is capable of distinguishing between the real and the apparent. But as those, who either belong to a lower level of the spiritual plane or do not belong to the spiritual plane at all, have not his perfect vision, they naturally fail to understand the true bearing of his activities.

The activities of Thakur Haridas can be properly understood only by perfectly self-realized souls. All that we may affirm in reward to them at this place, is that they show an utter forgetfulness of his material surroundings and an overpowering attachment to the Holy Name of Krishna. We have already seen that he was absolutely free from sexual weakness and was thoroughly versed in the principles of the Shastras. The idea regarding the real nature of his personality will be further elucidated by a careful consideration of the different aspects of the event that we are just going to describe.

The Kazi or Moslem priest under the employ of the State, who was both priest and judge and looked after the Moslem religion, soon began to take an interest in the doings of Thakur Haridas. Being apprised of his antecedents and present behavior he considered it necessary to bring the matter to the notice of the local Governor. The Kazi went personally to the Governor and told him everything about Thakur Haridas concluding with the request that as Thakur Haridas was guilty of the offense of living as a Hindu, although he is a Muhammedan born, he should be dealt with in a decisive manner.

“The Governor,” writes Thakur Brindavandas, “who was himself also of a worldly disposition, on the representations of the misguided Kazi, ordered Thakur Haridas to be seized and brought before him at once. Haridas voluntarily offered to accompany the men despatched to seize his person by violence and to appear before the Governor.” “By the Grace of Krishna, Thakur Haridas,” says the author of the Chaitanya Bhagavata, “was not afraid of death not to speak of the Moslem ruler. Thakur Haridas, with the chant of the Name of Krishna on his lips, set out immediately and presented himself before the Governor. All the good people of Fulia, apprehending the worst, were filled with sorrow and dismay on being thus suddenly and violently deprived of his happy companionship.”

And now an incident occurred which throws much light on the true personality of Thakur Haridas. As soon as the tidings of the seizure of Haridas reached the prison of the Governor, the leading persons of all those parts, who were confined in the jail at that time, experienced a great joy in the core of their hearts at the news. "They thought," writes Thakur Brindavandas, "that as Thakur Haridas was the greatest of Vaishnavas. The miseries of their captivity were sure to end by the sight of him. They accordingly persuaded their keepers to afford them an opportunity of obtaining a glimpse of the great devotee as he passed by the prison house. Those captives awaited the arrival of Thakur Haridas with their eyes fixed to the path by which he was to pass. Thakur Haridas came to the spot and on catching sight of the prisoners he mentally cast the glance of mercy on them. The prisoners fixing their eyes to the feet of Thakur Haridas remained in the posture of obeisance. They saw that Thakur Haridas was surpassingly handsome. His hands reached down to the knee. His eyes were like the lotus flower. His incomparable moonlike face was, however, the most beautiful of all.

All the prisoners bowed with a natural and loyal impulse of submissive devotion. They at once underwent the spiritual perturbations of devotion to Krishna. Lord Haridas noticed the devotional activity of them all and finding that they were in chains broke into a smile of mercy. "May you continue to remain in your present condition," said Thakur Haridas. He began to laugh merrily after pronouncing this veiled benediction. The prisoners failing to comprehend the real meaning, which is, indeed, very difficult to understand, were somewhat depressed on hearing these words.

Haridas Thakur was thereby moved to the mood of pity and at once proceeded to explain clearly the import of his words. "I have indeed conveyed my concealed benediction to you all by means of those words. You feel dejected because you do not understand this. I never bless amiss. You will understand this if you give my words your close consideration. May the minds of all of you remain constantly turned towards Krishna as they actually are just now. May all of you from now jointly chant the Eternal Name of Krishna and think only of

Him. There is now no malice, no thought of oppressing any creature, in your hearts. May you meditate on Krishna by taking His Name with all humility. If you go into the world once more you run the risk of forgetting Him again by mixing with the worldly people. Love for Krishna cannot co-exist with any form of worldliness. Know it for certain that from one who is of a worldly disposition Krishna is always very far off. The mind, that is engrossed with the pursuit of the objects of this world, is a great nuisance. Wife, sons and all worldly objects are the toils of delusion. All these are 'death'. It is by Providential contrivance that any fortunate person gains real contact with the pure devotees of Godhead and, being thereby enabled to give up his attachment for the world, is in a position to devote himself to the service of Krishna. All those offenses that are now absent from your minds will once more be committed when you mix with the worldly people. It is the nature of this world. This is the gist of all that you require to be told for your benefit. Give it your most attentive hearing. I pronounced this great benediction which you misunderstood. It is not my desire that you may continue to remain in this state of captivity. Forget the world and take the Name of 'Hari' night and day. I pronounced this only benediction in a disguised form. Feel no dejection, no, not even for a moment. I see all persons who are really in the fetters of this world with the eye of pity. May all of you attain to firm devotion to Krishna. Have no anxiety. I assure you that you will be freed from your captivity in the course of two or three days. Whether you engage in ordinary worldly pursuits, or wherever you be, never forget your present resolve by any means." Having sought to promote the true well-being of the prisoners in the above manner Thakur Haridas proceeded on his way and duly presented himself before the Governor of the District.

The advice to the prisoners makes the position of Thakur Haridas clearer. It is necessary to chant the Name of Krishna, to mediate on Krishna, instead of being engrossed in worldly pursuits. For this purpose the state of captivity is more favourable than the state of bodily freedom, provided one is really inclined towards Krishna. It is very difficult to remember Krishna in the midst of the thousand and one pre-occupations of the worldly life, Krishna and worldliness having no connection with one another, the two being perfectly

incompatible. It is never possible to serve both. A worldly-minded person can have nothing to do with Krishna. It is never possible to worship Krishna in the intervals of worldliness. The slightest inclination to worldliness should be impossible to a person who is at all inclined to Krishna. It is necessary to understand clearly that as long as the least inclination for worldliness persists in our minds there can be no love for Krishna. The society of worldly people has this tendency of making us wholly forget Krishna. Wife and children are cited as instances of the deadly traps that are laid by the Delusive Energy for encompassing our ruin. The attachment for wife and children and other worldly objects can be overcome only by association with the sadhus. In the company of the sadhus our attachments are deflected towards Krishna. Therefore, Haridas properly enough exhorts the prisoners to forget the world completely and chant the Name of Krishna night and day.

The function of the soul, who is anxious to be restored to his natural condition of loving devotion to the Lotus Feet of Krishna, is very simple. One must willingly turn his thoughts and activities towards Krishna. He can do so most naturally by association with the devotees of Krishna. The devotees of Krishna always serve Krishna and do nothing else. By adopting their life under their direction love for Krishna is gradually aroused in the fettered soul. Attachment for the world is automatically dispelled by the dimmest apprehension of such inclination, as darkness is dispelled by the glow of the reflected light that harbingers the approach of Sunrise.

The cultivation of association with the devotees is the only method of attaining to the natural function of the soul, viz., unalloyed love for Krishna. This inclination for the society of sadhus, which is inherent in every soul, is liable to be rendered ineffective by association with worldly people. Pure devotees and worldly people and worldly objects generally present themselves simultaneously and claim our service, as rivals. We cannot choose both. If we choose one of them we completely lose sight of the other. They are related to one another as darkness and light. The light of this phenomenal world imperceptibly shades off into darkness, so that it is not possible to fix a line of real demarcation between the two. But the darkness of the non-spiritual state

has a definite line of demarcation. Until this line is passed we can have absolutely no idea of the spiritual state. A better analog from this point of view is furnished by the case of life and death. Death is not an attenuation of life. It is the complete cessation of life. We cannot have both simultaneously. It is not possible to mix up the two. It is also possible to ascertain perfectly the dividing line between the two. A dying person is a living person to the last moment that he retains his animation in however attenuated a form. When he dies he passes completely out of life. The smallest fraction of a second makes a complete rupture, not merely a graduated difference. A dead man cannot also come into life again.

This is the reason why the acceptance of a person as disciple by the spiritual guide has been called the second birth. The seminal birth does not give the spiritual life. One is spiritually dead till the second birth. One is born a third time on receiving the full enlightenment of dîksha. The first is the seminal birth, the second is initiation or admission for enlightenment, the third birth is brought about when one attains to the state of actual enlightenment. The first is the condition of spiritual death, the second is the quasi-living state, the third is the normal living condition. One who has any real experience of life and death cannot prefer death to life; neither can he plead for an unnatural and impossible mixture of the two.

We must not suppose that we are asked to accept anything blindly when we are told to accept the life that was actually led by Thakur Haridas. If any one shouts the Name of Krishna three or any number of lakhs of times everyday and abstains from open debauchery or detectable forms of gross worldliness, he cannot thereby mechanically attain to the spiritual plane. It is not mechanical, nor even mental, activities and attitudes, that we are asked to adopt. As soon as the Name of Krishna manifests Himself to our spiritual ear we obtain the power of vision that can distinguish between the substance and the shadow. The shadow now no longer stands in the way of our dealings with the substance. Those, who are under the misapprehension that the shadow is everything and behave and think accordingly, cannot at all understand the ways of the devotee of Godhead.

The very idea of service is incomprehensible to the material mind. The material mind is connected by the relationship of the deluded pseudo-enjoyer to the objects that lie exposed to the physical senses. It misconceives certain forms of such enjoyment to be 'service'. It thinks that its very existence is dependent on and consists of such enjoyment. Therefore, whenever it finds anybody behaving on a different principle it judges him, consistently enough, to be in the wrong and his course as suicidal. While the real Truth is that the judge himself is all the time pursuing the course that leads to death while the sadhu has his face eternally turned towards the Life Eternal.

How can one live at all unless one eats and tries to procure food, clothing and shelter? Thakur Haridas also, it is supposed, required all these 'necessaries' of life. Once this is admitted it follows that one must lead the worldly life as a matter of course. But Thakur Haridas says that nothing is necessary except taking the Name of Krishna. If he is asked why he himself eats, drinks, sleeps and does other kinds of work in the same way as another person, he simply replies that he does nothing of the kind. The objection may prefer to believe the testimony of his senses and consider Thakur Haridas to be a shameless liar. It is of course, perfectly open to him to do so. But even by disbelieving Haridas he does not establish the Truth of his own contention. All that is proved is that if both of them are assumed to tell the Truth their points of view must be admitted to differ widely. This brings us back to a re-examination of the bases on which they take their respective stand. If we do so without bias we should be impressed by the conviction that the method of Thakur Haridas may lead us to the Truth, but the method of the mentalist can never do so.

True, we may pretend to stick to that course into which we suppose we have been born by the Will of Godhead. But what right have we to suppose that the phenomena of birth and death themselves may not be as deceptive as any other similar phenomenon? So the question cannot be solved if we choose merely to stick to the testimony of our deluding senses on the ground that it happens to be so. If it be our fore-gone conclusion to adopt that course which seems more

likely to enable us to exploit for our transitory pleasure the questionable so-called facilities offered by this world, we do not admittedly approach the issue for the impartial purpose of finding out the Truth before our conclusion is declared. If by taking the Name of Krishna in the manner that is free from offense the senses themselves are transformed why should it be still necessary for us to obey the dictates of the old, non-spiritual faculties? If I actually can see that it is Godhead Himself Who always feeds and clothes me, why should I still consider it my duty to maintain it is I who feed and clothe myself? If I clearly realize my blunder, why should it still be my duty to stick to it? One, who tries to mechanically imitate Thakur Haridas, without possessing his vision and purpose, should find it impossible and inconvenient to imitate his whole conduct, as will be evident from the incident that we are going to describe just now.

After endeavoring to compass the good of the prisoners Thakur Haridas made his way to the presence of the Governor. The Governor was fascinated by the extraordinary charm and force of personality of Thakur Haridas. He accordingly offered him a seat with the greatest respect. The ruler of the mulk himself then questioned him. The questions of the Governor have been preserved by Thakur Brindavandas in his account of Sree Chaitanya. The Governor said in effect, 'Brother, what is the cause of this peculiar disposition in you? It is no small good fortune whereby you have been born a Yavana. Why then do you incline to the practices of the Hindus? We don't touch our food if we but chance to see a Hindu. Why do you give up the superiority that accrues to you by your birth in our great race? You behave unnaturally by transgressing against your race and religion. You cannot hope to escape the dire consequences of such gross offense, at any rate in the next world. The malpractices, of which you have been guilty through ignorance, are a sin against Godhead. By all means do get absolved from these heinous offenses by uttering the formula (qalma) of the faith.'

Thakur Brindavandas comments on the speech of the Governor as proceeding from a person whose judgment was stupefied by the deluding energy of Godhead. Haridas only burst into a loud laughter, "Lo, the Deluding Power of

Vishnu !” said he, and then began to reply in a sweet manner. “Listen, dear one, there is only one Godhead and He is the Lord of Everything. It is the mere concocted name that makes all the difference between ‘Hindu’, and ‘Yavana’. The Veda and the Koran alike declare the summum bonum to be one and the same for all. The one eternal entity, free from all defect, indivisible and indestructible, occupies fully the seat of heart of everyone. All the worlds function exactly in the way in which the one Supreme Lord guides the minds of His servitors. It is the Name and Quality of the Selfsame Lord on Whom all persons discourse in conformity with the declarations of their respective Scriptures. He, Who is Godhead, takes cognizance of the disposition that prompts the utterances of all persons. Whence I am doing exactly that very thing to which Godhead directs my mind. It is analogous to the conduct of a person who, being a Brahmana and born in the Hindu community, is sometimes found to become a Yavana by his own free choice. What can even being a Hindu avail such a person? The deeds of every person are entirely his own concern. What is the good of killing a person who has himself committed suicide? Good sir, judge my case accordingly. If there be no real lapse on my part, do by all means punish me for my offense.”

These wholesome and true words of Thakur Haridas satisfied all the Yavanas who heard them. There was, however, one solitary exception. An ecclesiastic (kazi), who was a great offender against Godhead, now tendered quite different advice to the Governor. He said to the Governor, “Punish this person. This wicked one will lead many others into his folly. He will bring low the prestige of the Yavana race. For this reason let him be punished in all seriousness. As an alternative let him recite his own Scriptures.”

On this the Governor spoke once more to Haridas, “Dear brother, profess your own Shastra and be relieved of all anxiety. If you do not do so all the ecclesiastics will band together and punish you. You yourself will also say your own Shastra in the long run. Then what is the good of your choosing to be lowered in the estimation of the people?”

Haridas said, “No one can do anything else than what Godhead makes him do.

Know it as certain that it is Godhead Who awards the punishment that is the fruit of offense committed by ourselves. If my body be hacked to pieces, if life itself desert me, even then I will not give up the Name of Hari.”

The ruler of the place, on hearing his words, put the issue to the ecclesiastics, “What will you do to him now ?” The Moslem ecclesiastic (kazi) gave his verdict, “Let him be whipped at the twenty-two market-places. Take his life without any hesitation. If he survives the beating at the twenty-two markets, then I should he prepared to admit the truth of what the sages have declared.”

I have tried to reproduce the actual wording of Sree Brindavandas’s account of the famous trial of Thakur Haridas. We should now try to put ourselves into the attitude of the saintly narrator in order to be able to understand the real meaning of his words.

But before we proceed to do so it is necessary to offer a few remarks as regards the canon by which the authenticity of a statement is to be tested. It is not the practice in the conventional history to use the method of direct narration unless the words actually spoken can be reproduced verbatim, and even in such case it is very rarely, indeed, that recourse is had to this direct method. In the Biographies of Sree Chaitanya penned by Thakur Brindavandas and other contemporaries and followers the method of recording the speeches of the actors has been used very frequently and the followers of the Lord accept the version of the Biographies as the actual language used by Sree Chaitanya Himself.

The value of the actual words used by the speaker is even greater in the case of theistic history than in secular narrative. In theistic history only the actual words of the devotees convey the full meaning intended by them. The words are living entities. This is the reason why these authors are so careful to give us the actual words of the devotees whose views they record. In this connection we should remember that the method that is being followed in the compilation of the present work is not the empiric method of induction-cum-deduction but that of manifestation of the Truth in the Form of the articulated Transcendental

Sound. In this method the value of every single word, actually spoken by the devotee, is worth preserving and the original text is therefore all-important.

It is possible for the devotee of Godhead to supply us with the actual words of the Divinity. The slightest deviation from the Divine Language is also for the same reason detectable by the devotee. The language in the form of direct narration is, therefore, not a departure from the Truth in this case, but the closest adherence to Him. In the form of indirect narration the writer's personality is the obtruding and dominating factor. In theistic history the personal equation should be non-existent; and, therefore, its indirect narration should also be acceptable in proportion as it approximates the direct form. This is also the reason why quotations of actual texts are so much esteemed in the theistic method of narration. Sree Jiva Goswami Prabhu has tried to clothe his highest conclusions in the language of the Scriptures. The method of Sree Jiva Goswami is a part and parcel of his function as the real exponent of the Absolute.

If it be urged why it is necessary also to preserve the actual words of the opponents of the devotees, as has been done in this case, the explanation is that the words of a person, who is adverse to Godhead, when directed to the devotee of Godhead even by way of opposition, do no longer point to the mundane objective and for this reason acquire special value for the instruction of novices. Nothing can purely express one's personality except the words spoken by the person himself. The indirect method of narration is due to the inability of the writer to understand the real character of a person with sufficient distinctness. There need be no categorical distinction between the dramatic or conversational form and that of indirect narration which has found so great favour, by reason of its very insufficiency, in all so called serious compositions of these days. The indirect narration is suitable as medium of expression in the case of inanimate objects or when the narrative is intentionally converted into a monologue. Either of these, if properly used in place of the other, would be a deviation from the Truth, and would, therefore, be inadmissible, unless required for the purpose of expressing the Truth.

To proceed with our narrative, the issue, that was put before the Governor by

the Kazi and used by him in punishing Thakur Haridas, is by no means so crude and unimportant as it may appear to a moderner to whom religious toleration is supposed to be 'as the very breath of his nostrils'. The Kazi said that as the Moslem community are upholders of the Truth, Who can be but One, they have a right to convert others to their faith by any method, even by force, for the good of all parties. In case of extreme perversity the true believer has also the benevolent right, on the same principle, of even putting an end to the earthly existence of a person who sets himself in opposition to the Truth, for vindicating the supreme necessity, on the part of all lovers of the Truth, of supporting the cause of the Truth at all costs to prevent any misunderstanding. If cognizance is to be taken at all of any lapse from the Truth no sentence. that will not maintain the claim of the Truth to our fullest allegiance under all circumstances, can be a true verdict.

Those, who do not profess to be the exclusive servants of the Absolute Truth, need find no difficulty in practicing the duty of tolerating untruth without losing their self complaisance. But the real lover of the Absolute cannot hasten to make terms with untruth in order to satisfy the tendency of aversion to Truth that is eternally inherent in the very nature of the dissociable particles of the Divine Essence, viz. , the jiva souls. The uncompromising and even violent or impatient opposition of a lover of the Truth to all suggestions of the lower self, who is always whispering into his ears the counsels of disloyalty, may appear to be intolerable to one who is complacently disposed towards the pernicious tendency, but should not be justified on this ground by those who are not also themselves disloyal.

Thakur Haridas did not blame the Kazi and the Governor for their intolerance of untruth but for their hallucination which led them to mistake their own disloyalty to the Truth for the undoubtedly good quality of uncompromising loyalty. Intolerance, said Thakur Haridas, is impossible for one who is really a lover of Godhead. Such a person can naturally blame nobody excepting himself when he finds anything to be wrong. There can be no activity on any plane except by the will of Godhead. If any activity is blamed or praised it shows the disposition to judge the doings of Godhead Himself. Any thought against any person is nothing short of malice against Godhead Himself. The Scriptures

themselves are also not really different from one another, if they are rightly understood. Those who do not understand their real meaning are alone disposed to differentiate between the Scriptures and revealed forms of worship which are all directed to the One Godhead.

The question of religious toleration is a matter of the highest practical importance. Those who maintain the doctrine of intolerance of untruth can only be properly answered by the higher doctrine of the realization of the Hand of the Supreme Lord in everything, except in the matter of the individual judgment. The soul can really do no wrong. Godhead is solely responsible for all activities of the world. The soul can be deluded and, in the state of delusion only, he can imagine right and wrong. This deluded condition is full of misery for the soul himself; and for this he should be an object of pity. The deluded soul is, however deluded also by the Will of Godhead. Therefore, the delusion cannot be blamed. The cause of the deluded state is inherent in the jiva soul as the necessary condition of his dissociable individual existence.

It is, no doubt, necessary to get rid of the deluded state. But it is not possible to bring this about by a policy of violence. As soon as one is disposed to be violent he is subjected by his own activity to the delusion that he, or anybody else except Godhead, is responsible for the ordering of this world. And if one persists in acting under such delusion he is himself deluded by his own acts. This is the meaning of the Koran. Those who imagine that the delusion is cured by putting the unbeliever to death, are themselves deluded. The only way, in which one can help both oneself and others, is by trying to avoid falling under the delusion that anybody except Godhead can do anything either good or bad. There is nothing good or bad but our disloyal thinking makes it so.

The policy of real toleration is not inconsistent with, but on the other hand indispensable for, the relation of the true service of Godhead. The toleration, that is disposed to dally with untruth is inconsistent with loyalty, is really due to aversion to the Truth, and is, therefore, more disastrous in its consequences than intolerance of untruth which it pretends to condemn.

The policy of sincere intolerance of untruth, although it is better than disloyal tolerance of untruth, is thus itself a mischievous delusion. The chaste and loyal wife may consider it her duty not only to cut off the connection with all unchaste women but to revile and punish them for their misconduct. But if those unchaste women could be reclaimed by a policy of milder firmness their husbands would have real cause to thank this loyal wife of another person for her benevolent and really kind disposition. This would certainly be no neglect of her duty towards her own husband.

We crave the kind indulgence of the reader to tolerate an unhappy metaphor to elucidate the position of the loyal servant of Krishna which cannot be fully explained by our defective vocabulary. The unchaste wives, in the case of spiritual service, have really also no other husbands than Krishna. They are, therefore, the co-wives of the loyal matron. It should, therefore, be a duty of the chaste wife towards her Husband to try her best to reclaim the unchaste ladies. If the chaste wife does not do this she is herself proved to be disloyal to her Husband to that extent.

Krishna is not pleased by the malice of loveless fanatics any more than by the covert disloyalty of pseudo-latitudearians. Fanaticism is due to ignorance of the Perfect Nature of Krishna and of our common relationship with Him. It is also a proof of our want of faith in the Dispensation of the Supreme Lord. It is of course absolutely necessary to keep wholly aloof from all unbelievers in the matter of loyalty to Krishna. But this should be coupled with the desire to benefit the deluded souls by trying to win them over to the service of Krishna.

This duty, as the present episode shows, cannot be neglected with impunity without producing the most tragic results. The fanatical Kazi could dupe those who were maliciously disposed like himself to join with him in practicing terrible oppression on a devoted servant of Godhead, on the strength of a narrow interpretation of certain texts of the Koran condemnatory of association with unbelievers. Those passages, if rightly understood, are a condemnation of disloyalty to Godhead. But malice towards any creature, as Thakur Haridas took care to point out, is malice against Godhead Himself and such disloyalty is

not less condemnable than any of the other more familiar forms of that pernicious tendency.

Loyalty to Krishna necessarily means perfect toleration, nay perfect positive good will, towards all creatures good and bad. Nothing less than this can satisfy Krishna. But perfect toleration or good-will towards the misguided soul need not be perversely supposed to mean either toleration or sympathy for the motive that lies behind the conduct of such a person. There can be no toleration of the tendency to untruth. There must be perfect toleration of the activities of misguided persons as Krishna does not cherish any ill-will against them, nay permits those activities with the object of effecting their reclamation thereby. Loyalty to Krishna should express itself by serving the perfect good-will of Krishna towards all creatures and realizing the Mercy of Godhead in the activities, as distinct from the motive, of even those persons who are most averse to Krishna. Those, who find fault with the activities of unbelievers from malice, forget that those activities are possible only by the Sanction of Krishna and that by one's malicious opposition of those activities it is Krishna against Whom our malice is really directed. That this must be so is proved by the fiendish persecution that was now launched against Thakur Haridas.

Therefore, the excuse that, as it is not possible to distinguish between a believer and unbeliever except by conduct and profession and as it is our duty to Krishna to discourage disloyalty to Him by all means in our power, the persecution of Haridas can be defended as being due to a strong sense of loyalty to Godhead, is wholly untenable. Krishna can be properly served only when we possess the knowledge of His Real Nature. Krishna does not want us to discourage disloyalty to Him by hypocritically or maliciously opposing His wise and benevolent method for the reclamation of disloyal persons. In other words, fanaticism is the result of culpable ignorance due to a radically disloyal and unserving disposition. Recourse to violence, either physical, mental or spiritual, is directly opposed to the Purpose of Krishna, because violence is powerless against the soul who, being the essence of Krishna, possesses His perfect freedom of will. The freedom of will of the soul is indestructible. He can be reclaimed only by an appeal to his judgment and free will. Those, who advocate

the policy of violence, are far away from Krishna and perfectly ignorant of the nature of their own selves.

Faith in Krishna is the natural attitude of the pure soul. Fanaticism is the hypocritical and malicious caricature of spiritual faith by the soul in the state of utter delusion. Fanaticism, being essentially an attitude of opposition to Krishna, is also necessarily intolerant of all loyal servants of the Supreme Lord. It is not by accident that the fanatics crucified Jesus. The fanatics can never tolerate the good-will of Krishna towards all His creatures. They pretend to show their love (?) for Krishna by hating His loved ones.

The fanatics are bound to hate everybody because they really hate the Supreme Lord Himself. They, therefore, also hate those who are averse to Krishna. not from a sense of loyalty to Krishna but, because they themselves are unmindful of the service of Krishna and want everybody to serve them. Fanaticism always kindles counter-fanaticism in those of its victims who happen to be equally averse to Krishna. But it is powerless to move the servant of Godhead to thoughts of malice against his deluded oppressors.

By command of the Governor wicked ruffians laid violent hands on Thakur Haridas. They beat him most ferociously from market to market to put an end to the least sign of life. Haridas remembered to repeat the Name of Krishna. There was no manifestation of bodily pain by the bliss of the Name. All good men experienced boundless grief on witnessing the utmost severity of the beating that was inflicted on the person of Haridas. Some apprehended the ruin of the whole kingdom from such treatment of a good person in view of the people. Others openly expressed their indignation against King and Minister. There was some display of actual violent opposition also. Intimidation was combined with the offer of bribes to soften the harshness of those ruffians. But all was to no purpose. They beat him severely from market to market. Haridas did not experience the least bodily pain by the Grace of Krishna, even under such ferocious castigation. Thakur Brindavandas compares his condition to that of the great devotee, the child Prahlada, who passed unscathed through all hurt inflicted by the atheists (asuras). The writer assures his readers that inasmuch

as one, who remembers Haridas, is thereby delivered completely from the possibility of all bodily pain, it is no wonder that Haridas himself was also perfectly immune from all such pain on this occasion.

Those, who suppose that the above is the exaggerated version of a petty incident, or may be disposed to minimize or explain away its real significance, are perfectly free to do so. It is not also impossible to adduce instances of the marvelous powers of endurance of the worst of criminals under deserved chastisement. The story of Prahlada may itself be dismissed as a concoction of the fertile imagination of writers who find a senile pleasure only in praising deeds of transcendental performances. The sedulous cultivation of a taste for the super-natural is also supposed to be that unfortunate trait in the Indian character that distinguishes the Hindus even in the twentieth century from the saner peoples of every other part of the world. It is for this reason that foreign writers, who are really well-disposed towards the Indians, find themselves at the end of their resources to invent a suitable apology for this favourite defect of the narrators of the Indian spiritual traditions that are cherished with the utmost tenacity and reverence by this strange people.

If instead of allowing ourselves to be obsessed by our indigenous or foreign prejudices we stop to consider seriously the version of the event from the pen of the contemporaneous writer in order to arrive at the truth that he is anxious to impress on our minds, we should not fail to be struck by certain very remarkable points in the above narrative. In the first place it is evidently not the intention of the writer to arouse animosity against the Yavanas. Had this been his real object he would not have taken the trouble of insisting on the point that Haridas actually suffered no pain. Neither could it also be the object of the writer to praise Haridas for his courage or power of endurance. In fact he does not want to praise any worldly merit or condemn any worldly demerit. He is wholly indifferent to such issues which alone possess any interest for the secular historian.

Thakur Brindavandas is trying to understand the experiences of Haridas in terms of his own. What he means to say in effect is this: 'I, who have been

immune from all bodily pain by the mere recollection of Haridas, am in a position to testify to the fact that neither he nor Prahlada can ever really be subject to bodily pain'. So it is necessary to understand what the writer really means. If it be asked why others are not similarly relieved of their sufferings by the mere recollection of Haridas? Why were not those people, who had an opportunity of actually witnessing all these events, instantly relieved of all anxiety on his account by the very sight of him, which should not be regarded as less than recollection?

Thakur Brindavandas could realize that the devotee of Krishna is not a convict who is put in the prison of this world of three dimensions like ordinary worldly people. The difficulties of three dimensions are automatically solved on the plane of four dimensions although this may pass the understanding of those who are privileged to have a view of events on the plane of four dimensions from their platform of three dimensions without being able to dive into their real meaning. By taking the Name of Krishna one is relieved from all worldly sufferings. If one chooses to stick to his platform of three dimensions he cannot, merely by uttering the word Krishna, avoid the sufferings of this world. The sufferings of the body are a part and parcel of the phenomenal world. The soul does not belong to the phenomenal world and is, therefore, not subject to bodily sufferings. This is logical. But how can this be actually realized in practice? It can be realized in this world by only one method, viz., by uttering constantly the spiritual Name of Krishna. This is Divinely ordained as there cannot be any mere logical way out of this insuperable difficulty.

The devotee of Krishna is relieved from all bodily and mental suffering by the realization of his natural condition, viz., that of the soul. The tree is to be judged by its fruit. If by uttering the Name of Krishna one is not wholly relieved from all worldly trouble he cannot claim to have succeeded in taking the Holy Name. It is only the pure soul who can really utter the Name of Krishna. It is only by uttering the name of Krishna, by listening to the same from the lips of a devotee, that one can attain to one's natural spiritual condition when alone he is fit to take the Name of Krishna. It is only by getting

out of the sphere of three dimensions or any dimensions that all unwholesomeness can be finally, logically and naturally eliminated.

Those, who pray to Godhead to give them the power of endurance under trial; commit a great blunder. Those, who pray to be permitted to serve Godhead on the plane of the Absolute by His causeless grace, alone pray truly. Prayer means unconditional reliance on the Grace of Godhead. The Grace of Godhead is perfectly wholesome and need not be reminded of our wrong aspirations by the method of selfish, criminal insistence for their dire fulfillment. Those who pray in order to gain any object of their present ambition, do not pray at all in the Scriptural sense. The Grace of Godhead will revolutionize our limited outlook and impart other ambitions than those that are giving us such interminable and unrelievable trouble.

Those ruffians and on-lookers, who were interested in the fate of Haridas, were all of them equally misguided in supposing that a devotee is subject to bodily sufferings like themselves. It is to prove by his teaching as well as conduct that he is not subject to any worldly suffering, that Thakur Haridas was displaying those activities in order to induce them to believe in the absolute Truth of what he taught. He, who has himself attained to real immunity from all suffering, is the proper person to be approached as a teacher of the true method for attaining to the free state. Those ruffians and on-lookers were apparently innocent of any such purpose, except a very few who were led to reflect seriously on the real meaning for themselves of those events.

So the mere sight of a Vaishnava under the impression that he is only a mortal, or the mere recollection of a Vaishnava viewed as a mortal, are properly speaking not seeing or recollecting him at all. The Vaishnava can be really seen and recollected only on the plane of the Absolute by the pure eye of faith possessed by the soul in the state of Grace. The recollection of such a sight has the efficacy of freeing from all difficulties. The endeavour to attain such sight and recollection is the spiritual practice available to the novice by the grace of the spiritual teacher. The process of spiritual novitiate under a pure devotee is not ignored by the words of Thakur Brindavandas. The novitiate itself being also spiritual in character cannot be attained in this Iron Age except by the

method of perfect submission to the teachings of Thakur Haridas and of those who are privileged to see as well as remember him as he really is. He is the Acharyya of this Age of Evil. By following his teaching and practice one can be easily freed from every difficulty. There is no other way of our final and true liberation.

Chapter XXI **—Thakur Haridas—(contd.)**

Thakur Haridas experienced only one kind of pain while he was undergoing ferocious beating at the hands of the minions of the Moslem Governor. He felt sorry for those sinners who were involved in this terrible offense against himself. He prayed to Krishna to do him this Favour that those miscreants might not incur the Divine Displeasure by reason of their ferocious cruelty towards himself.

Those Yavanas, however, continued to beat him severely from market-place to market-place with the resolve of putting an end to his life. They beat him with all the strength they had. Haridas had no memory of his mental body and was perfectly immune from any sensation of suffering which was actually inflicted on his physical body. Neither did he die. The Yavanas now experienced a sense of surprise in their minds. They thought in this way, ‘ Can the life of a mortal survive such beating? The life of a man is extinguished by beating at two, or at most three, market-places. We have already beat him at no less than twenty-two market-places. Not only does he not die, but, the wonder of all wonders, he actually smiles now and then. All of them were filled with a terrible misgiving. “ Was this person after all the Pir that people claim him to be?”

At last the Yavanas put their own plight before Thakur Haridas. They said, “Haridas! you will be the cause of the death of all of us. We have beaten

you to the best of our ability. But although we are fatigued to death by our severe exertions life still refuses to quit your body. It will now be the turn of the Kazi to punish us. He will take the lives of all of us.”

This pathetic and strange protest made Thakur Haridas laugh as he said, “If my being alive be the cause of mishap to all of you, mark me well, I will die just now before your eyes.” Saying so Thakur Haridas became absorbed in the contemplation of Krishna. Haridas, observes Thakur Brindavandas, is possessed of all power. He became perfectly inert and there was no sign of the breathing activities in any part of his body.

The sight of this phenomenon filled the Yavanas with great astonishment. They conveyed Thakur Haridas to the steps of the entrance of the Governor’s residence. The Governor then gave the command, “ Let him have a burial.” The Kazi opposed. He said, “ He will fare well after death if he is given the benefit of burial. Being born in a superior faith he stooped to accept a low creed. He should be dealt with in accordance with the gravity of the offense. It will benefit his soul if his body is allowed a burial. Let his body be, therefore, cast into the river so that he may be doomed to eternal misery.”

At these words of the Kazi all the Yavanas caught hold of the body of Thakur Haridas with intent to cast him into the Ganges. Thakur Haridas now sat upright in the bliss of Divine contemplation and as he did so Viswambhar Who upholds the whole world, manifested His Presence in his body. The Presence of Viswambhar made it out of the question for any one to move the body of Thakur Haridas. Mighty men pushed the body from every side. Lord Haridas remained immovable like a great tower. Haridas had been perfectly immersed in the deep nectarine Ocean of Krishna-bliss and there had been no manifestation of any external consciousness. Haridas had not known whether he was on dry ground, in the air above the ground or in the water of the Ganges. The devotion to Krishna, manifested in the recollection of Krishna by Prahlada, is the only parallel to that of Thakur Haridas. Thakur Haridas’s conduct is also comparable to that of Hanuman, the servant of Sree

Ramachandra, who submitted to be fettered by the Rakshashas of his own accord, out of deference to Brahma. It is in the like spirit that Haridas accepted the beating of the Yavanas, for the instruction of the world. That teaching is to be found in his words, “ If my sufferings know no end, if life itself leaves my body, yet will I not give up uttering the Name of Hari with my mouth.” This constant loyalty to the Name is the teaching of this most wonderful exhibition of devotion by Thakur Haridas. Is it otherwise possible for any one to attempt any harm against Haridas whose Protector is Govinda Himself ? All suffering is instantly ended by the recollection of Thakur Haridas. How can, therefore, any suffering be inflicted on Haridas himself ? Let no one doubt that Haridas is verily the Iswara (Divine Ruler) of the world, one of the foremost of the greatest associates of Chaitanya-Chandra Himself.

Then Thakur Haridas exhibited the leela of being cast into the water of the Ganges by the Yavanas and lay afloat on the bosom of the holy stream. By the Will of Godhead Thakur Haridas soon regained his external consciousness. He then came out of the water and got to the bank of the river experiencing all the while the fullness of the transcendental bliss. In that manner he came on to the town of Fulia continuing to chant loudly the Name of Krishna.

The Yavanas, as they witnessed this wonderful exhibition of his power, were cured of their malice against him and their minds were purified. All bowed to him with humility, being convinced that he was, indeed, the Pir. All these Yavanas thus received their deliverance. When Thakur Haridas recovered his external consciousness he found the Moslem Governor in presence of him. This made Thakur Haridas smile as he was moved to mercy. The Governor reverentially responded, with palms joined in the act of supplication, “I now know most certainly that you are a great Pir. You have realized the knowledge of the One. People claim to be in touch with the Supreme Soul, to possess the knowledge of Him. But they only use their mouths to utter empty words. You have alone attained the realization in very truth. I have personally come down here to have a sight of you. Have mercy on me, great one. May you be pleased to forgive an my offenses. All are equal in your sight. You have neither friend nor foe. There is no person in all the three worlds who can know what you are.

May you proceed auspiciously anywhere of your own free choice and continue to stay in your solitary cell on the bank of the Ganges. You may abide at whatever place you choose and do whatever you like at your own sweet will.”

Commenting on this change of heart of his oppressors Thakur Brindavandas observes that if even those Yavana miscreants could forget their animosity at the sight of the holy feet of Thakur Haridas what to speak of those people who are endowed with a natural goodness of disposition ? The change of heart was, indeed, quite marvelous. Those Yavanas had come forward in the greatest anger to beat him to death. They recognized him as Pir and threw themselves at his feet in the end. Thakur Haridas bestowed on the Yavanas his glance of mercy as he came on to Fulia.

Thakur Haridas now presented himself again to the assembly of the Brahmanas of Fulia, in the act of chanting the Name of Hari with a loud voice. As they caught sight of Thakur Haridas, those Brahmanas of Fulia experienced in their minds the bliss that transcends all joys of this world. Those Brahmanas spontaneously burst into chanting the Name of Hari. Haridas danced with joy in their midst.

The spiritual perturbations of Haridas pass all attempt at description. There were manifest tears, shivering, laughter, swooning, horripilation, thundering ejaculation. Haridas would often tumble down headlong on the ground by the melting quality of the liquid mellowness of love. The Brahmanas swam on the current of a great joy on seeing these edifying exhibitions of love. As Haridas became quiet and sat still after a while the Brahmanas also seated themselves in a circle round him.

Haridas then spoke these words to the Brahmanas, “ O ye Brahmanas, cherish no sorrow on my account. This has been condign punishment for me who have heard endless blasphemy against the Lord. It has been all very well, indeed. It has been a source of very great satisfaction to me that the Lord has been pleased to pardon a great offense by awarding such light punishment. One is doomed to the sufferings of the lowest Hell by the offense of listening to

blasphemy against Vishnu. With my vile ears I have heard a good deal of the same. The Lord has awarded the just punishment for that offense, so that it may not be committed by me again.” In this manner Haridas passed the time in the company of those Brahmanas in the great joy of the congregational chant of Hari. While all those Yavanas, who had given him pain, were utterly ruined. They were destroyed with their families in a short time.

Haridas now lived in his cell in the bank of the Ganges. He lived in seclusion by constant recollection of Krishna. He took three lakhs of the Holy Name everyday. The cave became to him even as the realm of Vaikuntha. Inside that cave there also lived a huge serpent. The extremely venomous quality of its poison vitiated the atmosphere of the cave so that no one could bear the burning sensation that was experienced on entering the cave. None of those, who came to have a sight of Thakur Haridas, could bear to stay in the cave. They all felt the burning effect of the most virulent poison. But Haridas on his part was not aware of it at all. All those Brahmanas then met together and talked about it among themselves. They could not understand why there was such a great burning sensation in the cell of Haridas.

There lived in Fulia persons who were skilled in the treatment of poisoning by snake-bite. They made the discovery that the sensation was due to the presence of some extremely venomous snake within the cave. They informed the people about it and said that it was advisable for Thakur Haridas to quit the cave without delay and shift to some safe place. Accordingly the people went up to Thakur Haridas and implored him earnestly to leave that cave. But Thakur Haridas said that he did not experience any inconvenience personally, although he had been there for a very long time. However, if they really felt it to be unbearable he was willing to move out of the cave the next day if the serpent did not shift elsewhere by that time, provided he was there at all, adding, ‘that there was, however, no cause for any anxiety’ and bade them to proceed with Krishna talk.

As the people continued their auspicious discourse about Krishna a most wonderful event came to pass then and there. On hearing that Haridas

was to leave the cave the great serpent at once quitted his abode. In the approaching gloom of that very evening the huge reptile came out of its hole and moved off from the cell in the view of all the people. It was a most beautiful creature, most wonderful to see and most deadly, spotted with yellow, blue, and white. A great gem burnt on the top of its hood. The Brahmanas were struck with a great fear at the sight of the serpent and involuntarily recollected the Name of Krishna As the serpent left the place there was no longer any trace of the burning sensation that its presence had caused.

The Brahmanas felt a great joy on being relieved of the presence of the brute in that wonderful manner. They conceived a great regard for Thakur Haridas on witnessing this exhibition of his great power. It is a small proof of the power of Thakur Haridas that the huge snake left the place at his mere word. By the very sight of Thakur Haridas the bondage of nescience is snapped at once. Krishna does not oppose the word of Thakur Haridas.

The above incident is recorded in the work of Thakur Brindavandas. Another story regarding the greatness of Thakur Haridas is also recorded by the same writer. It runs as follows:—

One day at the residence of a wealthy person of Fulia a certain snake-bite healer was performing a musical dance when Thakur Haridas arrived there by accident and stood on one side to witness the dance. There now appeared the Prince of the Nagas, by the force of the Mantra taking its effect, in the person of the dancing snake-bite healer and began to dance in that human form. He sang in a loud key the moving song of glory of the Dance that was enacted by the Lord of dancers in the Lake of Kaliya. On hearing the Song of Glory of his own Lord, Haridas fell down in a swoon and there was no sign of breath in any part of his body. Regaining his consciousness in a short time he gave expression to his joy in thundering ejaculations and began to dance rapturously in an infinite variety of figures.

The snake-bite healer on beholding the spiritual possession of Thakur Haridas stood still on one side of the arena. Thakur Haridas rolled on the ground decked in the wonderful manifestations of tears, horripilation and shivering. The great Thakur Haridas was filled with the Presence of Krishna by listening to the chant of the Goodness of his Lord and burst into weeping. All the assembled people now sang the chant of Krishna, forming a ring round Haridas. The snake-bite healer looked on from one side with the palms of his hands joined in the attitude of humble supplication.

The spiritual trance of Haridas lasted for a short time. On its termination the snake-bite healer resumed his dance. All the people were filled with great joy by witnessing the trance of Thakur Haridas. All the people now began to rub their bodies with the dust of every place that was touched by the feet of Thakur Haridas.

There happened to be present in that crowd a hypocritical Brahmana who now conceived the fancy of performing a similar dance, under the impression that 'foolish uncivilized people evince the highest devotion for even an insignificant person if he but dances.' As soon as this thought flashed across the brain of this Brahmana he forthwith fell prostrate on the ground and appeared as if bereft of all power of movement. But no sooner did he fall in this manner inside the arena of the performance of the dance of the snake-bite healer than the latter at once began to beat him violently in a frenzy of anger. He began to beat him so ferociously on the head and shoulders and on all sides of his body with his big cane that the Brahmana was in imminent danger of being killed outright by the violence of his repeated blows. The Brahmana, groaning with pain under the merciless caning, fled from the spot screaming "Oh father!" Thereafter the snake-bite healer danced for a long while feeling all along a great delight.

This strange conduct of the snake-bite healer filled the people with a great curiosity. With palms joined in supplication they begged the snake-bite healer to tell them the cause of his unnatural behaviour. "Tell us why" they asked, "you beat this Brahmana. and stood with your palms joined while

Haridas danced. We wish to hear all about it from your own lips.”

Thereupon the Naga, devotee of Vishnu, began to speak as follows, through the mouth of that snake-bite healer. “ What you have asked is, indeed, a great mystery and one that is not to be divulged. Yet I will assuredly tell you about the same. On beholding the spiritual trance of Thakur Haridas all of you showed in a special manner your great devotion towards him. This Brahmana watched your conduct and through sheer malice tumbled on the ground to make a hypocritical display of devotion. But no one has power to disturb the joy of my dance by any malicious performance. Inasmuch as he falsely set himself up to caricature the devotional perturbations of Haridas I have inflicted this severe punishment on him. The idea by which this wicked Brahmana was led to act the part of a hypocrite was that people might be thereby deceived to honour him as a great personage. His only object was self-advertisement by means of an exhibition of seemingly pious activity. Such arrogant people have no love for Krishna. One may obtain the devotional aptitude to Krishna if only one is perfectly free from all desire to deceive. You have witnessed the dance of Haridas. Those, who have the good fortune of ever beholding his dance, are wholly relieved from the bondage of the world. Krishna Himself dances when Haridas dances. The whole world is sanctified by the sight of his dance. He is, indeed, deservedly named ‘the servant of Hari.’ Krishnachandra eternally dwells in his heart. He is a lover of every entity, is the benefactor of all, appearing in the Company of the Lord Himself in every birth. He is free from offense against Vishnu and the Vaishnavas. His vision does not stray to the wrong path even in sleep. The soul, who finds his company for the fraction of a moment, verily gains the Refuge of the Lotus Feet of Krishna. The highest souls such as Brahma, Shiva, etc., experience a great exultation of heart if they chance to be favoured by the company of a devotee like Haridas. He has appeared in an inferior race in order to prove the utter worthlessness of birth and lineage for the purpose of worshipping Krishna. All the Scriptures declare that if the devotee of Vishnu makes his appearance in the lowest of families he is still the only person who is fit to be honoured. If one, who is born of the highest lineage, do not serve Krishna, he is doomed to perdition, his high birth being of no avail. In order to bear testimony to the truth of those declarations of the

Veda Haridas appeared in a family of the lowest social standing. Just as Prahlada is a demon, Hanuman a monkey, so is Haridas a low-born person, only in name. The celestials covet the touch of Haridas. The Ganges herself desires the immersion of Haridas in her sacred stream. It is not necessary to touch but only to have a sight of Haridas, to be relieved for-good from the bondage of the eternal chain of one's fruitive activities. If I go on speaking for hundreds of years it would not be possible for me to reach the limit of his greatness. You are most fortunate. It is for the sake of such as you that this imperfect account of his glory has manifested itself on my lips. He who takes the name of Haridas only once, will assuredly attain to the Realm of Krishna." The King of the Nagas lapsed into silence after delivering the above discourse. The good people were satisfied on hearing this wonderful speech. The great Naga, who is the eternal devotee of Vishnu, made known in this manner the nature of the spiritual perturbations of Haridas. All people were already well-disposed towards Thakur Haridas. They were most highly delighted on learning these things about him from the mouth of the Naga.

These performances of Thakur Haridas may be ordinarily supposed to belong to the class of events that are called miracles in the theology of certain creeds. But they are not supernatural occurrences in the sense of being immune from the operation of the laws of physical Nature for no other reason than that they are the performances of possessors of superior power. Like his immunity from physical and mental suffering under severe castigation at the hands of the Yavanas, the conduct of Haridas towards the serpent, his dance, perturbations and trances are only expressions of his great love for Krishna. They are justified and explained properly by the laws of spiritual love which transcend, and by transcending fulfill, the imperfect and essentially unwholesome laws of physical Nature.

The cudgeling of the hypocritical Brahmana is similarly an exhibition of love for Godhead on the part of the snake-bite healer; while the barbarous behaviour of the Yavanas towards Haridas is an act of hatred against the Divinity notwithstanding the Scriptural language in which it was sought to be clothed by the Kazi. It is not the external appearance of an act that constitutes

its spiritual worth. In the one case an act of apparent cruelty is to be justly regarded as the exhibition of unalloyed devotion to the Truth; in the other case an externally identical act against Thakur Haridas is to be justly condemned as it proceeded from sheer malice and cruelty of disposition. So it is not the external appearance that determines the spiritual quality of an act.

But it is much more difficult to prove, to the satisfaction of atheists, how love for Krishna can be the sole criterion of spiritual activity. Haridas Thakur cares only to act under the impulse of love for Krishna in all situations. It is only for this reason and for no other that his conduct is to be regarded as spiritual. The relation to Krishna is the only condition by which to distinguish spiritual from non-spiritual conduct.

Spiritual conduct is beneficial to the person practicing it as well as to those who are in anyway brought within its influence. Any form of conduct, which is devoid of reference to Krishna, is bound to be equally and altogether harmful to all parties concerned. It is this consideration which lifts the activities, of the theist above the level of the so-called moral conduct, which is related to a standard of duty towards others independently of the exclusive reference to the Divinity.

The dance, the trance, the horripilation and other perturbations also belong to the category of spiritual activities that are supremely beneficial for all concerned because of their exclusive reference to Krishna. If a hungry man is fed by the birds at the command of another person, the latter may be credited with the possession of extraordinary power for removing physical suffering; but such conduct should not, therefore, be called also spiritual, although it may be moral in the empiric, i.e., worldly sense which that term has come to acquire quite wrongly at the hands of empiric exponents of ethical (?) conduct unconnected with Godhead. The theistic point of view cannot logically recognize the possibility of any person being really benefited by any activity that has no direct, conscious and sole reference to Godhead.

The conduct of the hypocritical Brahmana is on a par with that of the

Kazi who ordered that Thakur Haridas should be beaten to death for taking the Name of Hari. Hypocrisy and fanaticism are not far removed from one another as regards genesis. The reference to Krishna may be, and, as a matter of fact, often is, intended to cover a selfish purpose. The Kazi wanted to punish Haridas for a political and racial reason. The Brahmana sought his own fame and also to spite Thakur Haridas. These motives have nothing to do with Krishna Who is the Absolute Truth Himself in Whom there can be no scope for malice or narrowness. The apparently harsh conduct of the snakebite healer towards the hypocritical Brahmana is an act of mercy, solely because it is prompted by exclusive regard for the servant of Krishna.

If Krishna Himself is conceived in any narrow sense any reference to such false concept of the corrupt brain of man will not also make one's conduct spiritual. Krishna does not owe His Nature to the particular conception of the person who wants to be related to him. There is only one way in which one's relationship with Krishna may be really established, viz., by the resolve of single-hearted devotion to the Truth Absolute combined necessarily with the equally single-hearted resolve to eschew all association with non-Krishna. Any act, that expresses these complementary characteristics, is alone entitled to be designated as spiritual conduct. Partiality for any really narrow conception, by merely calling the same Krishna, will not enable a person to escape the punishment that is due to the enjoyment of non Krishna, any more than any other form of covert hostility to the Truth.

The kind and forbearing attitude of Thakur Haridas towards the offending Yavanas must not also be praised for its quality of toleration of any form or degree of untruth. Thakur Haridas did not pity the Yavanas for the reason that they were not responsible for their ignorance. Haridas knew that ignorance is really identical with aversion to Krishna, and he had, therefore no motive to find any excuse for their hostility to Truth. All, that he desired to express, was that his own punishment was fully deserved and not that the unpardonable aversion to Krishna, that was openly displayed by the Kazi and his myrmidons, did not deserve to be punished. He was silent on this last point.

Thakur Haridas passed his days in the performance of the chant of the Name till the period when Sree Gaurachandra at last began to manifest His Leela of bestowing loving devotion to Krishna on the people of this world. The world stood in extreme need of the Manifestation of Divine Mercy in His highest perfection. In all parts of the country all the people were altogether lacking in devotion to Vishnu. No one knew that there could be such a thing at all as the Kirtana of Krishna. Not only was there no sign of any spirit of devotion to Vishnu in any part of the country but it was the public fashion to ridicule the Vaishnavas. The attitude of hostility and contempt towards the Vaishnavas was universal, there being no exception to the rule. This state of public feeling compelled the Vaishnavas to sing the Name of Sree Krishna by clap of hand only among themselves. Even this modest activity proved too much for the patience of those wicked people. The atheists hurled their invectives against the Vaishnavas, whenever they met one of themselves.

The grievance of those people against the Vaishnavas have been recorded by Thakur Brindavandas in many passages of his work and we have already referred to them at several places of this Narrative. Here are a few additional samples of the ordinary charges that were brought against the Vaishnavas by their implacable enemies. 'These Brahmanas will bring ruin upon the country.' 'These Brahmanas resort to various devices in the shape of singing the Name with excessive display of sentimentality, in order only to live by begging.' 'The Lord sleeps during the four months of the rainy season. Is it meet to call upon Him with a loud voice at all time? If the sleep of the Lord is broken by their noise He will be most angry and afflict the country with famine. There can be no doubt of this.' There were not a few who said, 'If the price of paddy is found to increase ever so little we will make our fists familiar with the shoulders of these miscreants.' Some opined that 'it is indeed fit to chant loudly the Name of Govinda by keeping awake during the night of the eleventh day of the lunar fortnight. What is the use of uttering the Name everyday?' This was the utmost concession that the best disposed people of the society were prepared to make to the Vaishnavas, although the people in general did by no means endorse such a policy of undeserved indulgence towards them. The devotees felt sorely grieved at heart by hearing night and day all these

blasphemies, but no one of them ceased to chant loudly the Name of Krishna in the company of the Vaishnavas. Haridas was also filled with sorrow on beholding the absence of any regard for the communion of devotion in the people. Yet Haridas continued to chant his Lord with a loud voice and employed his mouth exclusively to this supreme function. But the loud chant of Hari even by Thakur Haridas proved unbearable to certain extremely wicked sinners.

A certain wicked Brahmana, who belonged to the village of Harinadi, angrily protested against his practice. “Haridas” said he, “what is this that you are doing? What is the reason of your uttering the Name with such a loud voice? It is enjoined by the religion that the Name is to be taken mentally without being audible. What Scriptures tell you of addressing Godhead by calling upon His Name with a loud voice? By whose teaching is the Name of Hari recited with a loud voice? Let this assembly of the Pandits judge what you have got to say to this.”

Haridas said, “You are all Pandits and well versed in the Scriptures. You must know very well all the reasons in favour of this method. You are also well aware of the greatness of the Name of Hari. In reply to your question I can only repeat what I have heard from the Pandits such as you are yourselves. If the Name is uttered with a loud voice no offense is committed. On the other hand the excellence of the process is augmented a hundredfold if the Name is uttered with a loud voice. This is declared by the Scriptures. The particular text of the Scriptures I refer to, is as follows,— ‘by uttering (the Name) with a loud voice the excellence is augmented a hundred-fold.’

The Brahmana asked, “What is the reason that the meritorious effect is increased a hundred-fold by uttering the Name with a loud voice?”

Haridas proceeded to explain, “Listen, revered Sir” said he, “the reason of it as given in the Veda and the Bhagavatam,. All the Scriptures manifested themselves on the holy lips of Thakur Haridas. He was impelled to expound by the joy of Krishna bliss. “Hear, O Vipra” said Thakur Haridas, “by listening to-

the Name of Krishna, only once, beasts, birds and insects find unobstructed passage to the Holy Realm of Vaikuntha. Here is my text. “What is the wonder of the brute (serpent) being delivered by the touch of the Feet of Krishna, by the taking of Whose-Name the person uttering the same is at once sanctified among with all those who listen to him?, The beasts, birds, insects, etc., cannot utter the Name of Hari. They are saved as soon as they chance to hear the Name. If the Name of Sree Krishna is taken mentally only the person taking the Holy Name is saved thereby. By chanting the Name with a loud voice the chanter benefits others also. It is for this reason that all the Scriptures declare that the good is augmented a hundred-fold if the Name is chanted with a loud voice. The text of the Bhagavatam is as follows, “It is, indeed, fit that the chanter of the Name of Hari with a loud voice is a hundred times better than one who takes the Name mentally. The person, who takes the Name mentally, saves only himself; one, who chants the Name with a loud voice, saves also his hearers.”

“So by the authority of the Purana I hold that one, who chants the Name with a loud voice, is a hundred times superior to him who does so mentally. The reason of this, O Vipra, also deserves to be listened to most attentively. By mentally taking the Name a person maintains only himself. If one chant the Name of Govinda with a loud voice every creature is delivered as soon as he hears. All animals, with the sole exception of man, although they are privileged to possess a tongue, are unable to utter the Sound of the Name of Krishna. The process, by which even those, who are born in vain, are saved, certainly does not deserve to be condemned. There are those who maintain thousands besides themselves. Which of them is superior? This is easy to find by a tittle of reflection. It is for this reason that the superior merit of the process of chanting the Name with a loud voice is held to be well established.”

The reply of Thakur Haridas only served to augment the anger of that wicked Brahmana who now threw off the mask of the hypocritical inquirer and began openly to revile Thakur Haridas. He said, “Haridas has at last become the maker of our Philosophy! So the path of the Veda is going to be destroyed before our very eyes after enduring through the Ages. It is said that the sudra is destined to expound the Veda towards the close of the Iron Age. That thing has

come to pass at this very moment, without our having to wait for the end of the Yuga. I can now see what it really is. You go about from door to door feeding on the choicest delicacies by this capital method of cheap self-advertisement. If the explanation thou hast offered is proved to be wide of the mark thy nose and ear require to be chopped off on the spot.

On hearing-these blasphemous effusions of that wretch of a Brahmana, Thakur Haridas smiled slightly as he uttered the Name of Hari. Without making any further reply Haridas left the place continuing to chant the Name of Hari with a loud voice. Those, who happened to be present in the assembly, were also sinful persons and, being of an evil disposition, made no proper answer to what was said by that Brahmana. “All these Brahmanas,” observes Thakur Brindavandas, “are verily cannibals (Rakshasas). They are Brahmanas only in name. All of them are proper objects of punishment by Yama. In the Kali Yuga all the Rakshasas are ordained to be born in the families of the Brahmanas for venting their spite against the good people. The Rakshasas, under the fostering care of Kali, are born in the womb of Brahmanas. They oppress the few who really possess the knowledge of the Vedas. The Dharma-Shastra, indeed, forbids to touch, hold talk with or bow to these Brahmanas in any circumstances. What more need be said. It is incumbent to avoid addressing or touching those Brahmanas, who are non-Vaishnavas, even by mistake. In this world it is one’s duty not to see a non-Vaishnava Brahmana, even as one should avoid the sight of the dog-eating Chandala. The Vaishnava, although he be born outside the Varnas, sanctifies the three worlds. If one, born a Brahmana, be not a Vaishnava, by even talking with such a person one loses the merits acquired by his previous good deeds.”

I have reproduced the words of Thakur Brindavandas and also the texts of the Scriptures quoted by him. Thakur Brindavandas informs us that a terrible calamity overtook the offending Brahmana only a few days after the above occurrence. The nose of the Brahmana fell off by an attack of the small-pox. The punishment, which he had proposed for Thakur Haridas, was allotted to himself by Krishna.

We next meet Thakur Haridas in Nabadwip, whither he was attracted by the prospect of the society of the Vaishnavas. He resided there, as the honoured guest of Sree Advaitacharyya, on a footing of intimate friendship with all the devotees.

It is, however, necessary, before we leave this portion of our narrative, to offer a few remarks on an important aspect of the incident just described.

The method of chanting in company the Name of Hari with a loud voice within the hearing of all persons, is the form of worship that was subsequently instituted by Sree Chaitanya as the Dispensation for the present controversial Age. The only offense, which may stand effectively in the way of one's taking the Name of Hari, is absence of faith in the Transcendental Nature of the Name Himself and of Sree Guru on whose lips the Name manifests Himself. Provided one is not deliberately resolved to disbelieve the Divine Nature of the Name and the spiritual nature of His chanter there is no other circumstance that can stand in the way of one's taking the Name mentally or uttering Him with a loud voice. The second of these methods is called Kirtana. This is held to be much more efficacious than the mental process.

By taking the Name only once a person is relieved from the bondage of Nescience for good. On the manifestation of the natural function of the soul the abnormal function automatically disappears. The Kirtana or loud chant of the Name is the only function of the soul in the state of Divine Grace. By His means the whole world is to be saved. This is the Dispensation of this Age.

But this is vehemently objected to by Brahmanas of the stamp of the person who reviled Thakur Haridas at Harinadi. It is necessary to consider the mentality that produces such vehement opposition to a method which should appear even to those who may not have any faith in it, as hardly capable of giving offense to anybody.

No one is likely to be angry with the loud chanter of the Name of Hari

unless he is himself accustomed to take the Name in the offensive manner. The rank atheist is less dangerous than the hypocrite. A person takes the Name of Hari mentally, but opposes the loud chant of the Name. What can be the reason of such opposition? It can be but due to the natural partiality for the wrong method to which he has been accustomed, as he must believe, on principle.

But if he is asked further why he takes the Name of Hari even mentally, the opposer of the loud chant should have no reasonable answer to give. The Transcendental Sound is the Name of Hari. The Name as Sound is identical with Hari. Hari's Name makes His Appearance in this world as Sound through the medium of the chanters of the Name. The Name is to be heard only from the lips of pure devotees. If He is so heard, even without faith but without offense, the dormant function of the soul is aroused thereby, enabling the hearer also to chant the Name. As soon as the Name appears on the tongue Hari is fully served. But why should the Name, received from His loud chanter, appearing on the tongue of the hearer, be recited mentally in order to prevent others from hearing Him?

The mantra, indeed, requires to be repeated to oneself mentally. The mantra is also the Name, but not in the form of direct address. The mantra is the formula by which the person repeating the same, makes a surrender of his mind and its function to the Name who is yet inaccessible to the worshipper because of his conditional state. If the Name is compared to the full-blown flower the mantra would be comparable to the unopened bud. The mantra is the formula for getting rid of the vanity of one's mental existence. The mantra helps to clear the way for the Appearance of the Name. The mantra involves mental surrender to the Guru and is, therefore, a deliberate act of conviction on the part of the person who is entitled to practice this method. The mantra in fact represents the special favour of the Guru and the personal relationship between the disciple and the spiritual guide. The imparting of the mantra is tantamount to recognition by the Guru that a person is accepted as disciple. This process is called diksha which means the bestowal of spiritual enlightenment by elimination of sinfulness, by the spiritual guide to the disciple who is disposed by sincere conviction to walk in the path of service

under Divine Guidance manifested through the Guru.

The chanting of the Name of Hari, after hearing Him from the lips of the pure devotee, in the company of His devotees, is the method of worship that was to be promulgated by Sree Chaitanya as the only Dispensation for the Age. Thakur Haridas is the Acharyya, or the Divinely Authorized Practicing Teacher, of this very function. He is here found to declare that the chanting of the Name with a loud voice is open to all persons and does not require on the part of the neophyte any precondition of fitness except the absence of deliberate opposition to recognizing the Name as being identical with the Transcendental Possessor of the Name, i.e., Godhead Himself. If there is no deliberate intention of refusing to acknowledge the Divinity of the Name appearing on the lips of the pure devotee of Krishna, a person is eligible to hear and, after hearing, sing the Name in the company of His devotees by discarding all unnecessary association with unbelievers. By practicing the chant of the Name in this manner, that is to say by being free from the offenses of intimate association with unbelievers and the intention of deliberately cherishing any doubt or disbelief regarding the Divinity of the Holy Name manifesting Himself in the form of the Sound on the lips of pure devotees, a person should be enabled in due course to realize the Divine Nature of the Name, i.e., of Krishna, His service and of his own soul as being the eternal servant of Krishna.

But the mantra is not really different from the chant of the Name. It only marks a stage of progress in an identical process. After the Name begins to be chanted in the manner that is free from offense against the Name, one begins to make progress on the path of spiritual endeavour. The first sign, that actual progress is being made, manifests itself in the form of the conviction that it is necessary to follow unconditionally the guidance of the Guru from whose lips the Name has been heard. This is the specific entry into the properly serving state of the process.

The position may also be explained in another way. The chanting of the Name with a loud voice in the manner that is free from offense is not possible for a person till he is relieved of the exclusively mental outlook on life which is

inevitable in the conditioned state. So long as the mental outlook retains its Prevailing force a person cannot conscientiously recognize the necessity of unconditional submission to the guidance of the Guru. This is so because he cannot realize by mental speculation the spiritual nature of the personality of the bona fide Guru and the consequent necessity of unconditional surrender to the bona fide spiritual guide.

It also does not follow that after the mantra is received one is not entitled to chant the Name with a loud voice. On the contrary it is the mantra who in his turn strengthens the faith of the chanter in the Divinity of the Name by relieving him from the obstructive force of mental speculation regarding the spiritual function. The mantra has to be repeated mentally because all persons are not entitled to listen to it nor does it concern any one else except the person to whom it is imparted. The identity between the Name and the mantra is established by the fact that the mantra is also the Name with the addition of the personal admission that the chanter is convinced that he can be relieved from the state of ignorance regarding the spiritual nature of the Name only by following unconditionally the guidance of the Guru.

It will not do to repeat the mantra mentally without receiving the same from the Guru, for the reason that the process would then be meaningless. The mantra really means that a person places himself under the unconditional guidance of the Guru in order to realize the spiritual function of chanting the Name of Hari without offense. If there is no Guru whom the person is to follow there is no meaning in merely uttering a formula which implies one's consent to practice obedience to the Guru.

The Guru understands the particular state of spiritual eligibility of the conditioned soul and is also aware of Krishna's intention in regard to him. He is the channel used by Krishna to convey His Mercy. to the conditioned soul. The best of devotees are alone privileged to enjoy this supreme confidence of Krishna. It is the function of the Guru to raise the disciple to the level of the intimate confidence of Krishna, because Krishna is fully served only by the congregational method to be found in the perfectly spiritual community of His

pure devotees. The unfortunate Brahmana of Harinadi and the learned Pandits assembled there could not understand the necessity or propriety of chanting the Name of Hari with a loud voice because they were satisfied with their individual mental outlooks and speculative opinions regarding the teaching of the Scriptures, although the same Scriptures are never tired of warning their readers against committing the offense of confounding the spiritual with the physical or mental issue. Those learned Pandits had found the untruth which they were seeking in their lives by precept and example. No sincere seeker of the Truth should, however, allow himself to be deliberately committed to views regarding the worship of Godhead for the purpose of thereby ensuring his own superiority over his fellowmen. Those pseudo-Brahmanas were too fond of the social superiority of their hereditary position to be inclined to pay heed to the real meaning of the Scriptures which is so utterly incompatible with the social privileges, which they so unworthily monopolized. It is seldom that the prosperous and confirmed thief is inclined to pay serious attention to the counsels of stainless honesty.

Chapter XXII **—Pilgrimage to Gaya and Initiation.**

Nimai Pandit continued to teach His students in Nabadwip after His Marriage with Sree Vishnupriya Devi. The Lord was leading the ideal life of the householder Brahmana up to this point of our Narrative. It was the life that is enjoined by the Dharma-Shastras for those who want to lead a life that is not opposed to spiritual well-being. But it is not itself the spiritual life. The life of the Brahmana is the model for the other classes of the worldly people. It places before us the necessity of not putting one's trust exclusively in the so-called good things of this world. If one has to live in this world, as one must till he finds it really necessary to change his worldly life for one that is higher, he should constantly keep before him the purpose underlying the life of the Brahmana as laid down in the Scriptures.

It does not mean that every one should embrace the calling of the teacher of religion nor that everyone should marry. So long as a person feels any affinity for the activities of this world he should learn a calling that is to his taste and follow the same. Those, who feel a taste for the work of a teacher, have also to qualify themselves for the same by adopting a life that is in keeping with the proper discharge of the responsibilities of that particular worldly calling. The teacher of the people must in the first place lead a life that is in conformity with the interests of his pupils. The highest of all interests is knowledge of the Brahman. One, who is devoid of the knowledge of the Brahman is debarred by this radical disqualification from taking charge of the education of the people.

It is not the purpose of the Scriptures to prevent the proper cultivation of any branch of knowledge by thus making the Brahmana the sole custodian of the education of the people. The arrangement recommended by the Shastras does not recognise the competence of any secular knowledge to free us from the fetters of ignorance, and is, therefore, unwilling to recognise the cultivation of such knowledge for its own sake, and is opposed to the purely secular education which they do not consider to be beneficial or even harmless pastime. All persons, even those who are engaged in secular pursuits, must possess the spiritual outlook to be enabled to function properly even in those pursuits. The superiority and desideratum of spiritual living in its unadulterated purity must be recognized by being practically imposed on all social institutions.

It must, however, be borne in mind that it is not to a sacerdotal, hereditary caste that the Scriptures intend to bestow the lucrative privilege of the monopoly of a trade of educating the people. Any person, who possesses the genuine disposition to seek for the Truth and who prefers the quest of the Truth to every other consideration, to whatever class of the society he may belong by birth, is to be recognized as a Brahmana who is fit for this purely spiritual purpose for its own sake. It does not appear that the Scriptures, by means of the Varnasrama organization, sought to prevent the free choice of

secular occupation by individuals. As a matter of fact the object of the institution is just the opposite of this. It requires every individual to be put into the profession that best suits his natural aptitude and to do this at the proper early age. But it also recognized a natural graduation of classes. It considers the position of the spiritual teacher of society as superior to that of all the others. Next below the spiritual teachers it puts the spiritually guided ruling class. Those, who are the leaders of the economic pursuits under spiritual direction, come next below the political body. The fourth estate consists of those who are devoid of spiritual inclination but are prepared to earn a living by loyally serving others who are spiritually disposed.

The peculiarity of the arrangement is that it puts the spiritually enlightened teaching class, carefully recruited from all the classes, at the head of the society, not in the political, nor in the economic, but in the purely spiritual sense. If a Brahmana meddles in politics or trade or service, he automatically loses his status as a teacher. As a teacher the Brahmana is to be maintained by the free gifts of the community to be obtained, not by political pressure but, by begging by the teachers themselves, or their students on their behalf. It is incumbent on the Brahmana not to amass any wealth but to devote all surplus wealth which may come into his hands in the way that is spiritually beneficial for the society.

In other words the Brahmana lives for the purpose of finding the Truth in order to serve Him when found. His life is the probationary stage of spiritual living. The practical result of this obligation, on the part of the teacher, of leading the theistic life enjoined by the Scriptures, would not be objectionable as long as the process of recruitment remains inefficient. The Scriptures provide that an unworthy teacher should forfeit his position as a matter of course. The function of degrading such a person belongs to the body of the Brahmanas. We find that the privilege was misunderstood and grossly abused in actual practice. But it would be difficult to suggest that the system itself is, therefore a defective one. If any society wants to be guided by the instruction of unworthy persons it is always free to do so and to be ruined by choosing to do so. The Varnasrama institution is a secular organization and as such shares the unavoidable defects of all such institutions. It is claimed to be the only organization that has been

scientifically conceived for the promotion of spiritual living. Unless this is borne in mind it would be difficult to understand what follows.

We have seen that Sree Gaursundar had been leading the life of the ideal Brahmana householder up till now. The actual mode of life that He led has already been described in different ways. The successful endeavour to live the life of a Brahmana was now to be rewarded by the attainment of spiritual enlightenment which is the goal to which it is directed.

This is the secondary aspect of the event that we are now going to narrate. The Supreme Lord was induced to manifest His Appearance in this world by being moved to Pity by the sufferings of His devotees. The Iron Age proved too bad to be redeemed by the exertions of His agents. Even Sree Advaita acharyya, Who is the cause of the Appearance of the Lord, had been set at naught by the stubborn atheists of Nabadwip, despite the universal respect in which he was personally held in all the learned circles and among those Brahmanas who occupied the highest social position. In spite of the personal exertions of Advaita and all the devotees who were resident at Nabadwip there was perceptible no change for the better in the attitude of the people towards the Vaishnavas. On the contrary their hostility to the Vaishnavas continued to increase and at last became intolerable. The denunciation of the Vaishnavas by those bad people became the constant and fashionable pastime of the day. The devotees felt the greatest sorrow on beholding the prevalence of such universal preference for false worldly pleasures on the part of the people. The very name of devotion was banned from the category of topics worthy of their serious discussion. Vishnu and the Vaishnavas were, however, constantly reviled by one and all. All this was happening at Nabadwip under the eyes of the Lord Himself Who was all the time absorbed in scholastic pursuits. The grief of His devotees at last moved the Lord to compassion and made Him manifest His Activity of the Savior.

But before the Supreme Lord openly ranged Himself on the side of His devotees He wished to visit the holy Tirtha of Gaya. For the ostensible purpose of performing the due funeral rites in honour of His departed father the Lord set out for Gaya with many of His disciples. With a mind full of great delight the

Lord took leave of His mother and obtained her permission for the journey to Gaya. The holy feet of the Lord then began their triumphal progress towards Gaya, sanctifying all the country and the villages wherein the people dwelt, turning them into the holiest of tirthas.

The Lord journeyed in the company of His numerous followers in the pleasure of delightful talk on all manner of topics ranging from religion to gossip and hilarious laughter and jocoseness. Traveling for days in this fashion the Lord reached Mandara and after beholding Sree Madhusudan, Who is worshipped there, roamed over the Hill to please Himself. But in a few days after the resumption of His journey the Lord manifested the Leela of falling ill by an attack of fever. The Lord was to all appearance smitten with fever, like ordinary men, on His way in the middle of the journey. This filled the hearts of His disciples with great anxiety. They halted on their way and made every effort for having Him cured of the distemper. But the fever obstinately refused to be healed. such being the Will of the Lord. At last the Lord prescribed the proper medicine for Himself, declaring that drinking the water that had been used in washing the feet of a Brahmana relieves from all suffering., In order to vindicate the greatness of the feet wash of Brahmanas the Supreme Lord drank the same Himself in the view of all the people. As soon as He had drunk the feet-wash of the Brahmanas the Supreme Lord was instantly restored to the healthy state and the fever left for good.

Thakur Brindavandas, commenting on the above, says that the Veda and the Puranas bear testimony to the fact that it is the nature of Godhead to drink the feet wash of Brahmanas and quotes the following from the Geeta. 'I serve every one in the way that he submits to Me. Men, O Partha, follow in all cases the lead of My Service.'

The service of Krishna is performed by all the activities of men. All methods of activity come under the category of the service of the Indivisible Knowledge Who is identical with Krishna. If it be asked what constitutes the basic difference between the methods of fruitive activity, seeking to merge in the undifferentiated Brahman, and the path of devotion (the only possible modes of

activity open to the individual soul) the answer is that the last is the model for the rest. Every one seeks to follow his own inner conviction and light. In proportion as the light within is actually followed it also gives the proper guidance. To one, who chooses to follow the inner guidance only partially, the Light offers only a proportionately partial view of Himself. One, who chooses to neglect Him, is offered a correspondingly deluding view of the Truth and one which he finds more in accordance with his choice. But the Light, Whom all men serve in different ways, is always the same indivisible knowledge dealing with His votaries in the way that His votaries choose to deal by Him. The difference is, therefore, due to the degree of submission to the indivisible knowledge that is actually offered by the individual soul. The doctrine of rebellion against Godhead, to explain the origin of sin, is true only in the above sense.

Krishna is found and served only by those who offer their full submission to the Indivisible Truth. When one offers less than his full submission to Krishna he no longer sees Krishna as He is but in an eclipsed form of the Truth corresponding to his own imperfect homage to Him. Indra is also Krishna but only as viewed by the worshipper who covets the pleasure of paradise. Every object of worship to be found in the different creeds, which is offered less than the whole service, is also Krishna in His secondary, i.e., deluding, forms. When the object of worship is not Krishna, or is an eclipsed view of Krishna, the Indivisible Knowledge does not show Himself to the worshipper who experiences in consequence all those difficulties that beset the path of those who do not worship Krishna as He is.

Sree Gaursundar exhibited the pastime of drinking the feet-wash of Brahmanas and not of non-Brahmanas to signify that Krishna fulfills all requirements of the soul who throws himself wholly on His protection, but He does not deal in the same way with those who are not disposed to serve Him. He is not disposed to accept the service of those who are not disposed to offer Him their whole-hearted service. But He keeps back nothing from His devotee; nay, He uses all his power in vindicating the preeminence of His devotees over those who are not disposed to serve Him fully.

Thakur Brindavandas goes so far as to assert that the Lord serves those who seek to serve Him in every way by their whole attitude and at all time. The Lord is the servant of His servant. He is subdued by His servant. This is in keeping with what has been stated above. In the battle of Kurukshetra Krishna was compelled by Bhîshma to take up arms, thereby breaking His own promise to observe absolute neutrality during the conflict, which had led Duryodhana to prefer to accept the help of Krishna's army to Krishna's own Person pledged not to fight by actually using His weapons against any party. Bhishma did not consider this policy of Duryodhana, on whose side he had to fight against his own better judgment, to be at all wise; and he told Duryodhana that Krishna was bound to break His promise if He found the Pandavas in real danger. Bhishma was confident of proving his contention as he knew that without the active help of Krishna no one could prevail against any one. Krishna could, of course, have easily made the Pandavas prevail over Bhishma without openly breaking His promise or neutrality; but He preferred to be vanquished on this point in order to glorify both Bhishma and Arjuna who were His devotees. Krishna is thus proved to be always ready to obey the wish of His devotee even when it seems to run counter to His Own. There are numerous instances of this kind of Conduct on the part of Godhead in the Puranas when He allows Himself to be vanquished by His devotee whenever He is seriously opposed by the latter.

I am perfectly aware that there are persons who have grossly misinterpreted the Shloka of the Geeta, quoted above by Thakur Brindavandas, and also the conduct of Sree Gaurisundar on this occasion: There is a body of opinion among a section of the commentators of the scriptures who are inclined to exploit the passages in the Scriptures expressing the superiority of the Brahmanas into an argument in favour of the unconditional predominance of the hereditary caste of Brahmanas over everything including the Divinity Himself. Sree Gaurisundar as well as Sree Krishna are held by these commentators to be upholders of the social and spiritual superiority of the hereditary Brahmana caste. The point is pushed to the promulgation of the view that those worshippers of Krishna, who are not born in the Brahmana caste, are rendered inferior to the caste Brahmanas by their not being born in Brahmana families.

This ridiculous interpretation of the particular passages of the Scriptures, of which an instance is given above, is so obviously sectarian and so utterly opposed to the contexts in which they appear that there should remain at this point of the Narrative no ground for such silly misunderstanding on the part of those readers who are not pledged to shut their eyes to the Truth out of deference to narrow individual or class prejudices. The true Brahmana is certainly deserving of universal respect by reason of his disposition for the unconditional service of the Truth. But no one is a Brahmana who does not serve the Truth in this unreserved manner. The Truth is identical with Vishnu. A Brahmana, who does not serve Vishnu, is worse than a Chandala whose very sight is to be avoided by all persons. Therefore, it is not the birth that makes the Brahmana in the sense in which he is to be regarded as the servant of Vishnu. It is the test of complete submission to Vishnu that is the only consideration. The distinction between one person and another is due to the measure in which he is disposed to serve not a fancy of his erring mind under the name of Truth but the Truth Himself, Who is no other than Vishnu. If one does not serve Vishnu, i.e., Godhead as He really is, he cannot claim the homage of society by reason of his birth in a Brahmana family. The community of genuine Brahmanas would also necessarily repudiate all claims of their own social superiority independently of the reference to the service of Vishnu which is the one thing needful and is admitted as such in practice by the Brahmanas who follow this real interpretation of the Scriptures and who are recruited from among all classes of the people by this sole text.

The doctrine, that requires unconditional submission to the feet of Godhead, does not entail any curtailment of our individual liberty to serve the Truth in the way we choose. There is no loss of scope or diversity on the plane of complete submission, but only an increase in the degree and outlook of the faculty of cognition. The very same act is viewed differently from different angles of vision even on the plane of the Absolute, but without causing any loss of Harmony. On the mundane plane there are also the same different angles of vision but they conflict with one another and produce only a temporary and unwholesome result by their diversity. The game is not worth the candle in the latter case.

A person, who is located on the mundane plane, commits the fatal error of looking at everything from a point of view that is not really his own. This real abandonment of his individuality is wrongly supposed, by mere force of habit, as constituting his proper individual point of view. In this case there is not only a disadvantageous angle of vision, from which the Truth cannot be properly seen, but also a resolve not to see the Truth. Truth can be seen only by the serving disposition. If I choose to look at the Truth from the point of view of the master I am left by the process without any ground to stand upon. This is so because the Truth does not serve anyone except Himself. If I choose to look at Truth from the point of view of the master and choose to call this as my individual angle of vision for viewing the Truth, I thereby commit the offense of suppressio veri inasmuch as my real intention, in taking up the impossible point of view, is not to see the Truth at all but only a particular hypothetical entity or non-Truth that is made to appear to my view by my own manipulation to miss the sight of the Truth.

The protection of Godhead in all circumstances is realizable as the basic condition of all rational activity on the part of the individual soul. The devotee is, therefore, under no temptation of seeking to disown the Refuge of the lotus feet of Krishna, even if such ambition be permitted a seeming scope by the absolute master Himself. The devotee is spontaneously and exclusively attached to the feet of Krishna not by the need of the preservation of his rational consistency of conduct but by the innate impulse of love. The devotee seeks the protection of the Lord for the satisfaction of the causeless loving hankering of his pure nature for the service of the all-beautiful who is also all-knowledge and all-existence. there is therefore, no plea which need be availed by him for seeking to disown the protection of the Lord.

After displaying the pastime of getting cured of the manifestation of fever, the Lord made His way to the holy Tirtha of Poonapooa. Having bathed and worshipped the Pitris (Manes), the Son of Sree Sachi entered Gaya. The Lord, joining His beautiful hands, made obeisance to holy Gaya on entering the sacred tirtha, being overcome with spiritual fervor. He then proceeded to Brahmakunda and, after bathing in its holy water duly honoured the Pitris.

Thence He came to Chakravera and made haste to have the sight of the lotus feet of Sree Gadadhara.

The Lord found that the holy site of the lotus feet was surrounded by the Brahmanas. The garlands, offered to the lotus feet, had accumulated to the height of a temple. The offering made of perfume, flower, incense, lighted lamp, clothing, ornament, was beyond all calculation. The Brahmanas, wearing the beauty of celestials and attending on all sides, were engaged in reciting the power of the lotus feet. “Ye most fortunate people, behold those feet that are clasped to his bosom by the lord of Kashi, that are ever the life of Lakshmi, that make themselves manifest on the head of Bali. Behold all ye those feet by whose momentary meditation one ceases to be subject to the god of death (Yama). Behold, all ye fortunate people, the self-same feet that are so rarely attainable to the highest yogis, those feet in whom the sanctifying Bhagirathy makes her appearance whom the devotee never parts from his heart. Fortunate people, behold those dearly beloved feet that repose on the couch of Sree Ananta.” On hearing of the power of those feet from the lips of the Brahmanas the Lord was overwhelmed by transcendental bliss. His two lotus eyes overflowed with tears. At the sight of the divine feet His person was decked with horripilation and shivering. So did Lord Gaurachandra, for the good fortune of all the worlds, begin the manifestation of loving devotion. The never ceasing Ganges flowed in the eyes of the Lord. All the Brahmanas beheld the wonderful sight.

I have tried to preserve the actual words of Thakur Brindavandas in describing the incident that first excited the manifestation of loving devotion by Sree Gaurasundar.

This is the turning point in the Career of the Lord. From this point onwards the Lord appears as the ideal devotee of Godhead. The change to spiritual life when it does come to the Brahmana householder, comes in the form of the undeserved causeless mercy of Godhead. The mercy of Godhead is indescribable to one who has not been the recipient of the same. Had it been describable in terms of worldly experience it would have been more or less deserved.

Those, who seek to understand the spiritual life in terms of mundane values, contradict themselves when they assert with the same breath that Godhead is the judge of right and wrong and is the Dispenser of reward for righteous conduct. If the spiritual enlightenment is a gift for righteous living preceding the gift, can it also be described as causeless or undeserved? Those, who insist that the value of the spiritual life should be intelligible to a person before he accepts it, in order that he may make his choice in the rational way, only commit the mistake of begging the question. If, on the other hand, the value of the spiritual life be admitted on trust without any previous knowledge of its nature, it would be liable to be justly condemned as 'blind faith' that has proved the fruitful source of all the patent corruptions to be found in all parts of the world and which are cherished by their victims under the terrible self-delusion that they only appear to be bad by reason of their very transcendental nature. The sight of Vishnu's feet at Gaya gave Sree Gaursundar His first spiritual experience as devotee. The sight of the feet of the Lord is not available to any one except by the mercy of the Lord. Why the Lord is merciful to a person, can never be known. The Supreme Lord is full of mercy and makes no distinction in bestowing His favour in boundless measure on all persons. But there is also a process of receiving His favour which depends on the free choice of the recipient of the divine favour. As soon as this condition is fulfilled by the recipient, he is rewarded with the sight of the feet of the Lord.

If it be contended that a gift, which is conditional on the recipient fulfilling any requirement, cannot be described as either causeless or undeserved, the answer would be that the particular gift fulfills all these contradictory conditions. The gift remains causeless although it is bestowed only on those who fulfill the conditions necessary for qualifying for receiving it. The sole condition is the desire, which is also causeless, of serving the Truth when found. This attitude may be called blind faith so long as the Truth is yet unfound. But the Truth reveals Himself only to His sincere seeker. There is no cause why He should do so; but, as a matter of fact, He does so. It is the nature of Truth to do so. If hydrogen and oxygen combine to form water we are satisfied that we understand how water is formed. If it be asked why the two gases should be transformed into water at all, which is altogether a different substance, we are

only offered further information on the process itself by way of explanation. We are also not dissatisfied when we get such explanation. This is so because we understand that it is our business not to question the truth of the operations of nature because they are of the nature of facts which exist independently of our speculations regarding them. We are naturally enough only anxious to know more about the actual process of the working of the different forces of nature. The question of 'Why' this should be so, i.e., the ethical issue does not arise at all, in regard to these 'blind' operations of nature.

But when we are asked to accept the spiritual 'fact' that the sight of the feet of Hari is capable of producing the disposition for serving the Lord we are at once impelled to bring up the ethical question why this should be so. In regard to such attitude, however, it is important to bear in mind that the ethical question itself is always relative to a standard. That standard is the unknown quantity. The empiricists have been trying in vain to discover the real standard of the ethical instinct. All speculative standards, as yet discovered in terms of mundane values, have proved more or less unsatisfactory and wide of the mark. The only useful purpose, that those speculations have served, is to expose the utter futility of finding the ethical standard by the method of such speculation.

The fun is that this admitted failure notwithstanding the exponents of the so-called science of ethics do not hesitate to lay down detailed instructions for the guidance of those who are desirous of leading the ethical life. The disciples of this imperfect science are also in their turn never tired of bragging their superiority (?) over those who are not acquainted with the conclusions (not errors) of their favorite science of moral (?) conduct. A certain type of admirers of Christianity are especially fond of trying to prove this kind of moral (?) superiority of the Christian religion over other creeds of the world. But if they are held tightly to the meaning of their words they can escape only under the cover of transparent prevarications and by dint of the dense understanding or contemptuous indifference of their opponents.

It is not our purpose to deny the value of the ethical instinct; but we are sworn foes of the hollow pretensions of the so-called empiric science of ethics which

has such disastrous effect on the morals of some of its votaries. It makes them insuperably self-conceited 'without rhyme or reason'. Godhead is no doubt the Source of all righteousness but certainly not of the brand that is manufactured by the science of empiric ethics. That science will be found on examination to be opposed to the real ethical issue by its presumption of being able to explain all ethical value by the superficial analysis of the external activities in which the ethical principle seeks to express itself. The method is that of shunting off the real issue to the side track and getting up a case in favour of its unworthy proxy on the evidence of non-essential adventitious circumstances.

We appeal to the experience of all that no person had ever been helped to become more ethical by the mere study of the empiric ethical science, nor has any person been ever really satisfied that the science has been able to throw any light on the nature of the principle that really matters. It has, on the contrary, only offered destructive criticism of the only really ethical conduct on the irrelevant ground of the defective circumstances under which it manifests itself in this world.

It's really the immaculate soul who expresses his dissatisfaction of meaningless unnatural sensuous existence, in the form of the ethical protest. The soul cannot be satisfied by any values offered by our mundane experience or hopes of mundane improvement. He believes instinctively in an existence which is wholly free from all these defects and is impelled by his innate nature to seek to realize the conditions of such existence. It is the question of function and plane, about which the empiricist is so unduly skeptical. The function of the soul on the mundane plane is directed, is bound unaccountably to be directed, towards only mundane objects. The mundane objective is also, in its turn the cause of the degeneration of the function. The organs, through which the soul functions towards the mundane objective, share in the defects of the objective and are as unavoidable causes of degeneracy as the objective itself. This is the only ethical problem.

The ethical instinct is thus co-related with the quest for the Truth, not the speculative truth which sets its heart on a radically glorified sensuous existence but the Absolute Truth to Whom the present muddy understanding, with its natural preference for the dirt, has no access and which is not even privileged to suspect that it is itself so far away from the direction of the Truth. This introduces the all-important factor of the plane. The ethical life is capable of being substantively realized, in a form that is perfectly unintelligible to our present understanding, only on the plane of the Absolute, to which our present faculties have no access.

This brings us to the necessity of divine grace for being relieved of our mundane equipments. Until this point of view has been reached by the discontented soul by the force of his earthly disillusionments, he is not in a position to lend his ear to the message regarding the proper nature of the spiritual function and the only method of its attainment. A person, who has arrived at this stage, should be in a position to recognize the manifestation of divine mercy in aid of the seeker of the Truth. The Archa is such divine Manifestation. The feet of the Lord, worshipped at Gaya, are really the feet of the Lord Himself and may be seen as such only by the most fortunate people who have been convinced of the utter worthlessness of the promised improvement of this temporary worldly existence by speculative methods and have been thereby led to put their trust, not blindly but in all true rational humility, in divine aid appearing in a form that is also accessible to our present defective equipments. To such a person the Archa of the feet of the Lord at Gaya manifests His divine nature.

The actual service of Godhead is barred to empiricists by reason of their stubborn disbelief in the divinity of the Archa. An aspect of the Protestant movement in Christianity and the religion of Mohammed as expounded by certain schools of his followers, inculcate doctrines akin to those of the school of the worshippers (?) of the undifferentiated Brahman in this country. The element of error in such attitude consists in the fact that it seems to imply the wrong assumption that it is possible to rise to the conception of the nature of Godhead in a way that is also explicable to mundane judgment. The descent of

Godhead is not, therefore, fully admitted. Once the empiric ambition of our capacity to work up to Godhead is properly discarded the deluded form of iconoclastic fury should appear to be itself subject to the delusion which it claims to condemn with such otherwise laudable vehemence. The iconoclasm of the rabid iconoclast must be carefully avoided by the cultivation of the true patience of judgment if one is to earn the privilege of recognizing the descent of Godhead in the Archa. Those, who are unfit to worship the Archa, are still less qualified for the higher form of confidential worship of the Holy Name by the methods of kirtana and recollection.

The mercy of Godhead is recognizable by His influence on the disposition of His recipient. As soon as Godhead wills to show Himself to the fettered soul, He does so by directing the latter to seek the guidance of His devotee. This involves two things. The person favoured by Godhead is enabled to recognize the devotee and is also enabled to be convinced of the necessity of submitting to his unconditional guidance. If this result is not produced we should suppose that the person has not really received the divine favour but has only been deceived by his own disloyal imagination.

As Sree Gaurusundar was in the act of exhibiting those spiritual perturbations that were produced by hearing the praise of the holy feet of Sree Gadadhara from the lips of the Brahmanas.

Sree Iswara Puri appeared on the spot, apparently by mere accident, but really by the Will of Godhead. On catching sight of Sree Iswara Puri Sree Gaurusundar made obeisance to him with an exhibition of His most cordial regard. Iswara Puri also on his part, on seeing Gaurachandra, embraced Him with great delight. The holy forms of both were drenched with the tears of both by the force of the experience of spiritual joy.

The Lord said, "My pilgrimage to Gaya has born fruit only now inasmuch as I have obtained the sight of your feet. By offering the pinda at Gaya only the pitris are saved from their sufferings. Even so it is only the particular person, to whom the pinda is offered that is saved thereby. By the sight of you crores of the groups of the pitris are instantly set free from all their fetters. Therefore, the tirtha itself is not the equal of you, You are the highest of tirthas and the best of

all blessings. Vouchsafe to deliver Me from the ocean of this worldly sojourn. I surrender My Person to you, now and here. May you be pleased to make Me drink of the nectarine juice of the lotus feet of Krishna. This is the gift that I pray for". Iswara Puri replied, "Listen, Pandit, I now know as certain that Thou art divine portion of the Iswara Himself. Are scholarship and goodness, that are Thine, possible in one who is not the Portion of the Divinity? I have had an auspicious dream of this truth this very day. I have now obtained the fruit of it in this tangible form. I tell Thee truly, Pandit. At the sight of Thee I experience the transcendental bliss at all time. Ever since I beheld Thee at Nadia nothing else has had any attraction for my heart. This is the bare truth I am telling Thee. There is nothing else in it but the truth. I obtain the bliss of beholding Krishna by seeing Thee."

On hearing the true words of His beloved Iswara Puri the Lord said laughingly, "I am, indeed, most fortunate." This was followed by a good deal of mutual talk in which both joined with alacrity. Thakur Brindavandas does not attempt to record the same, remarking that the task will be performed in future by Sree Vedavyasa. Having greeted Sree Iswara Puri in this manner the Lord, after begging and obtaining his permission, applied Himself to the performance of the funeral rites that are enjoined by the Scriptures on the pious pilgrim on his arrival at the tirtha.

The Lord now performed the rite of offering the pinda on the sand and went to the hill-top of Preta-Gaya. Having performed the rite of loyal homage (Sradha) at Preta-Gaya the Son of Sree Sachi gratified the Brahmanas by gifts and sweet words. Having thus delivered and pleased the pitris the Lord proceeded to Dakshina Manasa with a glad Heart. The Lord next visited Sree Rama-Gaya where He had performed the sradha when He Appeared in this world as Sree Ramachandra. After performing the same ceremony at the place in this Avatara also, Sree Gaur-Hari went from there to Judhithira-Gaya where Judhithira had offered the pinda in old times. Lord Gaurarai now exhibited the Leela of performing the same ceremony at this place in loving remembrance of that event. The Brahmanas, attending on all sides of the Lord, made Him perform the sradha and made the Lord repeat their words. As the Lord threw the pinda into the water on the conclusion of the ceremony, the priestly Brahmanas of

Gaya caught up and swallowed the same. The Lord laughed as He saw this performance. All the worldly fetters of those Brahmanas were canceled. After offering the pinda at Uttara Manasa Gauranga Sree Hari performed the rites of Bhima Gaya. The Lord duly performed all the customary ceremonies at Siva-Gaya, Brahma-Gaya and all the other places and at last went up to Shorasha-Gaya. Having performed the Shorashi at Shorasha-Gaya, the Lord offered the pinda to all, with all due regard. Then, after bathing in the Brahma Kunda, the Supreme Lord came up to the Head of Gaya and offered the pinda there. Taking up the excellent garlands and sandal-paste with His own beautiful hands, the Lord worshipped the Print of the feet of Vishnu with great joy. Having thus performed the sraddha at all the different places, the Lord returned to His lodgings after satisfying the Brahmanas with gifts.

After refreshing Himself by a short rest, the Lord began to cook His meal. Just as He had finished cooking the great Sree Iswara Puri arrived there. In the act of reciting the Name of Krishna by the process of loving devotion Puri came with tottering steps to where the Lord was preparing His meal. The Lord desisted from cooking as soon as He caught sight of Puri and, with the greatest reverence, after making His obeisance, offered him the best seat and made him seated.

Puri said laughingly, "Listen Pandit, I find that it is in very good time indeed that I chance to arrive !" The Lord replied, "As the good fortune has manifested itself, may your reverence accept the alms of this cooked food to-day.," As this request was pressed by the Lord Puri laughed as he said, "What wilt Thou have?, The Lord replied, "I will cook again, just now". Puri demurred, "What is the use of cooking again? Divide the cooked food into two halves." The Lord could not help smiling as He said, "If, indeed, you want to have Me at all, accept all the food that has been cooked. I will cook afresh, in a very short time. Be pleased not to hesitate, but do accept this alms."

Thereupon the Lord, making over His own food to Puri, applied to cook for Himself once again with a joyful Heart. Great, indeed, is the mercy of the Lord to Sree Iswara Puri. Puri also on his part had no other inclination save towards Krishna. The Lord served the meal with His own beautiful hands. Puri ate in the state of transcendent bliss. At that very moment Ramadevi Herself,

unobserved by any one, with the greatest secrecy, cooked the food for the Lord in no time. After having made Puri accept the alms of food, the Lord ate His meal with a glad heart. Those, concludes Thakur Brindavandas, who listen to this Narrative of the dining of the Lord in the company of Iswara Puri, gain the treasure of the love of Krishna.

After finishing His meal, the Lord, with His own holy hands, applied excellent perfumes to all parts of the person of Sree Iswara Puri. The tenderness of the love of the Lord for Iswara Puri passes the power of description of all persons. Lord Sree Chaitanya, who is Godhead Himself, undertook pilgrimage to the birth place of Sree Iswara Puri. Arrived at the place, the Lord greeted it with His fervent affection. "I make My obeisance," said He, "to Sree Kumarahatta, the blessed village in which Sree Iswara Puri made his appearance in this world." Chaitanya wept long at the sight of the place, and could not articulate any other sound except 'Iswara Puri'. The Lord took the earth from the spot and, tying it in His own outer-cloth brought it with Him. "This is the birth-place of Iswara Puri" said the Lord, "This earth is my heart's love, my treasure, my life." With such intensity does the Lord love Sree Iswara Puri. The Supreme Lord, indeed, wields all His power to glorify His devotee. The Lord said, "That I came to Gaya on pilgrimage, has been proved to be true, as I have obtained the sight of Iswara Puri."

On the following day the Lord went to Sree Iswara Puri alone by Himself and implored from him, with sweet words, the favour of initiation (diksha) by the mantra. Puri said, "It is a small matter to bestow the mantra. I can by all means give Thee my life." Thereupon, Narayana, Teacher-Guru of the world, accepted the ten-lettered mantra from him. Then the Lord after circumambulating Puri said to him, "I surrender My Person to you. May you bend your auspicious glance on Me that I may float in the ocean of the love of Krishna." On hearing these words of the Lord Sree Iswara Puri bestowed his embrace on Sree Gaurasundar by clasping Him to his bosom. The Forms of Both were drenched with the tears of Both by love, and Neither could remain unmoved.

The question of unconditional submission to the spiritual guide has a close

connection with that of ritual in general. Those, who are on principle averse to ritualistic observance in any form, are also necessarily disinclined to express in any formal way their decision to submit to the direction of the spiritual guide. They are disposed to make a distinction between the external act and the internal motive prompting the same and to hold the former as superfluous and unnecessary. This will appear to be an untenable attitude inasmuch as just to the extent that one's own differing judgment is asserted in the method and motive of offering one's submission, the submission, that is so offered, is rendered conditional and imperfect. Such protest is, therefore, really made against the principle of unconditional submission itself.

The point, that has to be borne in mind, is that the submission in this case is offered to the Supreme Lord Himself. If the Guru is supposed to be less than divine, less than the Truth Himself, the disposition, that holds back the offer of unconditional submission from such an entity, is both rational and perfectly justifiable. No one is under any obligation to offer his submission to the non-Truth. From this point of view the offer of partial submission to anything or to any person can be only a hypocritical show of submission against one's own conviction. The Truth is Truth. Adulterated Truth is contradiction in terms. Adulterated truth is untruth that tries to pass itself off as truth on this mundane plane of self-deceived delusions.

In this world no one is anxious to serve, but every one is anxious to be served. Service is, therefore, rendered in the expectation of a return in service greater than what is offered, by the estimation of the recipient of service. He who renders service is actuated by this deliberate desire to deceive the recipient of such service. This is the principle of hypocrisy. Expectation of greater service from others, is the antithesis of the bona fide impulse of service. One, who really offers service, does so without expectation of return, in any form, in exchange of the service that is offered. If the servant is critical, he is critical only to be on his guard against any reservation on his part. He is only anxious to render the complete service. He is anxious to be satisfied that there is no lurking reservation in this matter in any obscure corner of his heart. He is anxious to study the nature of the demand that is made upon him by his master. He is not

disposed to criticize the motive or method of the master making the demand. The servant must not suppose himself to be a better judge of the requirement of his master than the Master Himself. If he thinks he should be allowed to judge as to how the master should be served, he steps into the place of the master and makes his real Master serve the pleasure of His hypocritical servant. This would be the reversion of the natural process.

The show of opposition, that is made by the really loyal servant to the Master's wishes, should not be confounded with the desire of the disloyal servant to thwart the master for reasons of his own convenience. The demarcating line is, no doubt, an extremely fine one and is likely to be missed by those who have not a very clean heart. But there is all the difference between the seeming opposition of the loyal servant and the disloyal attempts of the mercenary self-seeker, that distinguishes the genuine gold from the treacherous counterfeit. The latter of course tries to mask his disloyal motive under the profession of an over-strained solicitude for the Master's interest. This only makes his conduct more hideous and ungrateful. The objectionable principle, underlying the latter form of conduct, is called hypocrisy. The loyal servant is free from all taint of hypocrisy. He may commit mistakes in judging the Master's wishes, but he is always and fully anxious to understand and serve the wishes of his Master. Any seeming opposition of his to his Master's wishes, even when his judgment is wrong, also expresses his single-hearted devotion to his Master's interests.

The mischief is that the conditioned soul has got also other interests besides the service of the Truth. The conditioned soul is prepared, in every case, to offer this mixed form of service to Godhead: the disloyal servant also is prepared to serve his Master to a varying extent. It is seldom that the disloyal servant is prepared to openly defy his Master in every act. But even when the disloyal servant happens to agree to serve his Master, he does so for the ultimate purpose of serving only himself thereby. The hypocrite throws off the mask as soon as he is safe to disobey his Master without the risk of jeopardizing his interests, or when his own interests are best promoted by open disobedience. In the case of the loyal servant the Master's difficulties only serve to vindicate the genuineness of his loyal disposition by making him still more submissive to his

Master.

It is necessary for every one, who is really anxious to find and serve the Truth, to realize that the Truth is not to be found by the present physical and mental equipments. It is further necessary to realize that it is nevertheless possible to find and serve the Truth by the present defective equipments by the grace of Truth Himself. One is then prepared to wait patiently till the initiative of the Truth is properly. The person, who is in this genuine expectant mood, is on the lookout for the Appearance of the Truth in any form that Truth likes. He is prepared to understand that, as Truth is All powerful, He is likely to appear to his own defective understanding in a form that is least likely to conform to his natural misjudgment. He knows that all these difficulties notwithstanding the grace of Truth is sufficiently powerful to prevail over all obstacles and to manifest Himself to His servant in a manner that is perfectly inconceivable to our defective judgment.

This is the Theistic disposition proper. It is credulous in the sense that, although it is never prepared to remain satisfied with seeming Truth or half truth, it is always fully ready to make its unconditional, that is to say, loving submission to the Real Truth the moment He makes His Appearance. The Theistic disposition is prepared to wait patiently, even inactively, as far as this is at all practicable, till the actual Appearance of the Master of his heart. He does not believe in pragmatic loyalty. He abhors to serve any thing but the Absolute Truth. To such a disposition the Truth is bound to manifest Himself.

The worship of the feet of Sree Gadadhara or the offering of the pinda to the Manes by Sree Gaursundar, is not performed for any other purpose than for serving the pleasure of the Lord. An analysis of the forms of the rituals, enjoined by the Scriptures, should make it abundantly clear to every impartial person that making the service of the Lord the only duty of all persons is their only object. There is, therefore, no falling away from Theism by such activity even on the part of those who are not in a position to explain their motive to the satisfaction of those logicians who are illogically opposed to the Theistic disposition. It is the atheistic attitude that makes the ritualistic worship a form

of idolatry. But the atheistic iconoclast is the worst of idolaters as he is actuated by the resolve not to recognize the Omnipotence of the Supreme Lord and the consequent necessity of His grace for being enabled to distinguish between the idol and the Divinity. The iconoclast launches his fury against the Lord, Whom he mistakes to be stone or earth by the deluding evidence of his senses, whose slave he is by his nature. The truly serving disposition is always really humbler than the blade of grass, being aware that nothing is impossible with the Lord and that it is never possible to find Him by venting one's malice against His creatures or by the assertion of one's superior claim to selfconceited righteousness.

The conditioned soul stands in absolute need of grace. This grace can only descend to him when he is in the attitude of absolute humility. This grace is bestowed directly by the Supreme Lord on the sincere seeker of His grace. In the recipient the grace of Godhead expresses His presence in the form of the rational inclination of seeking perpetual enlightenment from the devotee of Godhead. He, who is disposed to serve the Lord but not His devotee, is really disposed to serve nobody except the deluded self. One, who is disposed to serve the Lord, is disposed to serve His servant, if possible, with even greater loyalty. The loyal subject of the King is not, therefore, less loyal to one who is commissioned by the King to carry out his commands in regard to himself. The Guru is no other than the Servant of the Lord, commissioned to effect the deliverance of those who are really anxious to serve the Lord. The Archa is the Lord making Himself accessible to the worship of conditioned souls by means of all their defective equipments. The Archa is not an image made by the hand of man. Neither is the Guru a mortal like ourselves. It is only the delivered soul who can help the conditioned soul to gain his deliverance. It is the eternally pure souls, who are themselves infallible by their nature, who are sent into this world in the form of the Guru to impart spiritual enlightenment to the individual soul liable to be fettered by the flesh. The Guru seems to the senses and the sensuous judgment to be an ordinary mortal. But he is not really any part of this plane at all, no more than the Archa. Both are equally manifestations of the eternal saving Potency of the All-merciful Supreme Lord to deliver the conditioned soul from his self-elected bondage of the deluding energy.

By an empiric analysis of the wording of the mantra or the composition of the Archa or the eternal conduct of the spiritual guide one cannot hope to gain any idea of the substantive plane of the Absolute. Because it happens to be really the attitude of refusal to recognize the imperative and moral necessity of loyally seeking for the divine grace for the attainment of spiritual enlightenment.

Chapter XXIII **—His Initiation—(Cont.)**

Ritual may be defined as worship by means of the objects of this world, which function alone is available to the conditioned soul, rendered possible by the grace of Godhead as revealed by the Scriptures and the spiritual Guide to the community of the servants of the Lord.

The empiric theory, which seeks to derive the form and significance of ritual from the worldly activities of the ancient peoples, is based on the assumption of the impossibility and superfluity of revelation as the source of worship. But as a matter of fact it is never possible for man, by progress in material civilization, to attain either to the form or significance of spiritual worship. The form of worship can derive its spiritual value, if it has any, only from revelation. As it does not possess any mundane significance it is, therefore, independent of all mundane reference. It may satisfy the spirit of antiquarian curiosity to discover how the superficial aspect of the eternal process of worship varies from country to country and from Age to Age. But will any number of such discoveries, add to our knowledge of the real meaning of either the form or the spirit of true worship?

If the mind can be supposed to be fit to worship Godhead by means of concepts or precepts referring to objects of phenomenal Nature, why should

such worship be impossible by means of the objects themselves? But mental worship in itself is no nearer to Godhead than the show of worship by means of material substances, both being made of non-spiritual stuff. The one is as much in need of the Divine Sanction as the other, if it is to reach the Divinity at all. The one is as much capable of being turned into worship as the other by virtue of such Sanction. The controversy among empiricists on the subject of worship rages round the external form versus the mental conception both of which are, by themselves, i.e., as they appear to the empiricists, wholly devoid of all spiritual significance.

The allied question, bearing on the same issue, may be put thus. Granted that a mental and physical activity is endowed with spiritual quality of the service of the divinity by the divine sanction, why should divine sanction itself be confined to any particular and strictly circumscribes form of such activity and not extend to the whole range of secular activities ? There is apparently much to be said in favour of such contention from the point of view of ordinary rational judgment. If the whole range of activities, both physical and mental, be made to be covered by the term 'ritual' then the departmental narrowness, that has come to attach itself to the term, would be removed. There are also numerous passages in the Scriptures themselves in support of such contention and to prove that one, who worships Godhead, necessarily does so by every act of his life.

But notwithstanding all this, spiritual worship is neither narrow and departmental nor liberal and comprehensive in the empiric sense. These terms of condemnation and praise do not apply to the issue at all. It is, therefore, necessary to be humble on the threshold of any serious inquiry into the nature of the substantive spiritual function. Pantheistic thought is only one form of atheism. No mental speculation in itself is logically admissible regarding the Absolute, by reason of the fact that the mind has no access to the transcendental plane.

The form of the ritual is not improved by the suppression of the methods of antiquity by more 'modern' methods on the ground that these would be more

'intelligible' to our present judgment. The question of intelligibility in the empiric sense does not matter. When Godhead is addressed by the empiricist as the Source of all existence, such form of prayer is adopted for the reason that it is supposed to be intelligible to our limited understanding. But does the prayer become a spiritual function by any such rational approval on the part of the worshipper? It is not denied that Godhead is the Source of all existence. Neither is it admitted that if a person addresses Godhead as the Source of all existence, he will be enabled to be in communion with Godhead by such prayer. How does he really know that Godhead is the Source of everything? His real ignorance cannot be removed by merely repeating a formula whose meaning it is beyond his capacity to understand. If he chooses to remain satisfied with an empty performance, he should be considered to be indifferent to the issue.

If Godhead is the Source of all existence, as the rational faculty claims to know instinctively, how is the same aspiring faculty to reconcile such a supposition with its own actual utter ignorance of the nature of its relationship with its own supposed source? Hydrogen and Oxygen were not instinctively claimed to be known as the source of water by the same all-knowing instinct. Is it not, therefore, only a silly and superficial vanity that leads such ignorant persons to 'believe' that Godhead is the Source of all existence?

Such an attitude of ignorant omniscience, so lightly assumed as their birthright in the name of the rational instinct by deluded souls, has to be got rid of if religion is to avoid the defect that is attributed by physical scientists to the speculative philosophers, viz., that their subject 'bakes no bread'. The sterile philosophy of empiricism has been weighed in the balance for too long a period and has been found wholly wanting. The world is in some need of a positive and real, and not merely hypothetical, solution of its spiritual difficulties.

In the process of spiritual enlightenment there is also, quite inconceivably to our present power of understanding no doubt, a beginning of the process followed by a probationary stage which has to be gone through before the goal is reached. The first faint glimmering of the approaching light is sufficient to

impart the consciousness of the categorical nature of the difference that separates the plane of the mind and physical body from that of the soul. All empiric questionings are at once and necessarily solved by this first experience of the actual spiritual life.

Thereafter arises a new curiosity which relates itself wholly to the transcendental plane. The experience of the glimmer of light proceeding from a realm that is yet completely out of sight except by the relationship of the light which while bearing testimony to the reality of spiritual existence securely keeps the secret of all definite knowledge regarding the same, makes one anxious, not for the nostrums concocted for their idle amusement by the children of darkness but, for positive information from those who really know about that world, which is only then actually realized to be perfectly unknown and unknowable to the aspiring understanding of man.

The present Narrative may be regarded in two possible ways. The first is the ordinary empiric way for the satisfaction of a limited curiosity born of the mental outlook. Such study is not likely to be of much positive benefit. But it may have the negative value of removing misconceptions to which even the open minded persons are liable by reason of habitual and normal association with worldly-minded people. This Narrative may strike the imagination of such a person and may induce a few to agree with the point of view of the Scriptures as set forth in these pages. If any person thereupon choose to undertake to act up to the principles inculcated by the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, he will be in a position to realize the necessity of praying for the grace of Godhead for directing him to the proper teacher of the Truth. If the prayer is, indeed, not altogether hypocritical the sincere seeker of divine aid may be rewarded by the mercy of Godhead and find the bona fide spiritual guide. The same Influence may also help him to make the complete surrender of himself at the feet of the Guru when found and to approach him with the further prayer for positive spiritual enlightenment. The mercy of Godhead will further enable such a person to be accepted by the Guru. The acceptance by the Guru of his offer of submission will be the beginning of his spiritual pupilage, and in proportion as

he will be enabled to enter into the plans and views of the Guru by the method of loyal, willing, rational obedience, the true meaning of the deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya will manifest Themselves to his serving disposition. If he thereafter reads the Narrative that has been handed down by the former serving teachers of the religion (the bona fide Acharyyas) he will gain the positive knowledge of the Truth.

In the following pages of this work the Events of the Career of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, corresponding to the activity of the seeker of the Truth after he has sought for and received spiritual enlightenment from the bona fide teacher of the Truth, are recorded and interpreted in pursuance of the exposition of the Acharyyas, by the method of the service of the bona fide spiritual guide. It will not be possible for the uninitiated to enter into the spiritual meaning of such a Narrative. But every one will be enabled to avoid forming any hasty and adverse opinion if he only keeps in mind the necessary reservations when going through the account of the happenings of the transcendental plane to which the conditioned soul has no access in their substantive sense. It can be to him more or less only like a story of the Fairyland with this difference that the realm of the soul is not the concoction of the fertile imagination of man as the other is; but on the contrary it is the only Substantive Reality that vitally concerns all of us both individually and collectively. No reader of a fairy tale ever thinks it worth his while to quarrel with any happenings in the Fairyland even if they are in flat contradiction to all experiences of this world. In the case of this Narrative also, from this point onward, even if the reader is unable to agree with any proposition fully, he need not for an analogous reason cherish any feeling of hostility inasmuch as the propositions have no direct application to the plane of three dimensions for which alone he is at present positively interested. His hostility against the Fairyland would be like fighting with a shadow as the land of the Fairies is not capable of being affected by his mundane blows; and one should not quarrel with a shadow on principle. If one is disposed to quarrel by apprehending any bad effect that the story may appear likely to produce on his actual worldly position, he should still be able to find consolation in the reflection that his mere desire to banish from this world anything that he does not like, will not necessarily rid it of those objectionable

entities, and, therefore, if those entities are entitled to have a place in the world it is the world that deserves to be condemned and not the story which would be perfectly harmless but for this possibility of its existence in the world despite our desire to the contrary.

We are not required either by our rational instinct or by the Scriptures to shut our ears against anybody. It is only during pupilage that the student is required to obey the teacher not mechanically but by the method of progressive co-operating conviction. The association with evil-doers, that is so strongly condemned by the Scriptures, is to be understood in the similar rational sense. The objectionable form of association with evil can arise only when we identify ourselves with the evil. It is not always practicable nor desirable to avoid external association with evil. But it is always practicable and desirable to have a protesting or at any rate an indifferent attitude towards evil. One must not be a consenting associating party with evil. A person is not capable of being contaminated by mere external association with evil, although he may be living in this world where 'even the light is as darkness.' The attempt to avoid all association with evil by the mechanical method is only another form of association with evil. One, who is impure at heart but fastidious in his external conduct, is called in ordinary language a hypocrite, who is not less harmful and who is not to be less avoided than the downright professed scoundrel.

There need not be any unnecessary mystery about spiritual matters. Everything is not intelligible to everyone. It is necessary also to adopt a method that is neither unintelligible nor misleading to the hearer. But nothing need be kept a secret unless it is impossible to be divulged without producing serious and harmful misunderstanding. The mantra is not to be divulged to another person, because this is quite a personal matter. It is also quite proper and logical to have the principles of reserve and privacy in the realm of the soul. It is not necessary to abuse those principles for securing transitory and narrow interests, as we do in this world. They are capable of being used and should by all means be used, for serving the Truth. This will no doubt give a chance to the hypocrite and the pseudo-teachers of religion to befool their over-credulous victims; but it should befool nobody who does not want to be befooled by their over-

attachment to the bauble pleasures of this world.

The nature of those funeral rites, that are enjoined by the Scriptures, requires to be understood from the point of view of the service of Godhead. One's duty to one's parents does not cease with the death of the latter. This admission is not avoidable by those who recognize the claim of their parents. to their duty in return of benefits received from them. The circle of such duties and benefits no doubt belong to the mundane plane. Death is the greatest calamity that may befall the relationship of parent and child. It severs the earthly connection between them. But does it really sever all connection? The elevationists do not believe it does. They suppose that the subtle body survives the death of the gross physical body. This subtle body has to be reborn after an interval during which it remains dissociated from the gross body. the subtle body embodies the principle of material enjoyment. But it does not obtain this enjoyment except through the gross body. The subtle body in the dissociated state, is called the preta. The funeral rites are intended for the benefit Of the preta. This benefit, as understood by the elevationists (smartas), consists in the rebirth of the preta in some other gross body. By such rebirth the preta is supposed to be delivered from his torments of the preta state. The salvationists on the other hand suppose that the preta is delivered if he is enabled to avoid rebirth in the gross body by merging in the Divinity. The Vaishnavas do not recognize any special duty to their forbears, for the reason that such duty is rendered to the material case which is wrongly identified by the elevationists and salvationists alike with the individual soul who is the person to whom all duties are really due. The individual soul is not served by any function that is intended for the amelioration of the gross or subtle material case. The Vaishnavas accordingly express their duty towards their forbears and all departed persons by making their offering at the Feet of Gadadhara.

At Gaya the round of the funeral ceremonies leads up to the worship of the Feet of Vishnu, as their consummation. This is the relation in which the Smarta

ceremonies are intended by the Scriptures to stand to the spiritual function proper. The Manes, i.e., souls imprisoned in the subtle bodies, are benefited by their descendants, worship of the Feet of Gadadhara. The performance of funeral rites by Godhead Himself is not to be supposed a concession to elevationist or salvationist method or objective. The avoidance of the ceremonies, by those who do not worship the Feet of Gadadhara, is also not supported by the conduct of Sree Gaursundar. What it is intended to significant, is that the smarta practice is the result of gratitude that is naturally felt by a person, who confounds himself with his physical cases, towards the forbears of those cases. One, who is in the deluded condition, need not be hypocritically ungrateful to his worldly parents till he has been really relieved from the state of ignorance. He would be delivered from his ignorance and all supposed obligations of that state, if he could attain to the pure service of the feet of Vishnu. This desideratum is recognized by the arrangement for the performance of the sraddha ceremonies at Gaya leading up to the worship of the Feet of Gadadhara. According to the dictum of the Scriptures a person, who desires to attain to the service of Godhead, should perform all duties enjoined by the custom of his society or preferably by the Veda in the way that is conducive to the attainment of the spiritual function. The smarta view is that the devotee of Godhead is also under equal obligation to appease the Manes by the performance of the sraddha ceremonies. This is the reverse of the principle that is followed at Gaya in the due performance of the funeral rites. The Supreme Teacher recognized by His Conduct the justification of the elevationist and salvationist function for the social purpose, while pointing to the attainment of the service of Godhead as the objective towards which all activities should tend if they are to possess any positive value for the soul. If any portion of the funeral ritual is opposed to this end it is necessarily unacceptable to the Vaishnavas, for that reason.

The ritual of diksha or initiation is liable to be similarly misunderstood. The smarta view of the ceremony is similar to their view of the funeral ritual. The smarta is anxious to provide for the needs of the gross and subtle physical cares. He deliberately ignores the need of the soul, because that is opposed to the interests (?) of the physical cases as understood by the smartas. The

ceremony of diksha, according to the smarta view, confers only on the Brahmana by seminal birth the eligibility for the worship of Sree Narayana. Those, who are not Brahmanas by seminal birth, are, according to this view, enabled by the process only to be born as Brahmanas in their next birth; but it does not entitle them to worship Sree Narayana in their present life. The Brahmana, who is eligible to worship Narayana or Godhead, is thus supposed to be the entity, viz., the physical cases, that is born of mundane parents. But as a matter of fact the physical cases have no access to Vishnu and the process of diksha cannot accordingly apply to them and for this reason diksha is not a social but a spiritual function the nature of which is misunderstood by those so-called Brahmanas who are anxious to retain intact their hereditary social privileges.

By seminal birth, on the contrary, everyone is made a Sudra who is the opposite of a Brahmana. The seminal birth provides the physical cases by which the conditioned soul is made subject to the sufferings of this world, or, in other words, is made a Sudra which term literally means 'one who is subject to sorrow'. By the purificatory ceremony of Upanayana, or being conducted to the Guru for attaining to the knowledge (Veda) of one's relationship with Godhead (diksha) in order to be enabled to serve Him on the spiritual plane, the Sudra is re-born, not as a physical or mental case but, as a soul or student of the Veda. This second birth is not seminal birth, because the pupil, who submits to the Guru, is not the physical body born of semen but the soul inhabiting the same. The substantive consciousness, that one is not the physical body but the soul inhabiting the body, can alone enable one to serve the Guru for obtaining the true knowledge of the function of his own proper self.

The ceremony of Upanayana, therefore, admits the necessity, on the part of the conditioned soul, of serving the Guru and represents the soul's act of appearing before the Guru in order to learn to serve Godhead. The ceremony of diksha confers on the soul actual spiritual enlightenment. When the Guru is satisfied by the probationary test that the candidate for spiritual enlightenment possesses the genuine aptitude for service, he confers on him the knowledge of his relationship with Godhead which enables him to serve Godhead. By means

of diksha a person is thus born a third time. It is a case not of seminal birth, but of the completion of the probationary stage of the spiritual pupillage of the soul.

The purificatory process of Upanayana and diksha are also proved to be necessarily open to all persons irrespective of seminal birth. The seminal birth can bestow only mundane aptitudes. The seminal birth cannot convey, or entitle one to, the spiritual nature. That, which conveys or entitles to the spiritual nature, is spiritual birth by Upanayana and diksha. There is real analogy but a difference of plane between the seminal and spiritual birth.

Upanayana is the process of being connected to the Guru. This refers to the function of the shiksha Guru. The shiksha Gurus may be many, but the diksha Guru is only one. The shiksha Gurus are the associated counterparts of the diksha Guru who is the associated counterwhole of the Divinity Himself. There is thus only one diksha Guru who is associated with his infinity of agents or limbs whose function is to lead the intending disciple to the diksha Guru. The diksha Guru may, indeed, be also the shiksha Guru, but not necessarily so. The distinction between the shiksha Guru and the diksha Guru is one relating to their respective spiritual functions which do not involve any unwholesome implication of inferiority in the mundane sense. The shiksha Guru is, therefore, to be as much obeyed by the disciple as the diksha Guru himself.

The function of diksha, in its ritualistic aspect, consists of the process of imparting the mantra by the diksha Guru which is spoken by him into the ear of the disciple without being allowed to be heard by any other person. It is the method of Truth communicating Himself to an individual soul in the Form of the Transcendental sound Appearing on the lips of His devotee. The mantra, as we have explained elsewhere, is the Holy Name in the Form in which He is coupled with the process of self dedication of an individual to the Guru. It is a specific matter that delivers the particular individual from the grip of all mental delusion by making him throw himself on the protection of the Name under the exclusive direction of the Guru. The process of initiation is not a limited

one. It is as much a continued process as the process of being helped by the shiksha Guru for approaching the diksha Guru. No one of these processes is capable of terminating is a limited result. They are eternally co-present in a relation that is progressive but without being hampered by the unwholesome imperfection of the principle of limitation.

It has been necessary to explain the process of entry into the spiritual life in some detail for several reasons. A good deal of misconception has gathered round the issue. This misconception is responsible for the mushroom growth of an endless variety of pseudo-forms of the process that are being constantly manufactured by quacks and knaves for leading astray simpletons and rascals, by the offer of their support to diverse forms of pernicious worldly activities. It is not also easy to withstand the temptation of being misled by the appeal to the principle of pseudo-ethics manufactured by intellectualists for justifying a life of the sensualists' paradise for belittling the spiritual issue which transcends the petty concerns of a nine days' existence. It is absolutely necessary to have this sense of perspective, if one is not to miss the only purpose for which the subject, treated in this work has been offered to his unbiased and serious consideration.

Nothing is easier than to make a butt of ridicule of the concerns of the eternal life by the method of empiric buffoonery. There is an enormous literature, that is also alarmingly growing in volume by leaps and bounds, which has been deliberately seeking to dissuade the limited mind from any thought of the Absolute by covering, with their flimsy ridicule, all transcendental claims of religion. Such effusions may have been partly called forth by the somewhat natural reaction against the practices of the pseudo religionists who unfortunately abound all over the world. They also serve the salutary purpose of checking the quarrels of the quacks and hypocritical followers of the different religious persuasions. But the warfare, that is waged by atheism against the forms of pseudo-religion, is also itself part and parcel of the opera show of our deluded existence. The history of the doings of man is full of instructive episodes in a short chapter of a real tragedy of errors which we are

gravely asked to regard as the progressive march of an ethical civilization towards increasing perfection. The reader has had enough experience of regarding the doings of the performers on the worldly stage from this supposed optimistic and universally advertised promising point of view. It is not our business here to offer him more of the same familiar commodity.

The real transcendental point of view is condemned by empiricists of all countries, with the exception of India and of those lands which have received their creeds from her, as being the hallucinate product of a sterile pessimism born of a decadent material civilization fretting over the solid achievements of successful rivals. India, which is the cradle and chosen land of the hankering for the realization of the transcendental existence, presents the spectacle of the continuing attempt to treat social issues by the Scriptural method by refusing to admit the absolute value of mundane interests. No school of Indian philosophy professes to value social activity divorced from the spiritual purpose. The difficulty in this country is due not to the absence of traditional opinion in favour of the endeavour after the realization of the transcendental existence, as distinguished from the mundane, but to the misunderstanding and misrepresentation, by different schools of misguided exponents, of the nature of the spiritual function itself. Whereas in those countries, which are proud of possessing a social organization that is not 'priest-ridden' and aims frankly at the multiplication and 'improvement' of the opportunities of sensuous enjoyment and the hopeless 'amelioration' of the inevitable consequences of the unhampered pursuit of this optimistic course, the difficulty is due to the absence of all traditional hankering for the attainment of the spiritual state. This last difficulty is infinitely increased by the misrepresentations of the whole body of empiric literature which is never tired of harping ad nauseam on the congenial theme of the glories of this mundane existence and holds up its nose in indignant scorn and contempt if the soundness of its wretched point of view is challenged by straight talk which it affects to invite so vehemently on its own side.

It is not our purpose merely to condemn the activities of this world. We should really try to understand the nature of our proper relationship with them. We

should not be willing to be satisfied with any hypothetical views on this all-important subject. We should not be violent lovers of the worldly sojourn without reservation, nor should we be prepared to desire its perpetuation as it is and as it is proposed to be made by those who derive their knowledge and wisdom from their experience of this world and apply them solely for further elaboration of our worldly activities on their present lines. We should long for an unobstructed vision of the Absolute Truth and believe in the possibility of the attainment of such vision, and to adjust our activities during this worldly sojourn to the requirements of our real and whole position revealed by the knowledge of the Absolute Truth. We should be disposed to regard the attitude, that is content to be satisfied with less than the Absolute Truth, as one of insidious and unpardonable revolt against the Absolute Truth. The present Narrative offers a Career That is wholly devoted to the service of the Absolute Truth. We are disposed to consider a pragmatist, if he does not possess the supreme regard due to the devotee of the Absolute Truth, as no better than a dangerous cheat and a sensuous hypocrite who wants only to indulge his aptitude for untruth under the guise of a mock concern for the Truth. We, therefore, claim to be neither pessimists nor optimists in the sense in which the contending factions of the empiric sages array themselves under their respective worldly banners. We should share their furious interest on behalf of the worldly life. We only invite our readers to lend their receptive ear to the narration of the actual conduct of Nimai Pandit, as He manifested Himself to this world, after He had received spiritual enlightenment by unconditional submission to the feet of the bona fide spiritual Guide. By the process of diksha, with the intention of trying to enter the spirit of the same from the point of view of the Narrative itself that has been handed down by the succession of the spiritual teachers.

The boon for which Nimai Pandit prayed to Sree Iswara Puri, was love for Krishna. He surrendered to Sree Iswara Puri His Body and Mind unconditionally for the attainment of the above purpose. When one obtains the actual sight of the bona fide Spiritual Guide, that is of the real exclusive servant of the Absolute, by the grace of Godhead, the duty, that he has to perform on his side, is to make the unconditional surrender of himself to the Feet of the

bona fide agent of the Absolute. This is the logical and consistent course but is impossible of realization in practice except by divine grace.

If the complete surrender to the Guru is made the spiritual mantra reveals himself to the disciple. It is now our task to trace the growth of this loving devotion in Nimai Pandit. But as we proceed to do so we must bear in mind the fact that Nimai Pandit was, indeed, no other than the Lord Himself. This is noticeable in the manner of Sree Iswara Puri towards his Disciple. He says that when he looks at Nimai Pandit he obtains the bliss of beholding Krishna Himself. The Vaishnava Guru does not regard any one as his disciple; but he does not, therefore, think that his disciples are Krishna Himself. The Vaishnava Guru regards his disciples as his Gurus and himself as their disciple. The Vaishnava Guru regards his disciples as his Gurus for the reason that as servants of his Lord they are really his Gurus. The disciple, who is under agreement to serve the Lord, becomes, by that very agreement, in the estimation of the Guru to whom he is bound by the agreement, the servant of the Lord Who is served by the Guru, and, therefore, his Guru. Iswara Puri would have been justified in addressing Nimai Pandit as his Guru after Nimai Pandit had agreed to become the Servant of Krishna. But he did not call his Disciple his Guru but said He was Krishna Himself. This shows the real state of things as realized by Sree Iswara Puri. It is really the Lord Who gave the boon of His Mercy to Iswara Puri under the guise of receiving initiation from His Guru.

Unless this point is properly grasped there will be difficulty in following the subsequent developments. Sree Iswara Puri belonged to the communion of Sree Madhvacharyya. Initiation at the hands of Sree Iswara Puri marks the entry of Nimai Pandit into the Madhva Community. It was certainly not incumbent on the Lord to enroll Himself under the banner of Madhva. This would prevent Him, according to usage, from breaking away from the tenets of a particular Community. It is well known that Sree Madhva did not teach the service of Sree Sree Radha-Govinda which was preached and practiced by Nimai Pandit. There is thus only connection but not identity of teaching between Sree Chaitanya and Sree Madhva. Sree Madhabendra Puri, the Guru of Sree Iswara Puri, was the first of the Acharyyas to manifest his inclination, in an elementary form, for the worship of Krishna as his Consort. In this respect he stands alone among

the followers of Sree Madhva. For this reason the followers of Sree Chaitanya regard Sree Madhabendra Puri as the germinating seed of the tree of loving devotion that was manifested to the world in its fully developed form by Sree Chaitanya.

These points of contact and difference will be dealt with more fully as we have occasion to examine, in the following pages, the details of the devotional developments of Nimai Pandit. The Lord accepted initiation from Sree Iswara Puri in order to satisfy the requirement of the scriptures that the mantra cannot be efficacious except within the spiritual communion. In other words spiritual activity is not a wholly individualistic affair. We have seen above that the mantra concerns the individual as regards its reception and practice of recital. But at the same time the mantra withdraws the individual spiritually from the society of those who are uninitiated. If the individual continues his affinity with the uninitiated after his initiation in ways that are adverse to his newly-formed spiritual connection, the mantra loses all its efficacy. This implies, and is a corollary from, the exclusive nature of the service of the Absolute and also lays down the nature of spiritual relationship among the servants of Godhead, which is categorically different from what prevails in the society of those who do not consciously serve the Divinity. It was in order to observe this fundamental condition of entry into the spiritual sphere, laid down in the Scriptures, that Nimai Pandit went through the form of spiritual initiation at the hands of Sree Iswara Puri who belonged to one of the four theistic communities recognized by the Scriptures. The New Dispensation does not, therefore, claim that it is altogether New. It does not belie but on the contrary only fulfills the requirements of the Scriptures in the most effective manner. The Scriptures had announced that the New Dispensation for the Iron Age will be given by the Lord Himself and that the form of worship, that will be thus established, will be the congregational chant (sankirtana). There was, therefore, sufficient Scriptural authorization for the establishment of the New Worship without reference to the existing theistic communities who possessed apparently somewhat different methods of worship. But the New Dispensation was to be accomplished, and could be accomplished, according to the Scriptures and in no other way than by the recognition of the necessity of

initiation into one of the authorized theistic communions. The Lord subsequently took the trouble of bringing about the spiritual reconciliation of the apparent differences of the four Vaishnava Communities, by giving to the world the complete explanation of the function of the soul revealed by the Scriptures. The Teachings of Sree Chaitanya in fact gathered up those of the former Acharyyas in a Scriptural Synthesis of a supremely higher order. His full interpretation of the service of Sree Sree Radha Govinda, Embodied in His Career, is not identical with the teaching or practice of any of the four Vaishnava Acharyyas, but the further and complete working out of the fundamentals of the teachings of all of them has been one of its inevitable achievements.

That the mantra, which had been received by Nimai Pandit from Sree Iswara Puri who had got it from Sree Madhabendra Puri, was to bear fruit in an ample measure, did not take a long time to manifest itself. Shortly after His Initiation, as Nimai Pandit was one day engaged in meditating of the mantra in His privacy, the impulse of loving devotion, which had been gathering strength, burst through all restraints and showed itself in unique external manifestations. The Lord was heard to be crying with a loud Voice in the act of reciting certain verses from the Scriptures, the import of which is as follows,— 'Oh Krishna! Oh My Darling! Sree Hari, My Life! Oh, whither hast Thou gone after stealing My Heart? I, indeed, got My Lord;—but where is He gone?'

The Lord went on crying and reciting these verses and rolling on the ground till His Whole Beautiful Frame became gray with the dust, while He was thus immersed in the liquid bliss of loving devotion. The Lord, indeed, cried at the top of His Voice, in the pang of a Deep Agony, 'Whither, Darling Krishna art Thou gone thus abandoning Me?' His great restlessness under the impulse of loving devotion appeared all the more strange as the Lord had formerly been distinguished by the quality of His extreme reserve on the subject of religion. The Lord rolled on the ground and cried aloud. He was adrift on the ocean of loving separation from Himself.

This gradually brought all His pupils to the spot who succeeded, after

prolonged endeavours, with the greatest tenderness and loving care, in restoring Him to His normal condition. But the Lord did not change His Purpose. He now proposed to His students that they should at once return to their homes. He was resolved on His Part not to enter the world again. He was resolved to go to Mathura to find Krishna, the Lord of His Life. All the students appealed to Him, by every possible method, to persuade Him to be calm. But the Lord of Vaikuntha, deeply immersed in the rasa (mellowing liquid) of devotion, could find no rest in His Heart under His great anxiety and did not know where to stay. In this condition the Lord, without the knowledge of any of His associates, set out for Mathura, by the impulse of love for Krishna, towards the closing hours of night on one of these days. He moved forward on the road with the piteous cry, 'Oh Krishna! Oh My Darling! Where shall I find Thee?' When He had proceeded a certain distance in this manner the Lord heard a celestial voice saying, "Jewel of the twice-born, forbear to go to Mathura for the present. There will come the proper time for going there. Thou wilt go there when the time will arrive. Retrace Thy Steps Home to Nabadwip for the present. Thou art the Lord of Sree Vaikuntha. Thou hast appeared in the world for the deliverance of the people, with all Thy Own. Thou wilt freely give away the treasure of loving devotion to the world by performing the kirtana through the infinity of the worlds. Thou has appeared in the world to give away to its denizens the good, by whose mellow quality Brahma, Shiva, Sanaka and their associates, are distracted with joy and which is sung by the Great Lord Ananta Himself. This is known to Thyself. We are Thy servants, and we speak as Thou Desirest. Therefore, have we made this submission at Thy Feet. Thou art Providence Himself. Thou art the Master. What Thou wilt is never thwarted by opposition. Therefore Supreme Lord, may Thou be pleased to return to Thy Home. May: Thou come again to see the town of Mathura after a time.' On hearing the Voice from Heaven Sree Gaursundar was persuaded to retrace His Steps with a glad Heart. Coming back to His lodging, the Lord prepared to return Home with all His disciples with the purpose of making manifest to the world the function of loving devotion to Krishna.

The reader is introduced with staggering suddenness into an atmosphere which is not at all familiar to him in his normal mundane existence. If he is disposed

to exercise his judgment at all he might be inclined to suppose the exhibition of love for Krishna as the effect of a strong emotion on a naturally and extraordinarily sanguine temperament. But he is at once assured by Thakur Brindavandas that prior to His Initiation Nimai Pandit did not wear His Heart on His sleeves. He was, on the contrary, possessed of a depth of reserve that baffled all penetration. This is the description of an unusually balanced temperament. It also fully accords with the respect and dread with which, as a Professor, Nimai Pandit was universally regarded by His fellow townsmen. His Fame as Professor had not remained confined to Nabadwip. The leading Professor of Nabadwip was at that time, as now, the greatest savant of the whole country. All this implies neither a morbid sentimentalism nor the lack of a balanced intellect.

Attempts have been made on the testimony of nobody but by most illogical inference from the events of His subsequent career regarded from the dishonest sceptic's point of view, to give publicity to the opinion that Nimai Pandit was never a particularly brilliant scholar. He was only the teacher of Vyakarana which has been described by one of His associates, who became subsequently His devotee, as a subject of study fit for children. This, it has been suppose, proves that Nimai Pandit was not a great scholar. But this view does not take into consideration the testimony of the earliest accounts of His Career which informs us that He was the greatest scholar of Nabadwip of His time and in all branches of knowledge. They are also careful to inform us that it was His Favorite pastime to go about the streets in the company of His pupils challenging every one to learned controversy with Him in any branch of study. The work of Thakur Brindavandas was written within less than forty years of the Disappearance of the Lord. We find that the Lord met and defeated in open controversy all the scholars of all parts of India. This could not be regarded as even an exaggerated account of the neurotic performance of a mad sentimentalist. Those, who are at all acquainted with the nature of theological controversies in India, should be aware that it is no child's play to defeat an Indian Pandit in open controversy in His subject.

'But there is far more convincing proof of His perfect rational sanity than all

this. The theological system, which is the Teaching of Sree Chaitanya, remains intact to this day. Some indications of its nature have already been available to the reader of the foregoing pages of this Narrative. It is for the reader to judge whether they constitute a revolutionary and unparalleled advance on every system of every school that has been prevalent in the world before or since His time. But that, which has been placed before the reader, is only that infinitesimally small portion what bears to be conveyed in the defective vocabulary that is at our disposal for the purpose. No vocabulary of this world can touch even the outermost fringe of the Absolute Truth whose complete face is presented by the Career of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, the Absolute Himself, in the Agony of an endless striving for beholding Himself as He really is.

The difficulty that the worldling has to overcome in order to be won to a rational faith in the Transcendental Nature of the Absolute, is that he is made by all his cherished habits of education and association to believe implicitly in the testimony of his senses. When Nimai Pandit is found by one's eyes to be no more than a human being like oneself, it should be impossible to be won over by mere theological arguments to a stable conviction of His transcendental nature. It would be still less possible to believe in His divinity by the same method.

This natural disinclination to believe in His transcendence would not be diminished by the closest possible scrutiny of His Career from the confirmed empiric point of view. The ordinary empiric attitude is to expect to find transcendence in the form that must wholly bewilder the understanding by the manner of a miracle. If Nimai Pandit possesses a Body which can be touched by my hands, seen by my eyes, how can such Body be regarded as something really extraordinary? Nothing mundane is ordinarily expected to be found in the mundane sense in the truly transcendental. Should, not, therefore, Nimai Pandit if He is really transcendental, have nothing in common with us according to mundane expectation?

The reply to such questions has already been given more than once in the course of this narrative. transcendence does not mean the denial of the

mundane. It simply means that the transcendent is inconceivable to our present understanding. For example it was inconceivable to His contemporaries that Nimai Pandit is really a transcendental person. This is quite in conformity with the peculiar characteristic of transcendence. It need not obey, it is sure to belie, all expectations of its mundane observers. No imagining on the part of the empiricists, by the negative method of analysis of mundane experience, can enable him to get to the real plane of transcendence. It is only by the mercy of the latter that he can have any access to him. Transcendence reserves the right of showing, or not showing, himself to the mundane spectator. He refuses to disclose his nature to one who does not desire to serve the Truth. This is not at all unreasonable, as we all recognize the paramount duty of serving the Truth in order to be enabled to realize our own proper nature by reference to the Truth.

The theory of miracle, in the sense in which the term is ordinarily supposed to stand for a transcendental occurrence, must be wholly discarded if we are to be enabled to approach the subject of transcendence in the truly scientific way. The power of performing miracles, in the ordinary sense of that term, cannot and need not be attributed to the divinity. The transcendence of Godhead consists in this that He does not require any extraneous proof of His divinity to maintain His transcendence. He is everything without being anything. This is the real nature of His transcendence. Godhead has been accordingly described in the Bhagavata as possessing a Medium Form. In other words there is prima facie nothing extraordinary at all about Godhead as He really is. This is the proof of His supreme freedom from all form and convention. The Divinity is also declared to have a specific form of His own who is like the human. This is not proved to be untrue for the reason that it is nothing apparently extraordinary to the judgment of man. The human form of the divinity is not the human form of non-divine man. Sree Krishna is free from all limiting connotations of the term 'man' and is at the same time Human in a manner that is inconceivable to man himself.

Such a view no doubt provides a capital opportunity for cheats and hypocrites to come forward as the Avatars of Godhead, an opportunity that has not also

failed to be exploited in the most shameless way, specially in this country. But the exhibition of such monstrous wickedness by all the sinners of this world, will be no palliative for the error of those who are, with equal hypocrisy, thereby led to hold to any belief which they know very well to be radically opposed to their own basic conception of the nature of the Divinity. No hypocrisy, not even that of the most subtle kind, is naturally permitted to trespass into the realm of the Absolute, for the simple reason that it happens to be a revolt against the service of the Truth as He is.

Nimai Pandit cries like a mad-man for Sree Krishna. He does nothing else, but always longs for the sight of Krishna. Who then is this Nimai Pandit and Who also is this Sree Krishna to whom He realizes Himself to be so exclusively attached by love ?

We have to turn to the Bhagavata for understanding the meaning of this Extraordinary Conduct. The shlokas, which Nimai Pandit was reciting as he wept loudly in His agony of separation from Krishna, are to be found in the Bhagavata. Krishna is leaving for Mathura. The shlokas express the grief of the milkmaids on that occasion. It is on the plane of Braja that Nimai Pandit finds Himself in consequence of His initiation. He is turned into a denizen of Braja that is now His real plane, while this world only serves to increase His sense of separation from Krishna. In order to enable the reader to avoid any gross misunderstanding of the nature of the spiritual function itself, manifested in the activities of Nimai Pandit from this time, we shall try to set forth in the next chapter a few additional considerations towards the elucidation of His conduct as devotee of Krishna.

Chapter XXIV **—His Initiation and After**

The method of service by the mood of separation is the distinctive feature, the

differential as it were, of the religion of pure devotion that is exhibited by the Conduct of Nimai Pandit after His Initiation. It is this which makes the religion of pure devotion the antipode of the worship (?) of Material Energy by the mood of enjoyment represented by the gross type of the Shakta Cult. The worship of Godhead, being located on the transcendental plane, cannot be practiced in its positive or substantive form on the material plane.

But neither is the spiritual function performed by the method of abstention from material enjoyment. The method of abstention is a radically unnatural, hypocritical and pessimistic attitude. Why should a person abstain from the ordinary activities of this world? If one loses any organ of sense should it be regarded as any cause for congratulation in itself? Any deliberate attempt to be deprived of the functions of all the senses, cannot be supposed, for the same reason, to be either desirable or equivalent to any positive function on the transcendental plane. Moreover the process itself of being deprived of one's senses is really impracticable. Any offense against Physical Nature is automatically punished by an equally violent re-action. Nature always takes her revenge.

The sensuous aptitude is the natural condition for the physical body under the direction of the mind which is dependent on the sense-organs for all its activities. This is the fact. The world is not an illusion, to be got rid of by the mere desire of any person. Those, who believe in the philosophy of illusion and the omnipotence of the mind, fall thereby only more deeply into the clutches of the sensuous nature. The victims of cynicism may not be themselves prepared to admit the sterile failure of their cherished misconceptions, but it is none the less patent to all impartial observers.

When, therefore, it is stated that Sree Gaursundar practiced the pure devotion of Krishna by the Mood of Separation, as distinct from that of material enjoyment practiced by the elevationists (or materialistic Shaktas), it is not to be supposed that He necessarily belonged to the opposite camp of equally materialistic ascetic salvationists. As a matter of fact He belonged to neither materialist camp. He was acting according to the pure dictates of the soul when he wakes from his mundane stupor to find himself wholly off his proper plane

in this world. The plank of the elevationists as well as of the salvationists offered Him the alternative aspects of the perverted spiritual function that prevails on the mundane plane. Elevationism is fruitful of transitory positive activities which are essentially irrational in their nature, although they seem to be true for a time; while Salvationism offers freedom from the round of such activities by substituting in place of the positive a number of impracticable, negative equally irrational and transitory activities. The stuff in either case is the same, viz., an unintelligible existence depending on the physical senses for its functioning. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Salvationists should consider himself saved only by his total immunity from the shackles of his present unwholesome existence as a thinking individual with compulsory, positive tantalizing functions.

The quarrel between Elevationism and Salvationism is as old as the hills. It has also remained the eternal Gordian Knot which cannot be untied by any earthly thinking. Each can be justified only by including the other which is logically its direct negation. This vicious circle is the very plane of all empiric thinking on the subject of itself.

Nimai Pandit was perfectly aware of the insoluble nature of this problem of empiricism and He took care not to embrace either of those alternatives. He found Himself instead on the real positive plane of the Absolute. This plane is not one of sensuous activities at all. On the mundane plane the senses demand their own gratification. On the spiritual plane the senses are found to be absolutely free from this hankering. The sensuous hankering of the Elevationists are capable of being only suppressed. The Salvationists are never cured of their longing for material enjoyment which is indirectly or directly the very stuff of all existence on the material plane.

If I suddenly find myself on a plane where the senses do not require their own gratification, I should be left without any motive for active existence. This is the seemingly rational conclusion of the Salvationists. But Nimai Pandit did not find that it is really so. He found that He was being prevented from exercising the proper function of His Senses by His Separation from the only Object

towards Whom it is worthy of being performed. He found no worthy function to be performed by His senses towards this world. He desired an infinity of functions to be performed towards the Absolute. But the Absolute had ceased to be accessible to Him after a sudden momentary revelation. This was the plight in which He found Himself.

The empiric critic might be inclined to agree to this for a reason of his own. He may think that such a state is identical with the goal of the Salvationists. If Nimai Pandit did nothing but cry for Krishna night and day, did He not thereby limit Himself to the minimum of barren transitory performances which is the cherished goal of ascetic Salvationists?

But as a matter of fact the ascetics themselves of that period did not recognize the Performances of Nimai Pandit as coming under the requirements of Salvationism. They said that He was only a soft-hearted sentimentalist. They scorned His company and His philosophy, as being utterly incompatible with a life of austerities.

Nimai Pandit was, therefore, out of His element both among Elevationists and Salvationists. Neither could He find any other footing of His own in this world. Thereupon He behaved as one who is distraught with a great sorrow, and found no consolation except in the talk of Krishna. His sorrow was that He had found Krishna but that He had been immediately forsaken by Him. He had lost sight of Him. But He could not live without seeing Him. His only concern was to find Him again. He was interested in the company and talks of those who were attached to Krishna and who might enable Him to find Krishna. He had no duties till He found Krishna. Can such a Person be described as a Salvationist who seeks freedom from the miseries of his individual existence? Or can He be regarded as an Elevationist, who is bent upon finding his goal in the gratification of his own senses ?

Nimai Pandit gave up all earthly occupation from the moment of His initiation, devoting Himself heart and soul to the Search for Krishna. Did He also expect to find Him ? He was engaged in this Search for the rest of His Career. The

Search served to intensify the pang of separation from His only Beloved. He ceased at first to care for the ordinary duties of a householder and finally renounced the world and lived away at Puri, far from His widowed mother and loving consort, who were left to be taken care of by, and to care for, Krishna, in His place.

Such a course, although at first sight it seems to bear a close external resemblance to Salvationism, is radically different from the same. To love Krishna is the summum bonum of all animation. The love for Krishna had been aroused in Nimai Pandit as the result of His Initiation. But from the very beginning it had the form of the anguish of loving separation from the object of His love. This was the fulfillment, brought about by the process of initiation, of His spiritual need. He had gained the summum bonum in this form.

If one is seriously disposed to settle down in a contented mood in this world, such a person cannot be regarded as possessing an iota of real love for Krishna. Krishna is never to be found in this world. It is also necessarily impossible to serve one who cannot be found. A person, who is favoured by the sight of Krishna, is thereby deprived of all taste for the life on the plane of sensuous existence that alone is available in this world. In this terrible predicament what is such a person to do for passing his time ?

Krishna shows Himself to the neophyte only once, at the moment of the fulfillment of the probationary stage of his spiritual pupillage, and immediately vanishes from his view. This, indeed, sets him on the real quest. Till the novice has been favoured by the sight of Krishna he has no love for the Real Krishna. The instant he is blessed by the sight of Krishna he finds Krishna to be his only beloved and he is ready with the offer of his all for His service. But Krishna has no need for the things of this world. The pure soul, who has once been blessed by the sight of Krishna, is thereby enabled to know also this perfectly well. He, therefore, on his part does not expect nor want that Krishna should actually allow Himself to be served by the offerings of mundane things. In other words that form of worship, which bears the Scriptural designation of archana, cannot also have an exclusive attraction for such a person.

It is possible to worship Godhead by means of the objects and thoughts of this world. But this form of worship can be but symbolical at its very best. It is not possible to attain to the substantive spiritual service of Godhead on the mundane plane. But notwithstanding this necessary reservation the process of worship represented by archana possesses the greatest value during the period of novitiate on the path of spiritual endeavour. It is not also correct to say that archana is symbolical worship. It should be described as the practice of learning to regard all mundane objects as being unacceptable to Godhead. The food, which is offered to Krishna by the process of archana, is not the mundane eatable. But it is nevertheless offered to Him by uttering the formula that the act of such offering is only the mental function which has a correspondence in the spiritual sphere and that the offering is therefore, made by means of the formula which shields the worshipper against mistaking the mundane act for the spiritual. The person who performs archana is required, as the initial act of the process, to try to realize that it is his soul who is offering worship. After this attitude has been assumed the object of worship and the articles of offering are regarded as further items in a corresponding function. The mantras impress this vital difference on the mind of the worshipper. All this precaution is necessary in order to guard oneself against the profane error that the articles of offering or any mundane figure of, the object of worship to whom they are offered or the mind or body of the worshipper, are the entities engaged in the service of Godhead on the spiritual plane. The mantra says that they are not. The archana, however, is not a symbolical process. The worshipper is instructed not to suppose that he is doing anything which can be conceived, either symbolically or otherwise, as at all like the spiritual process on which he is engaged. The mantra forbids him to exercise his mind at all on the subject.

The consideration, that affords the real clue to the spiritual significance of the method of archana as a valid form of worship, is to be sought elsewhere than in the visible items actually employed in the worship. The process derives its spiritual value from the fact that it has the sanction of Godhead Himself. It is, of course, perfectly conceivable that a person should be disposed to cherish the firm conviction that no entities of this world can have any locus standi on the

spiritual plane. It should also be possible to devise an infinite variety of forms and processes of worship based on such conviction. But if the conviction were acted up to under those forms, would it help us to get rid of our present doubts and difficulties? Our unbiased reason should hold out no hope of any such possible consummation. But if once it could be rationally admitted that the process has the sanction of Godhead we would have no further objection to it even on the rationalistic grounds. In other words it is not sufficient for any form of worship to be rationalistic in the conditioned sense. The rational instinct itself requires that there must be a Supernatural sanction, not for reinforcing the rational but, for endowing it with the substantive spiritual value. Human emotion is as much a mundane phenomenon as human reason; and, therefore, the mere addition of human emotion to an imperfectly rational process, will not make the function a religious practice even in the rational sense.

It should, therefore, be possible for a human being to gain the goal of spiritual endeavour only by the pursuit of a scriptural process. But what is this goal in itself? Sree Chaitanya's conduct shows that it consists partly of the realization of the categorical difference that separates the mundane from the spiritual. This realization is effected by the momentary vision of the Reality as He is. The vision is attained only for a moment in this life by the due performance of the archana and as the supreme fulfillment of the process. Should the process be, therefore, continued even after the vision has been attained?

The answer should be in the affirmative. It should now be possible for the worshipper to perform the worship in the manner that is required by the mantra. The mantra will now be consciously applied. But the resulting process, although there has been no external difference, will have been wholly changed as regards its significance and something more, for the worshipper. The worshipper is now no longer under the obligation of avoiding to exercise his mind on the impossible. He is now conscious of the nature of the spiritual process by reason of his spiritual experience. The function itself has thus

become quasi-spiritual. After this stage has been reached it is optional for him to continue to worship the Archa (image) by means of the symbols.

Nimai Pandit gave up the method of archaha shortly after His Initiation, when He found it impossible to go through the process by reason, not of His opposition to the principle of archana but by the discovery, of His actual incapacity for the due performance of the valued ceremony. This point will be taken up again at the proper place.

It is the fuller realization of the spiritual that is the cause of the non-attachment of the devotee, in the higher stages of spiritual endeavour, alike to the concrete and abstract forms of the mundane. The activities on the mundane plane are not discarded in the ordinary sense by the realization of their spiritual worthlessness, as the Salvationist avers. All activities are expanded by a change of plane into quasi-spiritual performances. The devotee in this stage appears to an external observer as being neither attached nor averse to mundane activities. But he is not found to be devoid of all interest. He is found to be partial to hearing and talking about Krishna and, unconditionally serving those who serve Krishna by the true method.

With the change of His point of view the nature of Nimai Pandit's normal Activities underwent only the corresponding alterations. The nature of this change is not conceivable to one who is bent upon confounding the spiritual with the mundane. Neither can a mere pessimist, a mere scorner of the things of this world, enter into the purpose of the pure devotee of Vishnu. His case bears a distant analogy to that of the love-lorn maiden separated from her sweetheart. She is not unmindful of the duties of the household on principle. But she cannot also avoid being unmindful. Her seemingly deliberate neglect of ordinary duties need not be objected to on economic and utilitarian grounds. in consideration of her inner condition.

It is no part of our duty to neglect the concerns of this world any more than to be wholly engrossed with transitory mundane interests. Those interests have a real, although temporary, value during our sojourn in this world. But they are

by no means the only interests. They need not be cultivated in the spirit that they are our permanent interests. They concern the perishable and changing physical body and mind. They can have no relation to the eternal. If the soul can subsist independently of the body and mind why should it be at all his duty to engage himself in supplying their so-called needs ? It is certainly necessary if these so-called duties are to be performed with the solace of any real conviction of their necessity for our souls, to inquire in what way, if any, they can really supply the needs of the soul.

As soon as this necessity for inquiring about the needs of our soul is seriously experienced we drift into the process of archana by whatever name we may choose to designate the ensuing function. The essence of archana consists in seeking to do every duty of this world by a considered reference to the paramount needs of the soul. The attainment of such an attitude is practicable in this world. Otherwise there would be no way of the redemption of conditioned souls. The archana develops into bhajana, or actual spiritual service, which is the function proper of the soul and which manifests itself to the view of this world as a causeless hankering for association with Krishna involving internal dissociation from all mundane concerns.

There is a still higher form of worship, viz., that which was exhibited by Nimai Pandit during the concluding twelve years of His Leela, at Puri. During that long period He did nothing but listen to the discourses of the Pastimes of the Divine Pair from the lips of His most confidential associates, Swarup Damodar and Rai Ramananda, in the strictest seclusion of His own private chamber.

All stages of worship of the Absolute, that are available on the mundane plane to conditioned souls, are of the nature of the unrealized quest of the Absolute. It is never possible, so long as the mortal coil persists, to know Krishna as He is. If it had been possible to know Him in that way the function would be substantively eternal. Nimai Pandit was apprised of this by the actual vision of the Object of worship. It had made Him realize that it is not possible to serve Krishna by the method of archana laid down in the Scriptures and that it is really impossible to serve Godhead on the mundane plane. The method of archana undoubtedly possesses the merit of being the legitimate form of

endeavour, available on this mundane plane the conditioned souls by the Grace of Godhead, for realizing the spiritual service of Krishna in Sree Brindavana, the eternal Realm of the Divinity. But the archana is nevertheless only an endeavour for realization; it is not the realized service.

The more strongly and fully this unbridgeable gulf that thus effectively separates archana from bhajana is realized by the endeavouring soul, one is bound to lose in proportion his confidence in the method of archana. The realization comes to him in the shape of the sense of utter inadequacy and impropriety of the available method. In other words, one does not become more sensuous, but one realizes that no form of activity, possible on this mundane plane, can possess the substantive spiritual nature of the Divine service proper. Such a person must still continue to retain his regard for archana, but he is unable to be satisfied by merely remaining on the steps of the ladder by lacking the means of the performance of the actual service of his Beloved.

It is this mood that has been termed 'bipralambha' by the Acharyyas who are self-realized, practicing, authorized teachers of the pure substantive eternal function. The word 'bipralambha' means the Mood of Separation from one's only Beloved. Godhead can be fully served on the mundane plane only by the growing realization of one's utter separation from Him. This is the sine qua non of the Teaching of Nimai Pandit. It is from after His initiation that He began to practice this hitherto unrevealed form of the religion of pure devotion.

Those, who consciously exhibit by the manipulation of their external conduct that they are actuated by the mood of separation, commit the blunder of supposing that they possess the thing, which alone it is certainly desirable to have. Any real manifestation of genuine self contradiction of this kind in the conduct of a person who is actually distraught with the uncontrollable anguish of separation from the Divinity, need not also be willfully undervalued. The condition of the loyal, loving wife is certainly to be preferred to that of the harlot. If it is not possible to serve Krishna really on the mundane plane, one, who desires to serve Him at all, should show his sincerity by submitting to undergo the preliminary training, in the form of the archana and must patiently and loyally wait for the realization of his desire when he is actually lifted to the

higher plane by the grace of Godhead by His own promise recorded in the scriptures.

But for the sincere soul there can be no meaning in simulating a condition simply because it resembles, in its external feature, that of Nimai Pandit. If one goes into the streets weeping and crying aloud the Name of 'Krishna' such an act should be discouraged by all means. If such a person is really actuated by the bona fide sense of separation from Godhead, he should be expected to exhibit his mood only to his confidential sympathizers, as Nimai Pandit took care to do. Nimai Pandit realized that the whole world is steeped in atheism, and that, therefore, it would be crying in the wilderness to ask them to listen to the tale of His woes. Notwithstanding all this precaution and apprehension, He could not always control His real sentiments. But whenever He chose to exhibit them openly, they only served to strengthen the general misconceptions against Krishna. They were so utterly opposed to the method of archana enjoined by the Scriptures that nobody, who was not himself very far advanced on the path of spiritual endeavour, could be expected to understand what it really was. It was only Sribas Pandit who could recognize in it the very highest form of devotion and accordingly proposed that Nimai Pandit might be pleased to perform the sankirtana of Krishna in his court-yard where all the Vaishnavas would join the holy function and from where all other persons would be excluded.

The Scriptures reveal Krishna through the medium of language. The sadhu reveals Krishna through his spoken words and every activity. But the spoken Word is the Source of all Manifestations of Krishna on the mundane plane. The Name of Krishna is the Supreme, All-sufficing, Spoken Word. The Name of Krishna is identical with Krishna and possesses all the Powers of Krishna. The Name of Krishna has greater Potency than any other form of divine manifestation. The person, who can utter the Name of Krishna without offense, is the purest of sadhus. By the service of the best of sadhus one acquires eligibility for uttering the Name of Krishna without offense. The only method of serving the pure sadhu consists in uttering the Name of Krishna without offense in his company. The companionship of the sadhu helps the realization

of that mode of life which is free from offense against Krishna. The sole motive for leading such a life is to be enabled to realize Krishna in the form of taking His Name without offense. If one calls upon the Name of Krishna only once with the really sincere motive of service, he is freed from all worldly entanglements for good.

This simple creed Sreebas Pandit was enabled to understand by the Mercy of Nimai Pandit, as embodying the complete significance of all the Scriptures. The conditioned soul can only try to sincerely call upon the Name of Krishna. If he wants to do anything else, he is bound to go astray. He is in utter need of receiving all enlightenment from Krishna. The sense of this supreme need makes itself felt in its truly effective form only to the person who is sincerely desirous of leading a life of which the sole object is to conduce to the Pleasure of Krishna. Such a life is made available for the conditioned soul by the grace of the sadhu who has himself attained the same position. The need for the grace of the sadhu is, therefore, the fundamental fact in the method by which spiritual enlightenment is to be sought by the conditioned soul.

The sadhu is not a denizen of this phenomenal world. The conditioned soul is not a sadhu. The redeemed soul is, indeed, a sadhu . But the process of redemption does not mean that the physical body and mental body of the conditioned soul are turned thereby into spiritual essences. There is no transformation of the mundane into spiritual. Just as the pure soul is liable to be enveloped by the double casing of the physical body and mental sheathe on attainment of the conditioned state, in like manner the redeemed soul finds his material casings in their turn capable of being coated or saturated with the substantive principles of spiritual cognition and bliss. This is in perfect keeping with our experience of the known phenomenon of the conditioned state. If the conditioned state is possible without the necessity of changing the essence of the soul, the redeemed state should also be possible without transforming the material casings.

But the sadhu has no material casings at all. The redeemed soul resembles a sadhu in his function inasmuch as he is in a position to render his service to

the Supreme Lord unhampered by the presence of his actual material coverings. The sadhu is the soul himself without the encumbrance of material coverings. But the sadhu appears to the vision of conditioned souls in the guise of the possessor of material cases. Or rather the form of the sadhu to the view of the mundane spectator, i.e., the conditioned soul, appears to be like the material case. If it be asked how the conditioned soul can at all see those material cases if the sadhu really has them not, the answer is that whatever the conditioned soul is permitted to see with his material eyes appears to him like material casing. No mortal eye is permitted to see the agent of Godhead as he really is.

Let us have recourse to a mundane analogy for avoiding any possible misunderstanding of this all-important point. If a live tiger could find his way into the bioscopic show, the spectators should have no cause to suspect that there is any material difference in the show by his appearance, unless, indeed, the tiger chooses to come out of the picture to prove to the spectators that he is really no part of the painted show. But if the tiger is content to behave as a harmless actor inside the show, no spectator need suspect that he is not the painted picture of the live animal. This impression of the spectators, however bona fide it may be, will be still in flat contradiction to the real fact, provided the tiger is actually the live animal instead of being the show that he looks.

The sadhu possesses the power of entering into the bioscopic show of this world in order to come within the range of the ocular vision of mundane spectators, without being really a part of the show. This is the real nature of the appearance of the sadhu on this mundane plane. His visible body is not any product of this phenomenal world any more than the body of the tiger is painted show. What appears to the mundane spectator as the physical body of the sadhu, is not the picture in the show, although it resembles the same to his view, but the form of the soul. The least gesture of the form of the soul is, therefore, a spiritual event. This can be known to the spectator only if he is inclined to submit to the sadhu for being initiated into the otherwise impenetrable secret.

There are no doubt lots of bogus persons who are passing themselves off as

sadhus , as an easy way of gratifying their sensuous appetites at the expense of their victims. But the undoubted existence of the bogus Sadhu can be no rational cause for disbelieving, the existence of the real sadhu . The bogus sadhu does not practice the service of Godhead, nor does he propose to teach his disciple the same. The bogus sadhu cannot teach his pupil the conduct that is enjoined by the Scriptures in regard to one who is anxious to attain to the spiritual service of Godhead. One who is anxious to find the genuine sadhu , however, can never go astray. The only thing that a person is required for finding the bona fide sadhu is to be true to himself. If one is insincere he has no chance of finding the sadhu and has to thank only himself for his dire misfortune.

If it be asked how an insincere person can be made sincere, the reply should be that no one is altogether insincere. It is not possible for a person to have a thing for which he possesses no aptitude. Everyone has got the faculty in an explicit or latent form. One is only asked to exercise the function in its full measure. The appeal of the sadhu is made to the higher nature of every person, which is fully sincere. The higher nature is deluded into supposing that it is the same as the lower nature which also is found in every person. It is the function of the sadhu to impress upon all persons that the one is categorically different from the other and to insist that the lower nature should be made to occupy a position of subordination to the higher. The sadhu says in effect to the insincere person, "You are really sincere, as you possess the higher nature. You have become insincere by supposing that you have an obligation to your lower nature. Any indulgence of your lower nature is partial or total denial of your obligation to the higher nature. The higher should be allowed to dictate your duty to the lower nature, and not vice versa. It is, therefore, your only duty to be true to your higher nature. Your higher nature has got no other function than to serve the Absolute. It is in a position to do so even by the resources of your lower nature when the latter happens unavoidably to be in his way. But it is possible, nay normal, for your higher nature to refuse to take any help of the lower, in serving the Absolute. It is also possible for your higher nature, i.e., your soul, to compel the lower, i.e., the physical body and mind, to be employed in the service of the Absolute during his temporary sojourn in this

world.”

The insincere man may, indeed, pretend to hold that inasmuch as the service of the Absolute is only open to the higher nature, who is perfectly sincere, it can be no business of a person who is insincere to bother about the service of Godhead. The weak point of such contention is brought out when we remember that the function of denying the higher nature would be impossible except by connivance of the higher nature himself. Such obstinacy of the insincere person is, therefore, nothing short of a gross and deliberate suicidal folly on the part of the soul. Of course it is open to the soul to choose to commit suicide and to say wrongly that he is being compelled to do so. But as a matter of fact there is and can be no necessity for insincerity. The most hardened sinner can be such only by option. He cannot also be redeemed unless he chooses similarly to be a really consenting party. He can be redeemed by the sadhu only with his own consent, by the method of his unconditional submission to the Absolute. The sadhu enables a repentant sinner to obtain the strength required for such submission even in the otherwise impossible surroundings of this mundane world. The sadhu never asks for more than it is really in one's power, by one's sincere conviction, to give.

Once the bona fide candidate for spiritual enlightenment finds himself in presence of the sadhu , he recognizes in him the transcendental guide of whose help he stands in such absolute need. There is no danger in making one's unconditional submission to the bona fide servant of the Absolute. If one really seek the exclusive service of the Truth one finds the person who is capable of instructing him in His service. The teacher of the Absolute is incapable of deceiving any person. He may find it necessary to advise an insincere person to shun the society of insincere persons by any pretext that may tend to aggravate the malady. But the sadhu is never the enemy of any person. This is instinctively realized by all who are themselves sincerely engaged in the quest of the eternal service of the Absolute. When the candidate for spiritual service is enabled to be really established on the path of the Absolute by the causeless grace of the pure devotee, he is liable to be set upon by all the deluding forces of the limiting energy for pulling him down to the mundane plane if he is found to cherish any lurking insincerity. If he stands the test he is also cured of

his worldly hankering and assured of unhampered progress on the path of divine service. The crisis of his life naturally makes the neophyte extraordinarily sensitive to the dangers of his position and makes him properly enough desirous of avoiding all association with non-sadhus lest he be misguided by their advice. The new experience is nothing less than the sudden revelation to the spiritual consciousness of the neophyte of his relationship to the Absolute which makes him realize the function of serving Krishna as the only thing needful. The Sight of Krishna excites an unpreventible disposition for His service which is recognized as the summum bonum. Thenceforward the only function of the awakened soul resolves itself into a sleepless endeavour for retaining and augmenting his newborn attachment to the Lotus Feet of Krishna.

There is a real danger of losing one's attachment to Krishna as long as the physical cases continue to be in one's way. By their means it is always practicable to cultivate the contrary disposition of seeking one's own sensuous gratification from the things of this world. The presence of the two material bodies is also an effective bar in the way of all access to the substantive plane of the Absolute. The service, that it is possible for the redeemed soul to render while he still continues to retain the entanglements of his material cases, is probationary service under the unconditional guidance of the sadhu . The whole duty of such a soul consists in obeying the sadhu. Krishna has, indeed, been seen by the grace of the sadhu , but the vision is not capable of being retained till Krishna is pleased to divest the soul of his mortal coils. The memory, however, persists by the grace of the sadhu. If the service of the sadhu is relaxed the memory about Krishna also tends to lose its spiritual significance. It is only by the continuous and exclusive service of the sadhu that one has any chance of retaining the memory of the divine event. If there is no real memory there can be no real relationship with the Absolute. No amount of punctilious observance of external conduct can restore to one's activities the spiritual character when once the tie of living memory is snapped.

The sadhu cannot be served in the way in which a person of this world is said to be served. The sadhu is a transcendental person. He can be served only on the transcendental plane. He is not served by the mundane aptitude of his

service-holder. This is the meaning of the Scriptural dictum that it is only by the method of unconditional obedience that the sadhu has to be served. The way, in which the sadhu requires to be served and is actually served by his disciples, cannot for this reason be at all understood by the uninitiated. Empiricists may think that they are justified in adversely criticizing the perfectly pure conduct of the devotee from the angular point of view of their mundane plane. They are apt to think that if the devotee really belongs to the transcendental plane, his conduct would be of an extraordinary kind and would also appear as such to all mundane spectators. Empiricists expect miracles and are prepared to serve only persons who are able to gratify their atheistical demands. But the devotee of Krishna lives above all expectations and performances of the worldling. It is no part of his business to seek to satisfy any expectations of any mundane person. It is the only duty of the worldling to try to understand in a spirit of humility and reverence why the sadhu claims to be able to serve the Absolute without having to perform miracles that alone are claimed to be recognized as spiritual manifestation by unbelievers.

When Sree Krishna-Chaitanya did nothing but cry for the Sight of Krishna, after He had been initiated into the transcendental service of Godhead by the grace of Sree Iswara Puri, His contemporary worldly spectators affected to regard His conduct to be absolutely sterile and wholly below the mark of their fanciful theories of the spiritual function. They could have been mystified by the manifestation of miraculous powers and some would have fallen at His Feet for obtaining 'boons' in the shape of extended scope for the gratification of their sensuous appetites. But all were sadly disappointed when they discovered that the Conduct of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya did not offer the least prospect of their worldly advancement. They turned into relentless opponents of the Lord when they found out later that the teachings of Sree Chaitanya were necessarily most radically opposed to their own cherished supposed interests and convictions.

Those who hold the view that the practice of spiritual service of Sree Krishna is conducive of social, political or physio communal welfare (?), betray utter ignorance of the nature of the elementary principles of the function of the soul in the state of grace. Social, political or so-called personal welfare, can be the

cry only of those who are actually in a state of want. The soul in his spiritual essence is self-satisfied. He requires no external condition for the perfection or augmentation of his happiness. To the pure soul the proposal of being made happy would be as unacceptable as that of being rendered unhappy. He covets neither. He has no reason to covet them even if he could know, because he is eternally located on a plane to which those considerations are absolutely foreign and inapplicable. The boatman of the fable conceived the ridiculous ambition of spreading prospective quilts on the thorny banks of the river when he would become a king in order that his bare feet might no longer be hurt in the process of tugging at the line of his boat. He could not imagine that it would not be necessary at all for him to pull at the line on actually becoming a real king. The amenities coveted by the conditioned soul refer only to the mundane plane and the adventitious material casings. The soul, when he is really free from those casings, has nothing to do with any physico-mental prospect offered by the mundane world. The real problem of the conditioned soul is located beyond the limited outlook of his fettered mental understanding. The problem for the conditioned soul is one of finding a method of realizing the inconceivable function of the unfettered soul. If the soul has no physical body nor limited mind, if he has, therefore, no mundane wants, in what manner could it be possible for him to be occupied at all when he leaves off his mortal coil? It is the problem of the boatman of the fable. The boatman could not find the solution by scratching his head with the help of the resources of his actual experience. He would have been better advised to inquire of those who knew about the function of a real king and who were not limited to his unwholesome experience of a life of unedifying menial drudgery.

If a person, after being thus admonished and after being promised good things of which he can have no idea till he had actually seen them with his own unsealed eyes, is suddenly informed that he would have lots of servants to pull at the boat-line for his pleasure and that he himself would only have to take his ease on the soft cushions spread inside the delicious cabin of a boat of wonderful quality, the boatman should no doubt be disposed to bless his extraordinary good fortune and be prepared to give up his own plans for the betterment of his condition, directed to an imaginary end.

But if on the contrary the boatman were told in a blunt fashion that he would have to tug at the line of the boat that conveys Krishna on the blue waters of the Yamuna and would have to do so without being supplied with the amenities of quilts, etc., and without being allowed to quit his hold of the line for a moment, nor to have even the scantiest of meals after the longest intervals, should he have the stomach for welcoming such strange tidings so apparently contrary to all ideas of the prospective good fortune that he had been eternally promised with all the choice phrases of the mundane vocabulary?

It is this sort of disappointment that is apt to be experienced by empiric expectants of transcendental enlightenment when they chance to meet the agent of the Absolute on this mundane plane. They have been building castles in the air from the moment that they were informed by the Scriptures that they are not physical bodies but pure souls and that the soul has no cause of unhappiness. Like the boatman of the fable the empiric sages, by ignorant inference from their mundane experiences, had proposed to themselves a condition which is to provide worldly amenities that would exceed their wildest demands.

But how can any worldly amenities be of any use on the transcendental plane ? The happiness and unhappiness of this world are of no use at all for the soul who happens to be located wholly beyond their limited and temporary jurisdictions. The conditions on the transcendental plane are wholly and inconceivably different from those on the mundane. The nature of the soul in the state of grace is also altogether different from the disposition and outlook of the temporary conditioned sojourn. In such circumstances it is foolish for the conditioned soul to embark on fictitious speculations on his own resources, regarding the substantive nature of the function of the soul in the unfettered state.

So without affecting to be undeceived by the actual conduct and words of the pure devotee, for the reason that they do not serve the purposes of our body and mind, it is necessary to turn one's unprejudiced attention to the real

significance of such activities. One need not bring up the resources of worldly experience for understanding the tidings of the transcendental plane by the method of trying to assimilate them to the mundane. It is not necessary to accept them for the purpose of gaining any worldly end that one may have in view. Such ubiquity is out of court in the perfectly pure atmosphere of transcendental enquiry. The whole position has to be accepted as it is and for good. It is necessary to try to become acquainted with the real nature of what is offered as our only eternal function, from the point of view of the soul, and not from that of the body and mind.

The body and mind are satisfied only when they receive an abundance of the deceptive treasures of this world. The mind covets subtler forms of acquisitions that can no more be retained than the grosser possessions of this world which it looks down upon. This accumulative aptitude, for no purpose of the soul, is apt to be accepted as the only function of human life. But why should it be obligatory on anybody to take the mind at its word? Why should one not agree to sit for a quiet half-hour for taking stock of the permanent achievements of his life? Are any of our acquired million of items likely to endure? Is it desirable that any of them should endure? Suppose all of them could be had without any effort; would they be worth one's while to have them? Or are their seeming values due to their being difficult to obtain and impossible to keep? Is not this a veritable wild goose chase from the point of view of substantive value? If a thing is really valuable for me, why should it tend to lose its value at all so long as I myself endure?

So it is absolutely necessary to try in all sincerity to get over the habitual, but nevertheless abnormal, feeling of disappointment that is experienced by all conditioned souls when they read the accounts of the Scriptures without being able to understand why it should be necessary for them to desire to have access to a realm which seems to resemble this world in many respects but is unduly lauded to the skies by a comparatively small number of the most peculiar type of people and their equally peculiar admirers?

The answer to their reasonable question is supplied by the Scriptures and they should only have the patience to question with an open mind. If they are prepared not to accept nor desire any merely tentative solution applicable to the conditions of this temporary sojourn, they are likely to find the real answer to their real inquiry.

Conclusion of the Early Part of the Career of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya

^[i]1 Noticed in

^[ii]

^[iii]2 Transcendental Eternal Divine Pastime.

^[iv]3 individual soul distinct from Godhead