

Vaishnavism —Real And Apparent

Foreword in the First Edition by Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura
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This brochure contains the essence of true Vaishnavism as revealed in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Geeta, the Bhagavata etc., and their teachings put into practice by Shri Chaitanya Deva. Four things may stand in the way of realising the truth laid herein - the cloaks of (high, or low) birth and station, (proficiency or deficiency in) worldly knowledge, and (beautiful or ugly, male or female) form. The Over-soul within Whom all individual souls are contained and to Whom all souls knowingly or unknowingly submit, confutes our tricks-and talents. The words for every soul who speaks from that life must sound vain to those who do not dwell in the same thought on their own art. When the walls of time and space are taken away we lie on one side to the boundless deeps of spiritual nature and attributes of the Supreme Lord, find that there is another youth and another age than that which is measured from the year of our worldly birth and realise that the scale of the soul is one and the scale of the senses and, understanding - the agents of the material mind - is another.

The soul in man is not the mind directing the organs of sense and action but the animation of the mind and these organs and the background of our existence. The angle of vision between these individual souls and the Over-soul is one and the same everywhere, whereas there is a distinctive variety and multiplicity of the angles of vision between the material minds and the world of the senses.

These lines will probably create a desire to know in all details the essential nature of the Eternal or Absolute Truth and prompt an honest and sincere enquiry in all who will go through them. His Divine Holiness Paramahansa Paribrajakacharya Shri Shrimat Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaja, the President-Acharya and Organiser-in-chief of the Viswa-Vaishnava-Raja Sabha is ever ready to send His associated counterparts - ideal devotees to explain at full length the said scriptures in Bengali, Hindi and English in any part of the world. He has no other work than pouring perpetual benedictions on the suffering humanity and stopping the perennial springs of triple miseries their flesh is heir to.

Invocation

Let us bow down at full length to the Acharya or Gurudeva (the preceptor) Who is no other than the associated counterpart of the Supreme Lord Himself and Who,

being kindness incarnate, is ever busy in kindly operating on the cataractous eye of ignorance of all jivas (souls, jivatmas) with the spike of true knowledge, thus openeth their eternal spiritual eyes and anointeth them with the collyrium of pure, disinterested and unsmitten love of Krishna (The Most Pleasing Attractor), stopping further attacks and enabling them to see Him face to face in His blissful Abode.

Let us kiss over and over again the dust of the holy feet of the devotees of Krishna who like Purpose-trees (Kalpataru) yield the fruition of all our devotional desires, and who are oceans of kindness and purifiers of the fallen.

Let us prostrate before Him Who is the most munificent, the free-giver of the love of Krishna - Who is Krishna Himself, Whose name is Krishna-Chaitanya, the glow of Whose body dims the lustre of liquid gold and the graceful glance of Whose lotus-eyes makes the devotees look upon annihilations (conscious and unconscious) as hellish existences, heaven as a castle in the air, the unsatiable and unconquerable organs of sense and action as venomous serpents devoid of poison-fangs and the universe as a blissful abode.

Real Vaishnavism

The word 'Vaishnavism' indicates the normal, eternal and natural condition, functions and devotional characteristics of all individual souls in relation to Vishnu, the Supreme, the All-pervading Soul. But such an unnatural, unpleasant and regrettable sense has been attributed to the word as to naturally make one understand by the word, Vaishnava (literally a pure and self-less worshipper of Vishnu), a human form with twelve peculiar signs (Tilaka) and dress on, worshipping many gods under the garb of a particular God and hating another human form who marks himself with different signs, puts on a different dress and worships a different God in a different way as is the case with the words 'Shaiva', 'Shakta', 'Ganapatya', 'Jaina', 'Buddhist', 'Mohammedan', 'Christian' etc.

This is the most unnatural, unpleasant and regrettable sense of the word, 'Vaishnava', which literally and naturally means one who worships Vishnu out of pure love expecting nothing from Him in return.

Vishnu, the Supreme, All-pervading Soul gives life and meaning to all that is. He is the highest unchallengeable Truth devoid of illusion everywhere and through eternity. He is Sat - ever-existing, Chit - all-knowing, Ananda - ever-blissful and fully free. He is in jivas and jivas are in Him, as are the rays in the glowing sun and the particles of water in the vast rolling ocean. As nothing but heat and light of the sun, and coldness, liquidity etc. of the sea is found in the constituents of the rays and the particles of water respectively, so nothing but Sat, Chit or free-will and Ananda is found in the jiva.

The ingredients and attributes of the whole must remain in the part in a smaller degree. So the part is identical with the whole when taken qualitatively and

different, when taken quantitatively. This is the true and eternal relation between jiva and Vishnu. So He always prevails over jiva who is also ever subject to Him. As the service of the master is the fundamental function of the servant, so the service of Vishnu is natural and inherent in jiva and it is called Vaishnavata or Vaishnavism and every jiva is a Vaishnava. As a person possessing immense riches is called a miser if he does not display and make proper use of them, so jivas when they do not display Vaishnavata, are called falses though in reality they are so.

Real and apparent jiva

Shri Chaitanya Deva once being asked who He was, replied, "I am neither a Brahmin, nor a King, nor a Vaishya, nor a Shudra, nor a Sannyasin, nor a Vanacharin, nor a Grihastha, nor a Brahmacharin, but I am the servant of all the servants of Vishnu!" At another time, Shri Sanatana Prabhu asked Him, "Who am I and why tritapa* - the three kinds of afflictions trouble me?" Shri Chaitanya Deva answered, "Sanatana, you are a jiva, your real self is the eternal servant of Vishnu; but you have an apparent self - your mind and body with which the real 'I' in stupor identifies himself. Tritap afflicts this apparent 'I'. The real 'I' or jiva has put on these two mortal garments, the subtle and ever-changing mind (consisting of ever-increasing unsatisfied desires) and the physical body (consisting of five elements - earth, water, fire, air and ether). The real 'I' forgets his own true self and is, in consequence, wrapped up in these two wears, inner and outer, and designates himself a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Christian, a Brahmin, a male, a female, rich, poor and so on. These designations of creed, caste, rank etc., not only change in different births but in one and the same birth; - a Hindu becomes a Mohammedan or a Christian; a Mohammedan becomes a Hindu, a Brahmin becomes a 'Brahmo' or a Christian! A street-boy becomes a Nawab, a Nawab becomes a beggar. As changeability is the prime factor of the mind, it flies like a roaming bee on the wings of desires and changes at will its name, colour, creed, habitation etc. One frequently goes from 'Log Cabin to White House', from the seal to the crown. The sweet sixteen changes into bitter sixty - 'The old order changeth yielding place to new.' Jiva in this manufactory of change, in this whirlpool of birth and death, is called enslaved (Baddha or apparent), ever engaged in forging the fetters of bondage.

The bondage of jiva

Jivas are of two kinds - (1) Nitya-Mukta (eternally free), (2) Nitya-Baddha (eternally enslaved). Free jivas are never enslaved. They are serving the Supreme God in five different functions** in His eternal blissful abode, where there is no change, no destruction, no misery. Jiva, once entered there never comes back here. The inconceivably narrowest line of demarcation between land and water or the line where land and water meet is called Tata; so also the meeting line of the Chit world or the eternal abode of the Supreme Lord and the A-Chit world or the Tata region of Maya is called Tata. The power of the Supreme Lord displayed at the Tata

is known as the Tatastha (lying at the Tata) or marginal power. All the jivas being the display of this power, have the inherent oscillating tendency and capability of going to the Chit or the A-Chit world. Tata not being a resting place, jivas must go this side or that ; those preferring the A-Chit, fell into the clutches of the Octopus Maya, when these mortal costumes of mind and body were put on him as a punishment. The satanic frenzy in which the jiva dislikes the blissful and eternal service of his Master and prefers to quench his thirstful desires of enjoying matter, opens before him a perpetual spring of liquid fire and poison at which he begins to drink deep. Thus in going to lord it over Maya, jiva became enslaved by her.

Daya or kindness to jiva

One apparent jiva considers himself (mentally and physically) less distressed than another jiva, feels for his distress and does something in the shape of relief or redress. This is but stopping or diminishing the unending miseries partly, locally or temporarily. It is frequently seen that a jiva who feels aggrieved and consequently abstains from committing wrong owing to weakness or inability, recovers, at such relief, strength or ability enough to commit wrong to other jivas. So it often happens that such apparently kind services not only bring harm to the recipient but cause indirect injuries to others. This is one aspect of the thing. Let us turn to the other. As a gardener prunes a growing tree, allowing its root to grow freely and easily, as a physician treats a patient leaving the prime-disease undisturbed, so this sort of temporary kindness stops, no doubt, the growth of the present inconveniences for a while but in no way uproots the cause whence all these afflictions arise. This cause has been identified with the enslaved condition of jivas. So real and permanent kindness consists in bringing before the enslaved jivas a true and vivid picture of their natural, free and blissful existence and reinstating them in their true position. Thus real kindness is applicable to the real jiva and apparent kindness to the apparent jiva.

Brahmacharya of the mind and of the soul

Should we picture the very sad and deplorable mental and physical condition of the younger generation - the boys of schools and colleges? Ye guardians, parents and well-wishers of boys, how long will you wink at the stealthy undermining of the vitality of your dear ones and be cruel to them? While claiming a right over their mind and body for one's own enjoyment, is it not fair that one should look after their proper and natural development ? There is in every soul a strong ardour of religious zeal, which, though pent up, will gush and struggle out like rain from the throat of the overflowing spout. How will the plants grow if the preserving fences devour them? Can anybody deny that the generation is going day by day to be mental and thus physical slaves to their senses?

Mere artificial restraint and austerity on the body and the mind, a mechanical regulation of diet and living in a solitary place do not constitute Brahmacharya, for

they change their sky not their mind, who scour across the sea. Then the animals in the 'zoo' would have been the best Brahmacharins. Brahmacharya is the powerhouse whence currents of Atma-jnana (knowledge of one's own self) are generated which illuminates his blinded self, withholds all his evil propensities and set the whole machinery in motion, so that this frail and rare but accidentally-got raft may get across the sea and anchor in the bay for eternity after carrying its passenger to his own home. As a barren cow looks exactly like a milch cow, but fails in giving milk to the keeper in return for his most attentive and faithful services which beget only further labour, so the so-called Brahmacharya, or a knowledge of the scriptures will, in no way, inspire Atma-jnana or real Brahmacharya in jivas. By means and ways a non-brahmacharin can never be a Brahmacharin.

In essence, the mind and the soul (the jiva) are diametrically opposite - the former being restless, impetuous, changeable and ever busy in enjoying matter, while the latter is eternal, unchangeable, stable and incapable of enjoying matter. So real Brahmacharya rests in the soul, not in the mind.

The characteristic defects of the mind

The mind and the soul are hostile to each other. There is an eternal enmity between them. In soul the four characteristic errors of the defective mind are totally wanting viz., (1) mistaking the mirage for water, the rope for the serpent; (2) misapprehensive intoxication, (3) knowing things with imperfect senses; (4) deceiving itself and others. As the horse can not hold its own reins, so the mind can not guide itself - it is ever being guided by an unending and unsatiable bundle of desires in the shape of enjoyment or indifference - of doing good or evil. Each individual mind differs from the other - no two identical minds are to be found. The proverb goes - 'so many Rishis, so many minds'. A mind can more easily hold a wolf by the ears than steady itself in spiritual experience. Beware of this mind which, like a bad guide, appears before you and others in sheep's clothing with all the ferocity of a ravening wolf and like a professional running thief crying "thief, thief". In the following song of our preceptor the deceptive nature of the mind has been fully and clearly described:

Ye wicked mind! Thou art not a Vaishnava. Thy apparent chanting of Hari's name in a lonely house is for attaining worldly supremacy; it is nothing but pure hypocrisy! Dost thou not know that worldly supremacy is as valueless as the dung of a boar and that it is one of the splendours of Maya or illusion Why shouldst thou think, year in and year out, of wealth and enjoyment ? These are all fleeting and transitory!

When thou claimest wealth as thine own, it creates in thee lusts for enjoyment. Madhava - the Lord of all wealth, should only and always be served with it. Why dost thou trespass on the lusts of women whose only and eternal proprietor is Yadava - Krishna, the charmer of all enjoy- ers.

Ravana - lust-incarnate, fought in vain with Raghava - the Love-incarnate, for the imaginary tree of the supremacy which is but a mirage. The supremacy thou seekest is like quicksand ever receding from thy foothold. Thou canst never stand upon it and if thou insist on doing so, it will lead you to rack and ruin. If thou can place thyself on the steady and solid standing-ground whereon a Vaishnava ever stands, thy feet will never slip.

Why dost thou suffer under the false hope of profaning Hari's men - the devotees, and attaining their inherent spiritual eminence and boast of thy fruitless and foolish efforts? An unworldly and eternal pre-eminence spontaneously follows the holy heels of a Vaishnava. The relation between a Vaishnava (devotee) and Vishnu (the Lord) does not smell of Maya (illusion) or worldly deceit. Knowest thou that thy seeming supremacy is as treacherous as a woman devouring a dog's flesh and thy feigning loneliness is totally hellish.

"I shall give up 'Kirtana' - chanting Lord's name, and besmear myself with supremacy - what is the good in searching for such eminence?" - if this be thy thought, knowest thou for certain that Madhavendra Puri did never deceive himself and commit theft in his own store-house of perception like thee!

Thou shouldst never compare the unsolicited eminence following Madhavendra Puri like an attending maid, with your seeming one which is like the dung of a boar. Thou hast drowned thyself out of envy in the filthy waters of enjoyment and hast abandoned the perfections of kirtana.

Ye wicked mind, bearest in mind that solitary devotion is propagated in disguise by the adopters of evil means. Thinkest thou over and over again what Supreme Lord Gauranga kindly taught us addressing Sanatana Prabhu with the utmost care. Dost not forget for a moment the two most valuable words He taught - apparent and real, apathy and sympathy, freed and enslaved - never confuse the one with the other. Singest thou the Lord's name aloud. He is a Vaishnava who is never a victim to the tigress of wealth, beauty and fame. He is indeed apathetic and a pure devotee. The transitory world is to him as a snake is to its charmer. He is indeed apathetic who moderately partakes of things necessary for, and in favour of devotion - neither below nor above par - avoids all enjoyments and is ever free from diseases. He looks upon every thing as his Lord as well as Madhava's, and not meant for his own enjoyment. This identity with, as well as attachment for, the things of Madhava - is real apathy. Fortunate indeed is he who is thus attached to Hari and who sees Hari's Lila or splendour in the realm of matter. He is rich in hypocrisy who sings the Lord's name to attain eminence.

Forsakers of matter out of fear or desire and enjoyers thereof are both equally Non-Vaishnavas. Shun the company of both. Thou canst neither own nor disown the things of Vishnu and thus run mad after enjoyment or renunciation.

The mind of Mayavadins can never think of Krishna and in a mood of imaginary salvation condemn a Vaishnava. Oh mind! Thou art a servant of the Vaishnavas and thou shouldst always hope for attaining devotion. Why shouldst thou hanker

after solitude?

A false renouncer calls himself a forsaker - and can never be a Vaishnava, as he abandons his servitorship and drowns himself in solitude. What's the gain in acquiring that seeming good?

Ever engagest thyself in the service of Shri Radha and keepest aloof from the snaky enjoy- ment. Singest the Lord's name not for glory or supremacy. Why shouldst thou run after false retirement for devotion, leaving aside the worship of Shri Radha, your eternal Object of wor- ship?

The dwellers of Braja are the real objects of preaching, and they being living agents and meant for preaching do not aspire after supremacy and are strong enough to instil life into the audience. Preaching is the symptom of vitality. Song of Krishna does not smell of any attempt for supremacy.

The Humble servant of Shri Radha and her Lover always hopes for kirtan and begs of all to sing the name of his Lord aloud. When meditation will spontaneously follow kirtana, then and then only solitary devotion and renunciation will be natural.

Two minds - material and spiritual

The mind can never sit idle. It will either create a hell out of heaven or a heaven out of hell. It is like drift-wood floating on the ebb and flow of good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice. As good Homer sometimes nods, it ever commits wrong in cleaving to that which seems to be evil and abhorring that which seems to be good, and vice versa. Every mind has its own way of looking at things; so what one mind establishes, the other destroys, nay the same mind rejects today what it accepted yesterday, as every life is a series of surprises or expe- riences. The things one now regards as fixed, shall, one by one, detach themselves, like ripe fruits, from one's experience and fall. The wind shall blow them, none knows whither - the landscape, the figures, Calcutta, London, New York, the Royal Throne, the Presidential Chair - are facts as fugitive as any institution past or any whiff of mist or smoke, and so is the society and so the world. Intimately alluring and attractive was a man to you yesterday, a great hope, a sea to swim in; now you have found his shores, found it a pond and you care not if you never see it again. The proverb goes, - "Today king, tomorrow nothing." There are two minds; one, the spiritual mind or the mind of the soul or jiva, the other, the material mind which has will- ing, feeling and perception of the material world. The spiritual mind can neither attach itself to, nor detach itself from, the objects of this kingdom of meat and drink nor is it liable to any change or modification in this world of the senses. The tongue may stab the material mind and strike into it a cureless wound, whereas no stab can wound and kill the spiritual mind. An iron ball and the fire are two distinctly different things; but when the former is kept - in an intimate touch with the latter, the former plays the role of the latter by radiating heat and light and burning other things, so the material mind, though in

reality purely a matter and devoid of life and its attendant energy, having been closely in touch with the spiritual mind from eternity, exhibits its borrowed activity, like an elephant run amuck, uncontrolled by the driver, through the ten organs of action and sense in the shape of good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, philanthropy and self-enjoyment, benevolence and miserliness etc. There is no waking, dreaming or sleeping in the spiritual mind, whereas the physical one wakes, sleeps and dreams; it creates, preserves and destroys and "gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." In doing so it sometimes busies itself with the fleeting, frivolous and despicable enjoyments of the world, sometimes it abstains from these things and chooses at will an imaginary god as the object of meditation and worshipful adoration, considers itself a meditator and plunges itself in solitary meditation or worships an idol of wood, clay or metal as a workable god - as a means of attaining (1) Salokya (the existence in the plane of God), (2) Samipya (proximity to God), (3) Sarupya (likeness to God), (4) Sarsti (equal glory of God), and (5) Sayujya (absorption in God or annihilation). It thus turns itself an idolater as a meditator or as an idol-worshipper. Like a dwarf uplifting his hands to catch at the moon it sometimes tries to taste the succulent pastimes of the Supreme Lord in His blissful abode with its passionate senses, identifying the perverted reflection with the real object. The mind, while giving the bridle to its passions and desires and being itself fully subject to affliction, grief and distress, considers itself free from these things and extends its helping hand to an equally suffering mind. Its knowledge of good and bad, happiness and misery, donor and the recipient, law and disorder regarding things other than the Supreme Lord is nothing but a series of blunders and is like jumping from the frying pan into the fire or like swimming between Scylla and Charybdis.

Its utterance, however sweet and sound, its meditation, however deep, long and undisturbed, though apparently true have no reality and are ever subject to change and destruction. Sometimes it imitates the activities of the spiritual mind and picks its own pocket. An abnormal heat in the body caused by keeping a clove of garlic under the armpit or exposing the body to the scorching sun, and the heat caused by fever, though similar in perception, are not the same thing - the former is artificial, empiric and inductive, while the latter is natural, spontaneous and deductive; the activity of the germ working within, bursts forth in the shape of feverish heat, headache etc. When the spiritual mind sets about his dormant devotional activities and his inherent love of God begins to blossom forth at the touch of the eternal, superior ecstatic Energy incarnate as his deliverer, tremor (Kampa), tears (Asru), stupefaction (Stambha), perspiration (Sveda), horripilation (Pulaka), pallor (Vaivarnya), humility (Dainya), throbbing, (Vepathu), exultation (Harsha) etc. appear on the body as spiritual changes (Satvika vikara). Sometimes changes of this nature and appearance are noticed on the bodies of emotional persons whose minds are so supple and susceptible as to easily produce those peculiar signs at the clangour of the drum and the cymbal, sweet music or the like. These are mere effects of the cause; and the effects disappear as soon as the cause is withdrawn, as the fever-looking heat disappears from the body as soon as it is withdrawn from the burning rays or the garlic is removed from the arm-pit. As the pendulum oscillates between two extremes, so the mind oscillates between enjoyment and abstinence. When it gets tired with the

meat and drink of this world, the busy strife of the dinning city, the griefs and woes of sweet home, the guilty mind seems to awake and exhibits a life of retirement, non attachment or reclusion, oftentimes, vainly directing its energies to annihilate the imperishable and indestructible devotional energy of the spiritual mind - to reduce it to nothing so that it can never feel, will or perceive - it may never come across the fleeting, changeable, and afflicting things of pleasure and pain. Sometimes one male mind feels the want of a female mind, and thus a male body gets united with a female body through the bond of wedlock. No sooner is this want fulfilled than fresh wants of wealth and home and hearth arise. When it rolls in wealth and the sweet smile of wife and children cheers it, alas, the grim reaper whose name is death, reaps, with his keen sickle the bearded grain and the flowers that grow between at a breath! Then it realises that it was drinking poison from a cup of gold. Thus it happens that the spiritual mind feels that it is fallen in an ocean whose waters of deep woe are brackish with the salt of human tears, and that it is within the jaws of lusts and anger like so many sharks and crocodiles swimming therein, enchained with ardent longings, totally unfriended and shelterless. He shakes off the torpor and realises that the material mind had so long been vainly playing with the fleshy forms known as the wife, the son etc. and fleeting joys like so many unsteady limpid drops of water on a lotus-leaf. Had satiation been in strength Myro and Ophellius would have been happy; had it been in wealth Croesus would have been happy; neither lies it in power nor in all these things together, for Nero, Sardanapalus and Agamemnon sighed and wept and tore their hair and were the slaves of circumstances and the dupes of appearances. The spiritual mind realises that he is living like a double-caged bird which identifies its own living self with the material cages, that the cages he is living in are ever subject to change and decay and though they look fresh and alive they are nothing but dust and will crumble into dust. The subtle cage of the material mind is within the gross cage of the physical body. The material mind is dancing like a jack-daw with the borrowed plumes of a peacock. He reflects -

What relish can there be in this decaying body, made up of the five decomposable elements and full of putrescence and impurity? Shall we not mind for a moment that this perishable and ever-changing body is liable to wrath, ambition, illusion, fear, grief, envy, hatred - separation from those we hold most dear and association with those we hate? What relish can there be for material enjoyments when we are exposed to hunger, thirst, disease, decrepitude, emaciation, growth, decline and death. The universe is tending to decay, - grass, trees, animals, spring up and die. Mighty men are gone leaving their joys and glories. Beings still greater than these have passed away - vast oceans have dried - mountains have been thrown down, the polar star displaced, the cords that bind the planets rent asunder, the whole earth deluged with flood - in such a world what relish can there be for fleeting enjoyments? Living in such a world are we not like frogs jumping in a well?

To get rid of the deception of this false and treacherous seeming friend, we should be sincerely suppliant before the Supreme Lord and water our couch with tears; He will receive our prayers, have mercy on us and out of His naturally loving kindness, appear before us as the preceptor, with all the proficiency in the

scriptures and fully free from the hankerings of the senses, to rid us from the clutch of the wicked mind, which has flame all around and death within, to cut asunder all its knots and hitches and to dispel all our darkness of the heart as an elephant runs away from the darkest recesses of the jungle at the approach of the lion and the veil of darkness is withdrawn from the surface of the earth at the advent of Aurora. Then the mind will brood over its guilty woes like a scorpion girt by fire.

The supplications of the spiritual mind

One material mind prays to another material mind (both of whom are being eternally and equally afflicted by three kinds of miseries) for relief or help. Its prayers are but hankerings after enjoyment and are always caused by want, fear and anxiety. There is no material mind - whether of a king or a tenant, a lord or a servant, a master or a pupil, the strong or the weak, the rich or the poor, the scholar or the dunce - which can ever be relieved of want or fear; whereas the spiritual mind never prays for daily bread, any sort of material relief, worldly prosperity, a life devoid of all miseries, a life in heaven dipped in celestial bliss or a peaceful existence in the kingdom of God. He has no such prayer, but is ever suppliant before the Supreme Lord and insists on the continuity of his loving service which is never at an end. As soon as he perceives the wicked and inimical activities of the material mind, he supplicates thus before a Vaishnava who has no want, fear or terrors of birth and death and is powerful enough to deliver all spiritual minds from the clutch of the material mind:

Vaishnava Thakur, the ocean of kindness, I take shelter at thy lotus-feet. Have mercy on me, your humble servant, and purify me with the cool shade of your holy feet. Check my proneness to pollute myself by (1) using offensive and hurtful language to others, (2) floating adrift with various frivolous and despicable passions, (3) using harsh words, (4) coveting palatable things, (5) giving loose to my appetite, (6) hankering after lasciviousness; - rid my grovelling self of the six evils of (1) putting by things in excess, (2) going against devotion by adhering to that which is forbidden and abhorring that which is favourable, (3) indulging in useless idle gossips, (4) retarding devotional progress and accelerating the contrary, (5) keeping company with the non-devotees and remaining aloof from the devotees, (6) floating with changeable views and transfuse into me the six virtues of (1) eagerness for walking in devotional ordinances, (2) firm conviction and sincere faith, (3) patience and perseverance in devotion, (4) adherence to the favourable enjoinders and abhorrence for prohibitions in devotion, (5) forsaking the company of the effeminate tied to a woman's apron-strings and the impious, (6) following the footsteps of the righteous men. I have been waiting for your company, bereft of which I am totally powerless to sing the name of the Supreme Lord (Krishna); so be kind enough to instil in me reverence and enrich me with the wealth of the Lord's (Krishna's) name as Krishna is yours and you can give Him to me - a beggar, bereft of all worldly wealth and following you chanting 'Krishna', 'Krishna'.

Vaishnavas are the wealth of this world. They who serve the Supreme Lord under his (Vaishnava's) guidance, walk in the commandments of the Lord and follow His observances, the rest live and die in vain. The best ornament of our head should be the dust of their feet, the best food, the remnants of their dish and the best drink, the water that washes their holy feet - these and only these can renew devotional love in us. Who but a Vaishnava will save our blinded selves from being led by the blind and from the onsets of ever-increasing insatiable lusts, anger, covetousness, illusion and egotism? We are groping in the dark labyrinth of this world and know not whither lies our way.

The advent of Shri Chaitanya Deva

It was in the year 1486 A.D. that Shri Chaitanya Deva appeared before us at Mayapura in Antardwipa [the island at the core or centre of the nine (nava) islands (dwipa) of which Navadwipa consists] on the eastern bank of the holy Ganges and lived there for the first twenty-four years of His stay here playing the part of house-holder. He accepted as his father, Jagannatha Misra a respectable Brahmin Pandita of Sylhet, then settled at Navadwipa, and Sachi Devi, an ideal Brahmin lady of the time as His mother. He had a human form so perfectly built, so lustrously complexioned, so highly statured and so lovely as purely inconceivable in a human body, and possessed such a pleasing and overpowering intelligence before whose effulgence the brightest and sharpest human intelligences burned like glow-worms. With all these superhuman gifts and possessions, He led the life of an ideal Vaishnava and with a view to establish an exemplar life of a pure and sincere devotee, extremely painful at the separation of His Divine Lover, complaisant and compliant to please Him by doing the highest good to Himself and to others by Himself adopting the life of an ideal devotee and by making others adopt a similar life. As propagation and practice or precept and example do rarely go hand in hand, He himself practised what He preached. He showed practically that devotion lies in all souls and not in the accompanying minds and bodies and that neither the delible stamp of birth, worldly knowledge and riches do in any way stand in the way of devotion nor do low birth, ignorance and poverty help or endanger devotion. The soul obliterates his individuality before the world, and disclaims these designations. He knows that he is lowlier than the grass, more forbearant than a tree, himself honourless and honours other souls and, that he sings the praise and glory of Hari day and night whether the material mind sleeps or wakes, the physical body busies itself or is at rest and even when he gives up for ever these two coils of the body and the mind. When the soul, not the material mind, surrenders himself to a Vaishnava and chants the name of 'Krishna' under his guidance and following his devotional enjoinders, (1) the activities of the material mind eternally prevailing over and enshrouding the soul or the spiritual mind gradually diminish, (2) the forest-fire caused by the friction of material minds is put out not to burn any more, (3) the efflorescent beams of Divine Bliss open the buds of spiritual weal, (4) transcendental wisdom bursts forth the shell of worldly knowledge, (5) the ocean of bliss swells up, (6) the soul tastes at every sip the succus of Divine Love, (7) wherein all souls are immersed casting off the impurities of the material mind. Along with the soul's casting off

the torpor of the illusory gloom reigning over him from eternity, the prayer of the material mind for worldly wealth, for dear ones, and for mental proficiency in worldly knowledge diminishes and he longs for eternal devotion unborn of motive or desire in whatever situation his Lord pleases to place him.

Chaitanya Deva as a Gardener

This distinctive inherent activity of the soul, which is called devotion and wafts the spiritual mind above all sordid thoughts, was not only propagated by Shri Chaitanya Deva but He Himself was an embodiment of it and proclaimed that He was a gardener possessing and nurturing the immortal and ever-fruitful tree of Divine Love, the innumerable and succulent fruits whereof are hanging like figs on a fig-tree and that His business was to distribute these fruits to the rich and the poor, the high and the low alike without any price and consideration and thus to play the part of a most munificent giver. He renounced the world and took up the task of distributing Divine Love to all jivas who were groping after the Spiritual by describing Him as invisible or were oblivious of their own true selves as well as of the real nature of their most Pleasing and Loving Attractor. This forgetfulness on the part of jivas is the root of all evils and sufferings; so He entreated one and all to taste of this divine fruit and contribute their share in distributing the fruit of Divine Love and enjoined that the best use of their lives lay in doing the highest and eternal good to themselves and to others and in practising at all times spiritual weal to others with their life, wealth, intelligence and speech. He said, "In so doing the waves of the world cannot stand in your way as your steps are ordered by the Divine Lover and He delights in your way. There may be a seeming fall but fear not nor be utterly cast down as He holds you up with His hand. If you are dumb, you will be a persuasive talker, if your legs are crippled, you will cross the Alps with ease and your words will need no bell to call people together and no constable to keep them - these will draw the children from their play, the old from their armchairs, the invalid from their warm chamber. Those who feel that their hardened necks are within the guillotine of birth and death will flow in torrents like patients to efficient doctors and will be effectually cured having received your efficacious remedy which is ever effective in its working. Your eye is on the eternal, consequently your intellect will grow and your opinions and actions will have such a beauty and strength which no learning or combined advantages of other men can rival. Know that Divine Assessors come up with us into life - now under one disguise, now under another like a police-man in a citizen's clothes - walk with us step for step through this world of senses to carry us to our ever-blissful abode." Application of real kindness to jivas

Shri Nityananda Prabhu, Advaita-acharya Prabhu, Shri Rupa and Sanatana Goswamins and Thakur Haridasa - the dear and ever-associated generals, of Shri Chaitanya Deva were deputed in rendering practical kindness to the ever-suffering humanity by: (1) spending their whole time and energy in devotional activities, (2) chanting aloud the Lord's name day and night, (3) singing His praise and glory, (4) compiling volumes of devotional works, (5) reclaiming and restoring the sacred sites, (6) going from door to door and begging of the sleepers and dreamers

thereof to arise, awake and worship Krishna, talk about Krishna, take His name and know that He is their father, mother, wealth and life; that they have no other objects of worship save and except 'Krishna'. As the twigs, leaves, flowers, fruits and the branches of the tree - their rest - are actually fed by feeding the roots and as the limbs of the body are properly nourished by putting the food into the stomach, so the innumerable gods, sages, forefathers, kings, animals are fully and properly appeased if Krishna, wherein lie all of them together, is worshipped. As continual showers of rain cannot feed the leaves nor enliven them, unless and until the rainwater is taken up by the roots and as the limbs are unable to get any nourishment from the food unless it is put into the stomach, so none can accept any present or exact adoration directly from meat unless all presents are made over to Krishna and He is worshipped.

All souls or jivas in their true selves are related to Krishna, the Over-soul, either as (1) His mute servants, - the flute, the rod etc., (2) His servitors, His gardeners, His sweepers etc., (3) His friends, playmates, (4) His parents Nanda-Yashoda, (5) His consorts - Shri Radha and her attendants. This relation being eternally fixed is neither inter-changeable nor transferable. Krishna, the Prime Cause, the Lord of all lords, the Supreme of all Gods, is imbued fully with the six divine pre-essences - (1) Wealth, (2) Might, (3) Glory, (4) Splendour, (5) Wisdom, (6)

Dispassion - dilute in His over-flowing love and all-charming beauty. He is the only Lover and the only object of love. This love, fully free from all earthly dross of lusts and passion, makes the Lover serve His beloved ones and the beloved ones their Lover - this love drowns all conceptions of Divine Sovereignty and possession of the above six pre-essences. The eyes of the beloved are always blind to notice the sovereignty or adorability of the object of love. The beloved ones, spontaneously deem themselves either equal or superior to the object of love, in consequence the former playfully ascends the shoulder of, chastises or takes to task or brings up with affectionate care, the latter. The love of Krishna is thus characterised. Krishna's loving beauty is so enamouring that even the god of lusts is charmed by Him and Krishna Himself being charmed by His own beauty and loveliness covets the pleasure enjoyed by the best of His lovers Shri Radha, by lovingly serving such Form as His. So anointing Himself with the lustre and complexion of Shri Radha and having been imbued with Her ardent longings of love, Krishna is ever dallying as an exemplary lover of Himself as Shri Gauranga. Shri Krishna, the essential nature of the Supreme Being - the only Real and Eternal Truth is the only object of love and Shri Gauranga the possessor and distributor of that love Krishna is simultaneously dallying with His dear consort in the groves of Vrindavana and tasting the extract of love-succus flowing from His consort as Gauranga at Nabadwipa, Himself singing Krishna's name and teaching others how to love Krishna and sing His name. In so doing He distinguishes pointedly the real name, identical with the Object Himself, from the apparent or false one which is taken profanely, blasphemously or in vain. He emphasises that in this Kali-yuga (era) worldly people indulge in (1) duplicity, (2) intoxication, (3) sensuality, (4) killing of animals, (5) mercenariness and so are unable to meditate upon, or worship Vishnu and to perform Vedic sacrifices. So the chanting of Krishna's name is the only meditation, the only sacrifice, the only worship in this Kali-age -

Name is the means, Name is the end. But it should be noted with the utmost care that Krishna's name is not mere combination or utterance of letters. A similarity in utterance and appearance is not identity. The fire and the glow-worm though similar in appearance are not identical. The minutest spark of fire set consciously or unconsciously, seriously or playfully will instantaneously burn an inflammable thing, whereas a thousand glow-worms will not act in a thousand years. Krishna's name is identical with Krishna Himself and pregnant with all the properties and attributes of Krishna. So His name, unlike all other names, is full of energy, perfect, eternal, pure, devoid of illusion and eternally free. Aurora is sufficient to dispel the darkness of night and to drive the wild animals to their lairs and thieves and dacoits to their resorts, enables us to distinguish the various objects of senses and ushers the advent of the glowing lamp of heaven. So does Namabhasa (the utterance of name avoiding the ten profanations) stop poverty from planting our pillows with thorns, destroy our worldly hankerings and dispel the illusory gloom, so that we may see the Name face to face. When the everburning lamp peeps out of the eastern horizon, its ever-effulgent rays make us see it face to face and feel its golden rays and enable us to see all objects bathing therein. The sun is seen and felt by us with its own rays and heat and not with the help of any other glowing object.

The brightest candles of the universe put together can not make the sun visible to us. When our dreamy nights are at an end - when we shake off the torpor, open our eyes, turn them to the east, we see the Name-sun with all his glory and beauty.

*Tritapa - The three afflictions are three kinds of miseries known as the "Adhyatmika" i.e., those that are due to one's self; the "Adhidaivika" those that arise out of deities or are of supernatural origin, and the "Adhibhautika" those that arise out of natural causes and beings. For example, fever and other such diseases, anger, desire and other such passions form the misery known as the "Adhyatmika". Thunder, lightning etc., produce the "Adhidaivika" misery. The "Adhibhautika" misery results from other animals such as tigers, snakes etc.

**As an instrument, a servant, a friend, parents and a consort.