

*The
Golden
Volcano
of
Divine Love*

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His Divine Grace
Swami B.R. Sridhar

SRI CHAITANYA SARASWAT MATH

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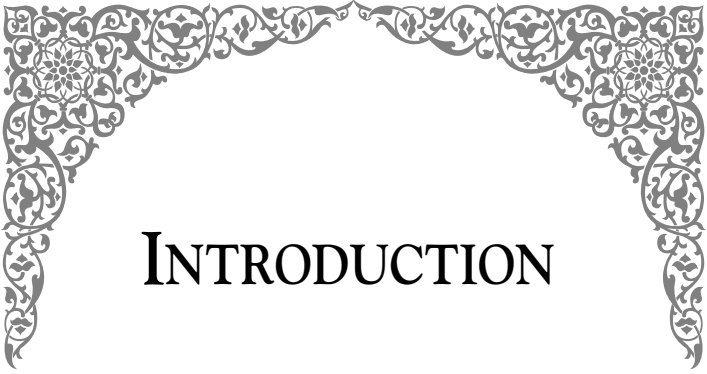
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INTRODUCTION

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu preached the full-fledged theistic conception given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* mainly deals with the comparative study of theism and the ontology of Krishna consciousness. It surpasses all other Vedic literature, even the *Purāṇas*. The *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* and *Padma Purāṇa* represent the importance of devotion to Krishna through narration and history to some extent, but fall short of the philosophical and ontological standard set by the *Mahāpurāṇa*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* can satisfy all Vedantic scholars, for it represents Krishna consciousness in its fullest dignity. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* expounds as the highest attainment of theism not consciousness, intelligence, or ontology, but ecstasy, beauty, and harmony—*rasa*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *rasa* is all-important. It is a unique treatise, for it takes theism from the plane of intellectual jugglery to the domain of *rasa*.

I once began writing a book which was to be a summary study of the eighteen thousand verse *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura condensed the whole *Bhāgavata* principle into one thousand verses in his *Bhāgavatārka-marīci-mālā*. I had a mind to consolidate it even more, to represent it within three hundred verses. I began that book, but could not finish it.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a vast treatise in the Sanskrit language, filled with essential information, historical reference, and expositions on the major schools of philosophy. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, many minor points of history and geography are also mentioned which, although nonessential, support its conclusions. Whatever is unnecessary in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is eliminated when its meaning reaches its purest and most intensified glory in the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. So, if we are to consider the very gist of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we must study the life and precepts of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Just as the teachings of the great author of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, were percolated by the realizations of Śukadeva Goswāmī, the essence of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has been percolated by the life and precepts of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

Therefore, because the teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu represent the gist of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,

I would like to include here one of the verses I originally composed to introduce my summary study. It glorifies the position of Gadādhara Paṇḍita, the most intimate associate of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Gadādhara Paṇḍita used to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in Jagannātha Purī, at the Ṭoṭā-Gopīnātha temple. He would read, and Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the great devotees like Svarūpa Damodara and Ramānanda Rāya were his audience:

nīlāmbhodhi-taṭe sadā sva-virahā-kṣeṇavitam̐ bāndhavam̐
 śrīmad-bhāgavatī kathā madirayā sañjīvayan bhāti yaḥ
 śrīmad-bhāgavatam̐ sadā sva-nayanāśru-pāyanaiḥ pūjayan
 gosvāmi-prabaro gadādhara-vibhūr-bhūyāt mad-ekā-gatiḥ

“On the shore of the broad blue ocean, Gadādhara Paṇḍita used to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who was suffering from the great internal pain of separation from Himself (Krishna). Gadādhara Paṇḍita supplied the wine of *kṛṣṇa-līlā* to intoxicate his afflicted friend and give Him relief. As he read, tears would fall from his eyes like flower offerings onto the pages of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. May the pleasure of that brilliant personality, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, the best of the Goswāmīs, be my only object in writing this book.”

The title of this book is *The Golden Volcano of Divine Love*. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu felt a great

pain of separation from Krishna which burned like fire and was expressed as the *Śikṣāṣṭakam*. This is explained in *Prema Dhāma Deva Stotram* (54):

śrī-svarūpa-rāya-saṅga-gambhirāntya-līlanam
 dvādaśābda-banhi-garba-vipralambha-śīlanam
 rādhikāhirūḍha-bhāva-kānti-kṛṣṇa-kuñjaram
 prema-dhāma-devam-eva-naumi-gaura-sundaram

“Diving deep into the reality of His own beauty and sweetness, Krishna stole the mood of Rādhārāṇī and, garbing Himself in Her brilliant luster, appeared as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. For the last twelve years of His manifest pastimes, He was deeply absorbed in the mood of union and separation and shared His heart’s inner feelings with His most confidential devotees. In the agony of separation from Krishna, volcanic eruptions of ecstasy flowed from His heart, and His teachings, known as *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, appeared from His lips like streams of golden lava. I fall at the feet of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the Golden Volcano of Divine Love.”

He was vomiting the fire of painful separation from Krishna in the form of the *Śikṣāṣṭakam*. Therefore, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is compared to a golden volcano and the *Śikṣāṣṭakam* is compared to divine lava.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has taught us that separation is the highest principle in divinity. Just as the most intense conception of ecstasy is associa-

tion with Krishna, the most intense conception of pain is separation from Krishna. Yet the pain felt from Krishna's separation is far more intense than the ecstasy felt from His association. Śrīman Mahāprabhu says, "Can't you understand the painful situation you are in? Your senses must have all been destroyed? Otherwise you would have died from the pain of separation from Krishna. It is inconceivable. We belong to Him wholesale. He is all in all to us, but we can't see Him. We are forcibly separated from Him. How can we tolerate this?" And Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura once said, "I can't tolerate separation from Krishna any longer. I can go on for only three or four more days, and then I shall have to leave this body."

To love Krishna means that we shall have to "die to live." In the beginning divine love seems like lava, death, but really it is nectar, life. Many persons in this ordinary world are also frustrated in love. They sometimes go mad and commit suicide because they can't tolerate the pain. But the pain which comes with separation from Krishna, although compared with lava, is not injurious like lava. Kavirāja Goswāmī explains:

**bahye viṣajvāla haya
bhitore ānandamāya,
kṛṣṇa premara adbhuta carite**

"The wonderful characteristic of divine love of

Krishna is that although externally, it works like fiery lava, internally it is like sweet nectar that fills the heart with the greatest joy.”

Although he felt the greatest pain of separation from Krishna, still, within His heart, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu experienced the deepest ecstatic joy. The ecstatic symptoms manifested by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu have never been found in the history of the world or even expressed in any scripture. In Him, we find the highest conception of the Ultimate Reality. This is explained in my *Prema Dhāma Deva Stotram* (66):

**ātma-siddha-sāva līlā-pūrṇa-saukhya-lakṣanaṁ
svānubhāva-matta-nṛtya-kīrtanātma-vanṭanam
advayaika-lakṣya-pūrṇa-tattva-tat-parātparam
prema-dhāma-devam-eva naumi gaura-sundaram**

“This is the all-conquering conclusion. The highest conception of the Ultimate Reality must also be the highest form of *ananda*, ecstasy. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is Krishna, ecstasy Himself, tasting His own sweetness and dancing in ecstatic joy. His own Holy Name is the cause of His ecstasy, expressed as dancing, and the Holy Name is the effect of His ecstasy, expressed as chanting. The cause is the effect. The dynamo is creating ecstatic energy which makes Him dance, and His chanting distributes that ecstasy to others.”

In this way, by every word from His lotus mouth

and every gesture and movement of His beautiful golden figure, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu performs His ecstatic pastimes of divine love.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja is the foremost pure devotee and is the patriarch of the followers of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He is an intimate disciple and eternal associate of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, the *founder-ācārya* of Śrī Gauḍīya Math who masterminded a spiritual revolution to inundate the world with Krishna consciousness. Noted for his wonderful ability to draw out the inner meaning of the scriptures, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja once composed a poem describing the ontological positions of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and the line of disciplic succession stemming from Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī was so pleased with his poem that he remarked, Śrīdhara Mahārāja is carrying the conception of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Now, I am satisfied that although I may go, at least one man will remain behind who can represent my conclusions.”

As he prepared to leave this mortal world, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī expressed his desire to fix his consciousness on the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. He called his beloved disciple Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja to his bedside and requested him to sing the famous song of Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, *Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī Pada*. At that time, in what has been described as a ‘mystic transmission,’ he gave Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja entrance into the eternal entourage of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja’s vision, however, he was posted as the gatekeeper, the guardian of devotion (Bhakti Rakṣaka), to protect the storehouse of conclusive truths about the full-fledged theistic conception of Śrī Krishna, Reality the Beautiful as presented in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and preached by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and the line of disciplic succession that has descended from Him, known as the Śrī Chaitanya Saraswata Sampradāya.



His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrdhara Deva Goswāmī

Śrīpāda Nityānanda Prabhu. By the grace of Nityānanda Prabhu we develop our attraction for Śrī Gaurāṅga. Nityānanda Prabhu helps us consolidate the foundation on which we can progress further. His mercy sometimes exceeds the mercy of Śrī Chatanya Mahāprabhu. He won't allow even those who want to avoid Krishna consciousness to escape. If someone says, "I don't want it," Nityānanda Prabhu won't allow it. He will say, "No! You must want it. I request you earnestly—take it! Use it and you will be able to feel the value of Krishna consciousness." He used to roam about here and there, rolling in the dust with tears in His eyes saying, "Take the name of Gaurāṅga and I will be sold to you."

By His mercy, even the most fallen souls can attain the supreme goal. He is the most generous-hearted aspect of *guru-tattva*, so we must bow down our head to Him, accept His holy feet, and surrender to Him.



Śrīpāda Nityānanda Prabhu

Śrī Chatanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Absolute Truth in its fullest and most dynamic expression. The influence of Rādhārāṇī over Krishna has transformed Him into a devotee, and He is searching Himself. Krishna—the personification of ecstasy and beauty —is mad in tasting His own internal nectar. His dancing indicates that he is full of ecstasy and His *saṅkīrtana* movement is the distribution of that ecstasy to others.



Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu

Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Krishna. Śrī Krishna is the fountain-head of all pleasure, ecstasy Himself, and Srīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the embodiment of ecstatic love of Godhead. Rādhā and Krishna are one and the same, but They have assumed two forms. Thus They enjoy each other, tasting the mellows of divine love. The service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Krishna in Vṛndāvana can be attained only by unalloyed devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.



Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Krishna



Part 1

The Life
of
Śrī Chaitanya
Mahāprabhu



THE GOLDEN AVATAR

In the teachings of Karabhājana Ṛṣi we find mention of the different incarnations for different ages (*yugāvatāras*). In Dvāpara-yuga, the *yugāvatāra* is mentioned as follows:

**dvāpare bhagavān śyāmaḥ
pīta-vāsā nijāyudhaḥ
śrīvatsādibhir aṅkaiś ca
lakṣaṇair upalakṣitaḥ**

“In Dvāpara-yuga, Lord Krishna appears with the color of a dark rain cloud, wearing lightning-colored garments. He is decorated with beautiful ornaments, His chest bears the mark of Śrīvatsa, and He carries His own weapons.”

After the description of the *yugāvatāra* of Dvāpara-yuga, Karabhājana Ṛṣi mentions the *kali-yugāvatāra*:

iti dvāpara urv-īśa
 stuvanti jagad-īśvaram
 nānā-tantra-vidhānena
 kalāv api tathā sṛṇu

He says, “O King, up to Dvāpara-yuga, I have finished describing the incarnations for different ages who come to remind the people of the most appropriate duty for their age. They come and tell us, ‘If you do this, you will get the greatest benefit.’ O King, after the Dvāpara age is finished, the age of Kali comes. The incarnation for the age of Kali has been mentioned in many places in the scriptures, and now I am just going to explain that information to you.” (S.B. 11.5.31)

Then he says:

kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣā ’kṛṣṇam
 sāṅgopāṅgāstra pārṣadam
 yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
 yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ

In a suppressed way, this verse explains the advent of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. The ordinary meaning of *kṛṣṇa-varṇam* is “of a black color.” But *tviṣā ’kṛṣṇam* means “His luster is not black.” “Accompanied by His associates, He is worshipped by the process of *saṅkīrtana*, the chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna, and those of sharp intellect will perform this kind of worship.”

❀ GOLDEN GIFT OF THE GOLDEN LORD ❀

Jīva Goswāmī explains the meaning of this verse in his own parallel verse:

antaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ bahir gauraṁ
 darśitāṅgādi-vaibhavam
 kalau saṅkīrtanādyaiḥ sma
 kṛṣṇa-caitanyaṁ āśritāḥ

“I take shelter of Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who is outwardly of a golden complexion, but is inwardly Krishna Himself. In this age of Kali, He displays His expansions while performing congregational chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna. That He is blackish within means that internally He is Krishna; that He is golden without means that He has accepted the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. In the age of Kali, that Golden Lord is seen accompanied by His expansions, associates, and intimate devotees performing *saṅkīrtana*.”

Someone may argue that the meaning of *kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ* is that His color is black and His luster is also black. But how is this possible? That would be redundant. The conjunction between the words *twisā* and *akṛṣṇam* mean that His color is *kṛṣṇa*, black, but His luster is *akṛṣṇa*: not black. Then, someone might say, “Not black does not necessarily mean golden. Why should it mean golden?” The answer is found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Once Vasudeva sent the astrologer-priest Garga Ṛṣi to Vṛndāvana to perform the name-giving ceremony for Krishna. At that time, Garga Ṛṣi came to the house of Nanda Mahārāja and explained that Vasudeva had sent him. He said, “Your child is now a little grown up and the name-giving ceremony must be performed.” At that time, he spoke the following verse:

āsan varṇās trayo hy asya
 gr̥hṇato ’nuyugaṁ tanūḥ
 śuklo raktas tathā pīta
 idānīm kṛṣṇatām gataḥ

“In past incarnations, this boy has appeared with different complexions: white, red, and gold, according to the particular age in which He appeared. Now He has assumed this blackish color.”

He said, “Krishna comes in a white color in Satya-yuga, red in Treta-yuga, and He also comes with a golden complexion. Now in this Dvāpara-yuga He has come in a black color.” So the reference to the golden color (*pīta*) is found here, because only that color has been left for this present age of Kali. There is another reference to this golden color in the Upanishads: *yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukma-varṇam*: “Krishna, the Supreme Brahman, appears in a golden form.” *Rukma-varṇam* means golden. And here also, non-black means golden.

Krishna wanted to come as the incarnation for this age of Kali, as well as to fulfill His promise in

Vṛndāvana: “ I shall chant the glory of the *gopīs*, especially of Rādhārāṇī. I shall chant Her name, Her glory, and roll in the dust of the earth!” But Rādhārāṇī said, “I won’t allow Your body to roll in the dust of this earth. I shall cover You with my luster.” Both the mood as well as the luster of Rādhārāṇī capture Krishna when He comes here in Kali-yuga. And this does not occur in all Kali-yugas, but only in a special Kali-yuga.

In all the days of Brahmā, in every *yuga*, the *yugāvatāra* comes, but Krishna appears only once in a day of Brahmā, or once every 4.3 billion years. At that time, the Original Personality of Godhead (*svayam bhagavān*) appears along with His abodes, Vṛndāvana and Navadvīpa. And Krishna and Mahāprabhu do not come here alone, but They come with Their paraphernalia and suitable companions.

❀ SWEETNESS TASTING ITSELF ❀

And in this age of Kali, He performs a double function: He preaches *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and more importantly, He assumes the mood of Rādhārāṇī to taste His own sweetness, *rasa*. He is *rasa* Himself. Krishna thinks, “What is the intensity of the finest *rasa* in Me? I would like to taste that.” But only devotees can taste that, so He took the position of Rādhārāṇī to taste Himself as Krishna, the central,

final and perfect abode of *rasa*. Only Rādhārāṇī can taste the maximum *rasa*, so He has to take Her nature, Her mood and temperament to taste His own intrinsic ecstasy. For that reason He descended. His first duty was to spread *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and the secondary, internal, private duty was to perform *svabhajana-vibhajana*, to taste His own intrinsic ecstasy in the mood of Rādhārāṇī. In Purī, with Rāmānanda Rāya, Svarūpa Dāmodara, and other intimate associates, He tasted that great ocean of union in separation continuously for twelve years. In His last twelve years, He passed His time only in the process of tasting that mellow.

That incarnation is generally worshipped by *saṅkīrtana*. Without *saṅkīrtana*, Gaurāṅga and His paraphernalia cannot be worshipped. He is the proponent of *saṅkīrtana*, He loves *saṅkīrtana*, and He gets satisfaction only by *saṅkīrtana*. Only those who have sufficient merit (*sukṛtivān*), will worship Him by this process. The common mob cannot join this campaign. Those who have good guidance internally, good fortune, can catch the very gist of truth and engage in this process of *nama-saṅkīrtana*.

❀ LOVE IS SUPREME ❀

A rubbish-brain cannot detect what is right or wrong, or how precious this is. He cannot understand

or follow this higher line of thought. A man should be judged by his ideal, his aspiration for higher things. If the ideal is great, the man is great. What should be the highest ideal? Love. Love is the supreme thing. It is the most rare and precious thing. Divine love and beauty is the highest thing ever known to the world, and those who can catch this are really possessed of good intellect (*su-medhasaḥ*). And one who possesses this highest ideal should be considered a man of higher order. He alone can understand and practice *saṅkīrtana*. He alone can take to this path, this process of satisfying the Supreme Being by chanting the Holy Name of the Lord.

✽ THE HIDDEN INCARNATION ✽

This is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as well as in the *Mahābhārata* and other Vedic scriptures. Karabhājana Ṛṣi, the last of the nine great yogis, has given us a clue to understand Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu as the special incarnation for the age. He has mentioned the incarnation for this age of Kali in a mystic way. We may think, why has this not been described very plainly? So many *avatāras* are clearly described, but when *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu as the incarnation for the age of Kali, it is discussed in a mystic way. The answer is found in the teachings of Prahāda Mahārāja, who

says, “O Lord, one of Your names is Triyuga, meaning one who incarnates in three ages—Satya, Tretā, and Dvāpara—but not in Kali. And why? Because the incarnation for the age of Kali is in disguise (*chhannaḥ kalau yad abhavas tri-yugo 'tha sa tvam*).” Here we find the key to this mystic way of representing Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to the fortunate and intelligent circle (*su-medhasaḥ*), that ordinary people may not have any clue.

**dhyeyaṁ sadā paribhava-ghnam abhīṣṭa-dohaṁ
tīrthāspadaṁ śiva-viriñci-nutaṁ śaraṇyam
bhṛtyārṭi-haṁ praṇata-pāla bhavābdhi-potaṁ
vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam**

“O Mahāprabhu, Your lotus feet are the highest object of meditation, for they not only destroy the pain of material existence, but they bestow the greatest fulfillment to all souls who take shelter beneath them. Your lotus feet even purify all saintly persons and holy places. Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā aspire to take shelter beneath Your lotus feet. O Mahāprabhu, You give shelter to all who simply bow down before You. You relieve all the miseries of Your surrendered servants. In the grand ship of Your lotus feet, we can cross over this ocean of material miseries. O Mahāprabhu, I bow down before Your lotus feet.”

After mentioning the incarnation of Godhead for the age of Kali, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* suddenly begins



The Pañca-tattva, Śrī Krishna Chaitanya, Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaita Ācārya, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita, and Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura

this song in praise of that great *yugāvatāra*, Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. With a grand voice the *Bhāgavatam* has come to sing the praise of that

guide for Kali-yuga. This follows the verse which hints at the *avatāra* of Kali-yuga. *Kṛṣṇa-varṇam* means one who is always describing Krishna, who always has on his lips the words “Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.” Another meaning of this expression is “One who is Krishna Himself, but whose luster is not black.” If we look deeply, we shall find that hidden beneath His golden luster is the blackish body of Krishna. With His own paraphernalia He has come to this plane, and service to Him is performed only by *saṅkīrtana*, divine sound in mass prayer. By that symptom we can recognize His divine position.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is a hidden incarnation; He comes in disguise. Such an *avatāra* is worshipped by the divinely intellectual. In this way, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* first describes that uncommon, extraordinary personality, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, in a mystic way and then proclaims His nobility and greatness.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains, “That same personality who came as Rāmacandra and Krishna has again appeared. He has come to direct you to the real fulfillment of life. He is drawing the sweetest nectar from above for the sake of everyone. Only meditate on Him and all your troubles will be finished. He is the agent purifying all the holy places of pilgrimage and saintly persons by His touch, by His *saṅkīrtana*, by His drawing the highest things down from the highest plane. And even Brahmā and Śiva, puzzled by His

noble gift, will begin to praise Him. They will eagerly aspire to take shelter under His lotus feet in surrender. The pains of all who come to serve Him will be removed, and their inner necessities will be fulfilled. And He will take care of those who take shelter of Him; they will be given protection as well as everything they may need. In this world where mortality rules, where we are continually experiencing the undesirable changes of repeated birth and death, in this area where no one wants to live, a great ship will come for us and take us within and carry us away from this unpleasant position. Let us fall at the feet of that great personality who comes to give the highest nectar.”

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* continues:

tyaktvā su-dustyaja-surepsita-rājya-lakṣmīm
 dharmiṣṭha ārya-vacasā yad agād araṇyam
 māyā-mṛgam dayitayepsitam anvadhāvad
 vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam

“O Supreme Lord, You gave up the goddess of fortune and Her great opulence, which is most difficult to abandon, and is sought after even by the gods. In order to perfectly establish the principles of religion, You left for the forest to honor the *brāhmaṇa*’s curse. To deliver the sinful souls who chase illusory pleasures, You search after them and award them Your devotional service. At the same time, You are engaged in search of Yourself, in search for

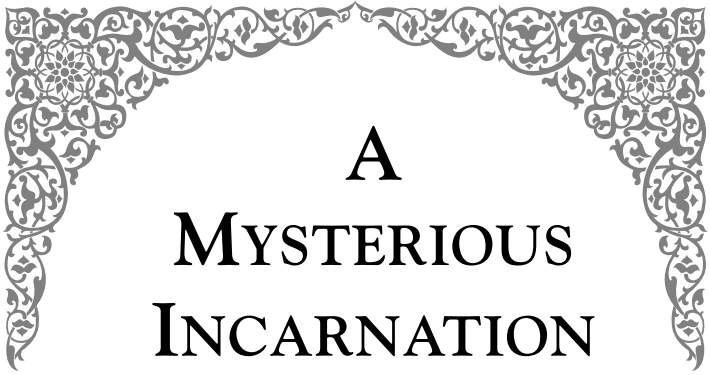
Śrī Krishna: reality the beautiful.”

Śrīla Viśvanātha Chakravartī Ṭhākura has given his explanation that although it seems that this verse applies to Lord Rāmacandra, who left His kingdom and went with Sītādevī to the forest to discharge the duties designed by his father, this also applies to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Viśvanātha Chakravartī Ṭhākura has drawn out the internal meaning of this verse and applied it in the case of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. *Tyaktvā su-dustyaja-surepsita-rājya-lakṣmīm* means He left imperial prosperity which is hard to abandon. Generally we find this in the case of Lord Rāmacandra, but Viśvanātha Chakravartī Ṭhākura says that *surepsita-rājya-lakṣmīm* means the valuable devotional company of Viṣṇupriyā-devī. That may not appear to be a materially big thing, but the dedication that Viṣṇupriyā has shown in Her heart for Śrīman Mahāprabhu is greater than any imperial standard. And He had to leave that behind. Such a standard of sacrifice and service is never found even among the great society of the gods. For the sake of the public welfare, He had to ignore the serving, loving attitude of Viṣṇupriyā.

❀ THE CURSE OF A BRĀHMAṆA ❀

This verse mentions the curse of a *brāhmaṇa*. That *brāhmaṇa* told Śrīman Mahāprabhu, “I want to

participate in your nocturnal *kīrtanas* in which You taste *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, but the doors are closed.” When Śrīman Mahāprabhu used to perform *kīrtana* and taste the *vraja-līlā* of Krishna, he did so behind closed doors in deep night. But this *brāhmaṇa* thought himself a very qualified, religious person because he lived by only drinking milk and nothing else, so he said, “I must have entrance into that *kīrtana*. I do not eat anything but milk; why should I not be allowed?” Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu replied, “Milk drinking is no qualification for entering into Krishna consciousness.” The *brāhmaṇa* said, “Then I curse You to lose your family life!” “All right,” Mahāprabhu said and accepted the curse. And later He took *sannyāsa* and chased after those who were misguided by Māyādevī in order to save them. At the same time, although He is Krishna, He accepted the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. For these two reasons, He left his apparently worldly life: He acted for the welfare of the public and, after finishing that work, spent the next twelve years tasting the very inner aspiration of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and searching after His own inner sweetness. This was what He came to show to the world. In this mystic way, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has proclaimed the magnanimous appearance of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.



A MYSTERIOUS INCARNATION

After Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*, He went to live in Jagannātha Purī. There, he converted the greatest scholar of the day, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya. After meeting Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the great scholar Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya questioned his brother-in-law Gopīnātha Āchārya about the *avatāra* of the present age Kali-yuga. Gopīnātha had been living in Navadvīpa, and he was a follower of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. In his own way, Sārvabhauma began to praise Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu as a beautiful man and a great scholar.

“I have great attraction for Him,” he said, “But I don’t think it wise that at such a young age He has taken *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. He has taken such a long life ahead of Him; how will He be able to keep up the dignity of the life of a *sannyāsi*, a life of renunciation? I can’t sit by and do nothing. I like this boy very much. I shall have to help Him as a

guardian, so that He may not lose His prestige by giving up *sannyāsa*, attracted by the fascination of worldly pleasures.”

Gopīnātha could not tolerate all this guardian-like advice. He told Sārvabhauma, “This young man, who is very beautiful, charming, and scholarly, has attracted your attention, and you want to become His guardian to keep up the purity of His life. Do you think you will have to help Him? What do you mean by saying all these things? Don’t you know that He is really the incarnation of Godhead for this age? He is the *avatāra* for Kali-yuga; He inaugurated the *yuga-dharma* of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* in Navadwīpa, and His appearance is mentioned in the scriptures.” Sārvabhauma replied, “No, no! You are not talking to an ordinary person. Don’t think that you can say whatever you like and I will accept it. I am a hard nut to crack. What are you saying? There is no *kali-yuga-avatāra*. One of the names of Viṣṇu mentioned in the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* in the *Mahābhārata* is Triyuga, ‘The Lord who appears only in three ages.’ That means that the Lord has no incarnation in Kali-yuga except Kalki, who is a past-time incarnation and not the *yugāvatāra*, the incarnation for the age.” Gopīnātha replied, “You think yourself so learned, but although you have studied all the scriptures, and are so proud of your learning, the *Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are the

main scriptures of the followers of eternal religious principles, and still you have no particular knowledge about that.”

❀ “NOT MAN—BUT GOD” ❀

At that time, Gopīnātha Āchārya quoted passages from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Mahābhārata* (*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tvisā ’kṛṣṇam, suvarṇa-varṇa hemāṅgo*). In this way, he pressed his point: “Here we find the direct avatāra for the age of Kali. He has appeared to spread *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. He is not a man, but the Supreme Lord, Krishna Himself.” Sārvabhauma said, “No, no. Go away. Mind your own business. Don’t think that you can instruct me.” And in this way they argued.

Later, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya told Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, “I would like to teach You Vedānta philosophy, so that You can keep up the standard of Your renunciation. I will teach You that this world is nothing, so that You never feel any charm to again enter into mundane life.” Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, “Yes, you are my guardian. Whatever you say, I must do. I will come and learn Vedānta philosophy from you at whatever time is suitable for you.

Then Gopīnātha Āchārya told Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, “Sārvabhauma is saying this because

he doesn't know Your real identity.” Śrīman Mahāprabhu replied, “Why are you speaking against him? He is My guardian. He was My father's classmate, so he has great affection for Me. It is out of affection that he poses himself as My guardian and looks after My welfare. I don't find any fault in that.”

❀ SEVEN DAYS OF SILENCE ❀

In a few days, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu began to hear Vedānta from Sarvabhavana Bhaṭṭāchārya, and as Sārvabhauma would speak, He would remain silent like a good boy, as if He were hearing with a submissive attitude. But after he had been teaching Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu for seven days, Sārvabhauma had some doubt in his mind. He thought, “What is the matter” I am such a great scholar in Vedānta and logic, and I am trying my best with all my intelligence to put before Him the inner meaning of Vedānta, but I draw no response from Him. He is only quietly attending my discourse as if He is deaf and dumb. And I can't say that He does not understand me, for He has a sharp intellect. I am sure of this, but still He gives no appreciation, no response whatsoever. He raises no question and gives no indication whether He understands or not—nothing of the kind. Then

what am I doing?” He could not keep himself any longer. He put the question straight to the Lord: “For more than seven days I have been explaining the inner meaning of Vedānta to You. Many *sannyāsis* come to me to learn about Vedānta, but You don’t have any question about my talk, my explanation? You maintain a strange and wonderful silence. What is the reason?”

✽ ATHEISTIC SCHOLARSHIP ✽

Then, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu revealed Himself. He said, “Sārvabhauma, what you explain is on the basis of Śaṅkara’s philosophy, but I heard that it was by the order of the Lord that Śaṅkarāchārya concealed the real purpose of Vedānta. Its author, Vyāsadeva, is a completely theistic person, and he has prepared this Vedānta, but what you say is all based on atheistic scholarship.”

Sārvabhauma was a very intelligent man. He realized, “In a very gentle way, He wants to tell me that what I am explaining is all bogus. I am laboring diligently to explain Vedānta to my utmost capacity for the last seven days, and now He shows His true colors and says that what I am explaining is all false. What is He saying?” Still, in a gentlemanly way, Sārvabhauma with some hesitation asked Śrīman Mahāprabhu, “You say that what I have been explaining for the last

seven days is all unsubstantial and unreal. Then can You give the proper meaning? If this is all improper and false, then what is the real meaning of Vedānta?" Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu humbly replied, "If you order Me to explain Vedānta, I will try. The *sūtras* or codes of Vedānta are lustrous in themselves. They are self-evident. The proper reading of the *sutras* leads towards Parabrahman, Krishna." Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu began with this introduction. He said that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the real explanation and commentary on Vedānta. It is mentioned in the *Garuda Purāṇa*:

artho 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrānām
bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau
vedārtha-paribṛṁhitaḥ

"*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* represents the real purport of *Vedānta-sūtra*. And although it is very difficult to draw out the real purpose of the one-hundred-thousand-verse epic *Mahābhārata*, the great history of the world, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has come to give its real meaning. The mother of all Vedic knowledge is the *Gāyatri mantra*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives the gist of *Gāyatri* in a very full-fledged way. And the supplementary truths of the Vedas are also found within *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*." Therefore, Vedānta must be explained in the line of the truth which has been

expressed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Only then can the real meaning be understood.

❀ THE ASPIRATION OF LIBERATED SOULS ❀

When Śrīman Mahāprabhu mentioned *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Sārvabhauma, being a learned paṇḍita could not deny its validity. He said, “Yes, I also like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And I especially like this one very beautiful verse. At that time, Sārvabhauma, to regain lost prestige, began to explain the *ātmārāma* verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

ātmārāmās ca munayo
nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim
ittham-bhūta guṇo hariḥ

“Even the liberated souls fully satisfied in the self are irresistibly attracted by the superexcellent qualities of Krishna and surrender to Him with unalloyed devotion.”

Sārvabhauma explained this verse in nine different ways, while Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, as before, sat silently hearing. After he had finished his explanation, Sārvabhauma thought that he had regained his position to a certain extent. Still, as a courtesy, he asked Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, “Are You satisfied with this explanation? If You can give any more light

to this verse, I will listen to that.” Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu told him, “If you order me, I may try.” Then He gave eighteen different types of explanations of that verse, leaving aside the nine already given by Sārvabhauma.

At that time, while listening to the explanation of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Sārvabhauma gradually saw that he was losing his position. His pride was finished. Astounded, he thought, “This youth, this young boy, is not an ordinary person. No ordinary intellect can refute my arguments. Leaving aside all of my attempts to explain this verse, He gave eighteen wonderful explanations of this particular verse. What is this? Such consistent, irresistible, devotional, and beautiful explanations are coming, superseding all those that with great energy and effort I explained. No human being can surpass my explanations. No human intellect can cross mine. This is a different sort of explanation. It is all-encompassing. But it is coming from this young boy? What is this?”

✽ MYSTIC REVELATION ✽

Gradually, he lost his faith in himself and became baffled. He recalled how Gopīnātha Āchārya had said that Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu was not a human being and thought, “It is not possible for a human to explain things in this way—it is something supernatural”. Then



Mystic Revelation. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu reveals Himself as Nārāyaṇa and Krishna to Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu revealed to Sārvabhauma His spiritual position as Nārāyaṇa and Krishna combined. In a trance, Sārvabhauma saw all these things and fell at the Lord's feet, and almost completely lost consciousness.

When he arose from his trance, he found that boy still sitting there like a student with great humility. Then Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu asked him, “May I go for today?” Sārvabhauma said, “Yes, you may go now.” The Lord went away, and Sārvabhauma remained there. After some time, he recovered, and began to think, “What have I seen? Four-handed Nārāyaṇa, then Krishna playing the flute! I was not defeated by a man—that is my solace. Sārvabhauma become a changed man and composed two verses:

vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yoga-
śikṣārtham ekaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-śarīra-dhārī
kṛpāmbudhir yas tam ahaṁ prapadye

“I surrender unto the lotus feet of Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who is an ocean of mercy. He is the Original Personality of Godhead, Krishna, and has descended to teach us the real meaning of knowledge, renunciation, and devotion to Him.”

kālān naṣṭaṁ bhakti-yogaṁ nijaṁ yaḥ
prāduṣkartuṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmā
āvīrbhūtas tasya pādāravinde
gāḍham gāḍham liyatām citta-bhr̥ṅgaḥ

“Let the honeybee of my mind dive deep into the lotus feet of Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who

is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna Himself. He has appeared to revive the path of unalloyed devotion, which had almost become lost due to the influence of time.”

❀ A TASTE SUPREME ❀

These two verses were composed by Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya expressing that Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Lord Himself. The next day, early in the morning, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, with some *prasādam* from the Jagannātha temple, ran to Sārvabhauma while he was still in bed. He cried in a loud voice, “Sārvabhauma, how wonderful is this *prasādam*! It has a very extraordinary taste. Please take it. I have come for you with this *prasādam*.” Sārvabhauma arose from bed as Mahāprabhu offered him the *prasādam*, and he could not but accept it without cleansing his mouth. Ordinarily a *brāhmaṇa paṇḍita*, early in the morning, will first cleanse his mouth, bathe, offer different prayers, and only then take *prasādam*. But when Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu personally came and offered it to him with His own hand, what could Sārvabhauma do? He had to accept that *prasādam*. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu told him, “We have previously experienced the taste of so many things like ghee, rice, sweets, and spices. We all know what flavors they have, but this is wonderful. This has

touched the lips of Krishna Himself. It is extraordinarily wonderful and tasteful.” Then, Sārvabhauma eagerly ate that *prasādam* and began uttering some *mantras*:

śuṣkaṁ paryuṣitaṁ vāpi
nītam vā dura-deśataḥ
prāpti-mātreṇa bhoktavyaṁ
nātra kāla-vicāraṇā

“One should take the *mahā-prasāda* of Śrī Krishna as soon as one receives it, without consideration of time or place, even though it may be dried up, stale, or brought from a distant country.”

na deśa-niyamas tatra
na kāla-niyamas tathā
prāptam annaṁ drutaṁ śiṣṭair
bhoktavyaṁ harir abravīt

“The *prasāda* of Śrī Krishna is to be taken by gentleman as soon as it is received, without hesitation. There are no regulative principles concerning time and place. This is the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

✽ “TODAY, I HAVE CONQUERED THE WORLD” ✽

He took *prasādam*, and the Lord and servant embraced one another and began to dance in ecstasy. As they danced, the symptoms of ecstasy appeared in

both of them. They perspired, trembled, and shed tears. Absorbed in ecstatic love, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, “Today, I have conquered the whole world, for I have converted a scholar like Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya. Now, he has so much faith in *mahā-prasāda* that without performing any Vedic rituals, he took the *prasādam*. My mission is successful!”

From that day on, Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭāchārya knew nothing but the lotus feet of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, and could only explain the scriptures with the conclusions of devotion. Seeing that Sārvabhauma had become a follower of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Gopīnātha Āchārya began to clap his hands and dance. He said, “Well, Sārvabhauma, what do you think now?” Sārvabhauma replied, “Gopīnātha, you are my real friend, for it is by your grace that I received the mercy of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.”



FRIEND OF THE FALLEN

Although it is the duty of justice to seek qualifications, mercy has no such limits. Divine mercy does not care for any qualifications, but is always ready to compensate the weak and unfit. Only one thing is required: our sincere eagerness to receive mercy. In *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said:

kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ
kṛiyatām yadi kuto’pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate

“Pure devotional service to Krishna cannot be obtained by performing pious activities even for millions of births. It can be purchased only by paying one price: intense eagerness. Wherever it is available, one must purchase it immediately.” No qualifications from one’s previous life will help one to attain Krishna consciousness; only eagerness and faith are important.

And what is the effect of Krishna consciousness?

**bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś
chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāsyā karmāṇi
mayi dṛṣṭe 'khilātmani**

“Our inner aspiration for *rasa*, ecstasy, is buried in the heart and the heart is tied down and sealed. But hearing and chanting the glories of Krishna breaks the seal of the heart, and the heart awakens and opens to receive Krishna: the reservoir of pleasure, ecstasy Himself (*raso vai sah, akhila-rasāmṛta-murtiḥ*).”

❁ THE HEART WANTS ECSTASY ❁

Our heart's concern is with ecstasy, charm, and sweetness. And this is felt by the heart, not by the brain, so the heart has been given the most importance. The next effect is felt in the plane of knowledge. After getting a taste of divine sweetness, suspicion vanishes (*rasa-varjaṁ raso 'py asya paraṁ dṛṣtvā nivartate*). When we have a taste of real ecstasy (*rasa*), then all doubts are cleared. By getting a taste of Krishna consciousness, the heart is captured and when the heart is captured, the ecstasy of love of Godhead, *prema*, begins to flow. Being satisfied, the heart will say, “This is what I was searching for!” Then, the brain will follow, thinking, “Yes, there can

be no doubt, this is the highest goal of our search. Dissolve everything else.” The heart will say, “I have attained *prema*, divine love—this is the highest thing! Stop all works from now on.” Then, *karma* will close all its workshops. After coming in touch with Krishna consciousness, the first result is that the heart awakens. When the heart is captured, the brain approves, and our *karma*, energizing in the wrong direction, stops. Krishna consciousness is the real wealth of the heart.

It is the nature of divine mercy to extend itself without caring for any law. The only consideration is our eagerness to accept it. Mercy is offered in this way: “Do you want this?” If we simply agree, “Yes, it is wonderful and most tasteful,” then we can have it. If our prayer is genuine, then nothing else is required. It is a simple transaction. If we want it, we will get it. Krishna consciousness is most simple. Whether one is fit or unfit is unimportant. Anyone who simply wants it may have it.

And what of those who don’t want this divine gift? For them, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu distributed special mercy through His most magnanimous canvassing agent, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. Nityānanda Prabhu won’t allow even those who want to avoid Krishna consciousness to escape. If someone says, “I don’t want it,” Nityānanda Prabhu won’t allow it. He will say, “No! You must want it. I request you earnest-

ly—take it! Use it and you will be able to feel the value of Krishna consciousness.”

To capture the market, a clever merchant may distribute free samples of his product to his customers, saying, “Take one free! There is no question of paying any price now. I am giving this away. Use it, and if you feel the value, the utility of my product—buy it.” And then afterwards everyone will purchase.

❁ “PLEASE ACCEPT GAURĀṄGA!” ❁

In a similar way, Nityānanda Prabhu traveled throughout Bengal making His humble appeal. Nityānanda Prabhu would knock at the door and fall at the feet of His customers, crying, “Please accept this! Don’t dismiss Me. Don’t drive Me away. Please do what I say. Give all your attention to Gaurāṅga and you will be benefited beyond expectation. This is My request to you.” He would shed tears, roll at their door, and say, “You are reluctant to accept this, but have no doubts. I implore you—take it! Believe Me. Please accept Gaurāṅga!” In this way, Nityānanda Prabhu used to wander down both sides of the Ganges, roaming here and there and preaching about Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

Nityānanda Prabhu knows only Gaurāṅga. He is represented in *kṛṣṇa-līlā* as Baladeva. Baladeva apparently performed the *rāsa-līlā*, but at heart was only



The Two Lords, Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīman Mahāprabhu

arranging *rāsa-līlā* for Krishna: His nature shows the experts of devotion that He is always dedicated to Krishna. Otherwise He would not be Baladeva. He has no individual thoughts for His own enjoyment; every atom of His body is always eager to make arrangements for the enjoyment of Krishna. In a similar way, every atom of the body of Nityānanda Prabhu is conscious transcendental substance. And every atom of His body is meant only for the service and satisfaction of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

✽ “COME DOWN FROM YOUR THRONE!” ✽

One day, Mahāprabhu’s mother, Śacīdevī, had a dream that Krishna and Balarāma were on a throne

and Nityānanda Prabhu was addressing Baladeva, “Come down from Your throne! Your days are over. Now my Lord Gaurāṅga will be installed.” Baladeva refused: “No. I have My Lord—Krishna.” There was a fight, but Nityānanda Prabhu was stronger and He took Baladeva down from the throne, saying, “Your day has gone. Now the time for My master, Gaurāṅga, has come. You are a trespasser, a usurper—You must come down.” And Baladeva could not defeat Nityānanda, who took Him down from the throne.

This is the nature of Nityānanda Prabhu’s relationship with Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He has nothing of His own; His everything is Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. As Baladeva is to Krishna, Nityānanda Prabhu is to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. The aim of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s descent was to distribute the devotional service of Vṛndāvana most generously. On the other hand, Nityānanda Prabhu used to sing,

**Bhaja gaurāṅga, kaha gaurāṅga laha gaurāṅger nāma,
yei jana gaurāṅga bhaje sei āmāra prāna**

“Worship Gaurāṅga, speak of Gaurāṅga, chant Gaurāṅga’s name. Whoever worships Śrī Gaurāṅga is My life and soul.” Nityānanda Prabhu tried His best to make the people at large accept Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. What did He say? “Come straight to the campaign of Śrī Chaitanya and you will safely attain Vṛndāvana.”

Of course, Navadvīpa, the abode of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, is no less valuable than Vṛndāvana, the abode of Krishna. The same *rasa* which is found in Vṛndāvana is present in another feature in Navadvīpa. Some devotees have a special attraction for *vṛndāvanalīlā*, others have a special attraction for *navadvīpalīlā*, and a third group represents both camps, but Navadvīpa is the most generous. In Vṛndāvana, the pastimes of Krishna are confined to a confidential circle, but in Navadvīpa, those pastimes are distributed. *Gaura-līlā* is more generous than *kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

In the *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* (Mad. 25.261), Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī explains his conception of the difference between *gaura-līlā* and *kṛṣṇa-līlā*:

**kṛṣṇa-līlā amṛta-sāra, tāra śata śata dhāra,
daśa-dike vahe yāhā haite
se caitanya-līlā haya, sarovara akṣaya,
mano-haṁsa carāha' tāhāte**

He says, “There is no doubt that we find the highest nectarine taste of *rasa* in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. But what is *gaura-līlā*? In *gaura-līlā*, the nectar of *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is not confined to a limited circle, but is being distributed on all sides. It is just as if from all ten sides of the nectarine lake of *kṛṣṇa-līlā* hundreds of streams are flowing.”

Our highest aspiration is to achieve the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, but in the beginning, we must

approach Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu through His manifest representation, the *guru*. Nityānanda Prabhu consolidates the foundation which helps us progress further in devotion. Quick progress without a good foundation invites a negative reaction, so the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu is our primary necessity. This approach culminates in the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī (*nitāiyer-karuṇā habe braje rādhā-kṛṣṇa pābe*).

To be reinstated as a servant of the servant to the extreme degree is the philosophy of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Our goal is not to become one with Krishna—to receive service—we want to render service. The predominated moiety of the Absolute Truth is negative potency—the energy that serves—and the predominating moiety receives that service. Our best interest will be reached when, according to our constitutional nature, we attain our position in the line of servitors in the negative, predominated moiety; not by considering ourselves one with the positive, predominating moiety.

By the grace of Nityānanda Prabhu, we develop our attraction for Śrī Gaurāṅga. If we receive the grace of Śrī Gaurāṅga, we receive everything in the highest degree. And that is the safest way to approach Rādhā-Govinda. If we try to achieve Rādhā-Govinda in some other way, our attempt will naturally be artificial and defective; if we approach Rādhā-Govinda

directly, avoiding Śrī Gaurāṅga, there will be great difficulty.

❀ AN INVESTMENT IN NAVADWĪPA ❀

Therefore, we should invest all our energy in the service of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Then, we shall automatically find ourselves being lifted towards the highest level. Prabodhānanda Saraswati Ṭhākura prays:

yathā yathā gaura-padāravinde
vindeta bhaktim kṛta-puṇya-rāśiḥ
tathā tathot sarpati hṛdy akasmād
rādhā-padāmbhoja-sudhāmbhu-rāśiḥ

“As much as we devote ourselves to the lotus feet of Śrī Gaurāṅga, we will automatically achieve the nectarine service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in Vṛndāvan.” An investment in Navadwīpa Dhāma will automatically take one to Vṛndāvana. How one has been carried there will be unknown to him. But those who have good fortune invest everything in the service of Gaurāṅga. If they do that, they will find that everything has automatically been offered to the Divine Feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. She will accept them in Her confidential service and give them engagement, saying, “Oh, you have a good recommendation from Navadwīpa; I immediately appoint you to this service.” Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is introduced in the form of

Gaurāṅga with the added element of magnanimity. No selfish sensualism can enter our consideration of the pastimes of Śrī Gaurāṅga, for there He appears as a *sannyāsi* and a devotee.

Of course, if we are to analyze Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, we shall find Krishna in the garb of Rādhārāṇī. According to the impersonal philosophers, when negative and positive combine, they become non-differentiated oneness, but Vaiṣṇava philosophy says that when both positive and negative aspects of Godhead are combined, personality is not lost. Rather, in the garb of the negative, the positive is converted and begins searching for Himself in the mood of the highest searcher. According to Vaiṣṇavism, when positive and negative combine, they do not create equilibrium; rather their dynamic character is always maintained. The combination of Rādhā and Govinda is Śrī Gaurāṅga, and by the grace of Nityānanda Prabhu, we may be attracted to Śrī Gaurāṅga.

❁ ALL-EMBRACING MERCY ❁

Nityānanda Prabhu's mercy sometimes exceeds the mercy of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Because it may create a bad precedent, Mahāprabhu sometimes cannot accept certain fallen souls—He has to consider their status as well as other things.

Nityānanda Prabhu's mercy, however, does not care for any unfavorable circumstances; His mercy is very lavish and almost blind. He does not discriminate between different degrees of sinners. His mercy is all-embracing. And Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu cannot dismiss His recommendation. Even those who Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu rejected, Nityānanda Prabhu sheltered, and gradually Mahāprabhu had to accept them. So the grace of Nityānanda is the greatest both in magnitude and circumference, and that is our solace, for by His mercy even the most fallen souls can attain the supreme goal.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu once told His followers, "Even if Nityānanda Prabhu is found with a fallen girl of the lowest kind, drinking wine in a wine shop, still you should know that He is above all these things. Although you may find Him apparently engaged in lower activities, He is never implicated. He may appear connected with so many fallen activities, but you should know that He is always revered by the creator of the universe, Lord Brahmā, and other exalted devotees. Nityānanda Prabhu's mercy is so powerful that if one simply takes a piece of His loincloth and wears it respectfully on his body, he will be saved from all the disturbances of the mundane senses." Therefore we pray, "May my mind always stick to His holy feet; I offer my obeisances to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu."

❁ SWALLOWED BY MĀYĀ ❁

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* for the benefit of those souls swallowed by *māyā*. He ran and chased after the fallen souls to deliver them from illusion by giving them the Holy Name of Krishna, and Nityānanda Prabhu, like His shadow, ran after Him wherever He went. He fully surrendered and identified himself with Mahāprabhu’s cause. So we must bow down to Nityānanda Prabhu. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu was merged in tasting the sweetness of Rādhā-Govinda *līlā*, and diving deep into that reality, however, at the same time, He wanted to deliver all souls whose hearts had not been devoured by the false notions of renunciation and exploitation, He ordered Nityānanda Prabhu, “Go to Bengal and try to deliver them—give them divine love for Rādhā and Krishna.”

He ordered Nityānanda Prabhu to distribute divine love for Rādhā-Govinda, but instead, Nityānanda began to preach about Śrī Gaurāṅga. He thought, “It will be better for them to worship Gaurāṅga; that will help free them from their offenses in their present condition, and by doing so, they will automatically achieve a position in Rādhā-Govinda *līlā*.” He was ordered to preach the name of Krishna, but instead began to preach the name of Gaurāṅga. So, for our own welfare, we bow down to Nityānanda Prabhu with all our humility.

We pray, “O Nityānanda Prabhu, O *gurudeva*, please give me a drop of firm faith in Śrī Gaurāṅga, who is Rādhā-Govinda combined, tasting the sweetness of the divine nectar of the pastimes of Vṛndāvana. Give me a drop of faith, so that one day I may attain divine love and enter into that domain.”

If we neglect Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, our aspiration to serve Rādhā-Govinda will be a dream, an abstract imagination without reality. Nityānanda Prabhu is the refuge of all fallen souls. He is the most generous-hearted aspect of *guru-tattva*; we must bow down our head to Him, accept His holy feet, and surrender to Him.

In the spiritual realm of Vaikuṅṭha, Nityānanda Prabhu is represented as Saṅkarṣaṇa, the Supreme Lord who is considered to be the foundation of everything in existence. All possible existence is maintained by His energy. Nityānanda Prabhu is the original Baladeva, the Personality of Godhead. Therefore, we should view the pastimes of Nityānanda Prabhu with full consciousness of His dignified position, although He used to roam about here and there, rolling in the dust with tears in His eyes, saying, “Take the name of Gaurāṅga and I will be sold to you.” Although He posed in this lower position, still, He should be considered in light of His actual dignified position. We must surrender to Him with that attitude.

Balarāma is represented in different parts of the spiritual world in different aspects. He came here as Nityānanda Prabhu with Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. The truth about Nityānanda Prabhu has been exhaustively explained in *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Chaitanya-bhāgavata*. There, He is described as enjoying His life and relishing His pastimes with His own younger brother. To that Nityānānda, we must bow our heads.

Śrī Krishna *prema*, divine love, is an inconceivable substance which is very pleasing and ecstatic. Great saints who get a taste of that wonderful substance throw away all sorts of aspirations, including salvation, which is lavishly praised by the *Vedas*. So Nityānanda Prabhu, although one with Baladeva, is greater than Him? Why? He is distributing divine love.

What is divine love? It is so important and valuable, so much higher than all other sorts of achievements, that one who can give divine love is far superior to those who can give duty, wealth, pleasure, and even salvation (*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa*). If we conceive that Krishna is subordinate to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, then of course Balārama is subordinate to Nityānanda Prabhu. In all other respects the two of Them are similar, but when magnanimity is added to Balārama, He becomes Nityānanda Prabhu.

First, the position of divine love must be established: the great saints discard salvation and other

things after they get a slight scent of divine love. Once the position of divine love is established, we can understand that one who can give it must necessarily be superior to the givers of all other things.

So Nityānanda Balārama is superior to Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul of the collective universes, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul of this universe, and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul of all living beings. And that Balārama has come here as Nityānanda Prabhu—not with majesty, grandeur, or power, but in a human form—to distribute divine love. And He is the giver of Gaurāṅga. His greatness is proved by this fact. We can understand this by further examining the different aspects of His life, step by step.

Nityānanda Prabhu was born in Ekacakrā, and there He passed His early life. His parents, friends and neighbors were filled with ecstatic joy, being pleased with His sweet infant pastimes. From His birth, He was a pleasure to the whole atmosphere of Ekacakrā, and in this joyful atmosphere He passed His childhood years.

One day, while Nityānanda was still young, a *sannyāsi* came to His home and begged Him from His parents. The *sannyāsi* was roaming about to different holy places and he prayed for Nityānanda as his alms. He took Him in his company and Nityānanda Prabhu wandered about almost all the holy places, following

that *sannyāsi*. It is said that the *sannyāsi* was Madhavendra Purī.

Then one day, from within, feeling ecstasy in His heart, Nityānanda Prabhu could understand that Śrī Gaurāṅga had begun His pastimes of *saṅkīrtana* in Navadvīpa. And with that inspiration, He came to Navadvīpa Dhāma.

✽ AN EXTRAORDINARY DREAM ✽

That day, Mahāprabhu told His followers, “I had a dream that an extraordinarily great man, in a chariot marked with the palm tree flag of Balarāma, came to My door and said, ‘Where is the house of Nimāi Paṇḍita?’ Twice, thrice, four times—again and again—he keeps saying, ‘Where is the house of Nimāi Paṇḍita?’” Mahāprabhu continued, “That great personage must have come last night to Navadvīpa. Try to search Him out.” They searched and searched, but could not find Him anywhere.

Then Mahāprabhu told them, “Let Me try.” He took them straight to the home of Nandanācārya, and when Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu with His followers suddenly arrived there, they found Nityānanda Prabhu sitting on the veranda. After seeing Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu stared intently at Him for some time, became absorbed in Him, and fainted. In this way, in one day, He became the most



Nimai meets Nitai. Seeing Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu stared intently at Him for some time, became absorbed in Him and fainted.

intimate associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. When He was ordered by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to give Krishna consciousness to everyone, He began to distribute Gaurāṅga consciousness, divine love of Śrī Gaurāṅga. That Nityānanda Prabhu is the savior of all fallen souls, without any discrimination of the degree of their fallenness; so we bow down to His holy feet.

Once, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu had a secret talk with Nityānanda Prabhu in Jagannātha Purī. When Nityānanda Prabhu went to Bengal and married, some say that Mahāprabhu asked Him to marry. It is our opinion that because the so-called “high class” people were so much surcharged with vanity, Nityānanda Prabhu was asked to approach the masses. Because He was ordered to mix with them very familiarly for His preaching purposes, it was found necessary for Him to

marry. Otherwise, if He were to have mixed very familiarly with family men, accusations may have been leveled at His standard of renunciation. And to further that purpose, He married. He had to adopt that policy and accept that attitude. And He may have been told to do so by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu; it was not his own decision. Of course, marrying or not marrying was nothing to Him.

How He came in contact with His eternal consort, Jāhnavādevī is described in the *Bhakti-ratnākara*. It appears that when He was preaching all around Bengal, He preached at the house of Jāhnavādevī's father, Sūryadāsa Paṇḍita, the brother of Gauridāsa Paṇḍita, who was already a follower of Gaurānityānānda. Sūryadāsa gave Him intimate help in His propaganda work, as his house was a good base. And Sūryadāsa, who had two daughters, offered Nityānanda Prabhu his daughter in marriage. Ultimately, Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīmatī Jāhnavādevī are eternally associated, and although Their marriage apparently took place out of necessity, it was actually part of Their eternal *līlā*.

Of course, some so-called *sannyāsis* take advantage of this to give up their vows of celibacy and marry. They give the marriage of Nityānanda as an excuse. But it is not a proven fact that Nityānanda Prabhu was a *sannyāsi*. Actually, the name "Nityānānda" is a *brahmacārī* name. "Ānanda" is a suffix added to the

name of a *brahmacārī*. Ānanda, Svarūpa, Prakaśa, and Chaitanya are different types of *brahmacārī* names. The name Ānanda is also found in the *sannyāsa* order of life, but we find no *sannyāsa* title mentioned for Nityānanda Prabhu. There is also no mention anywhere of a *sannyāsa guru* for Nityānanda Prabhu, although we know that His *dikṣa guru* was Madhavendra Purī, the *guru* of Advaita Prabhu and Īśvara Purī.

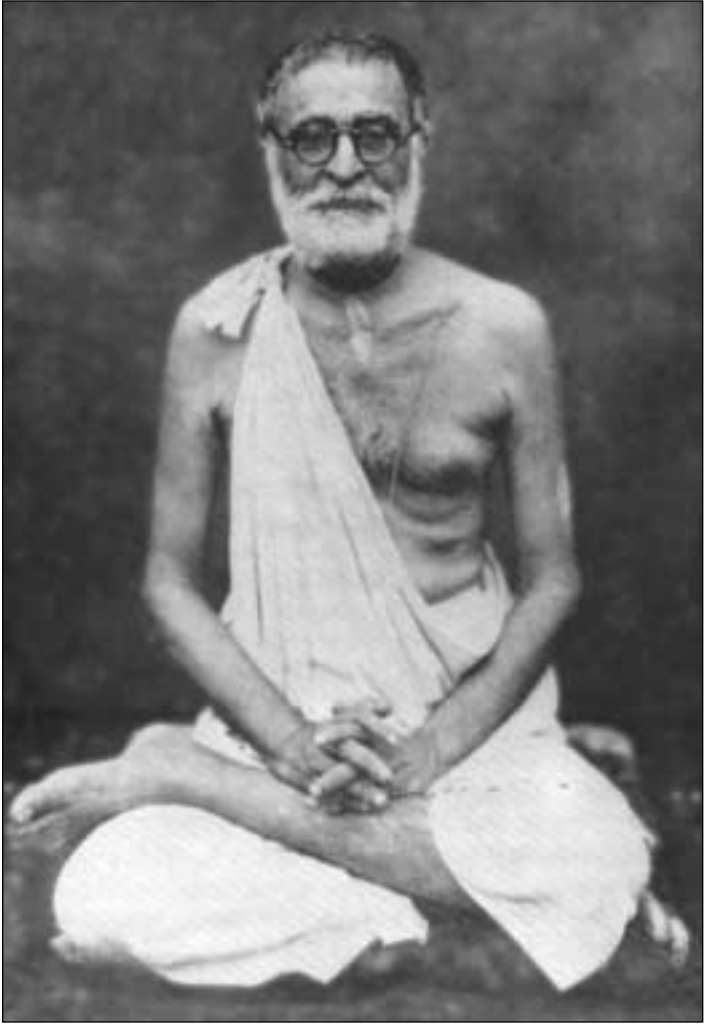
Nityānanda Prabhu is known as an *avadhūta*. *Avadhūta* does not mean a *sannyāsi*, but one who is not very particular about his external practices and sometimes does things which should not be done. When an exalted person is seen engaging in lower practices, he is considered an *avadhūta*. It is understood that he is above that, but his practices are of a lower nature. *Ava* means lower, and *dhūta* means that he can either remove or purify.

Nityānanda Prabhu broke the single *sannyāsa* staff (*ekadaṇḍa*) into three; that indicates that when taking *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life, we should accept not one, but three *daṇḍas*, which symbolize the dedication of body, mind, and words in the service of the Lord. And Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Thākura Prabhu-pāda was also inspired by this action of Nityānanda Prabhu's to give *tridaṇḍa sannyāsa* to his followers, in contrast to *ekadaṇḍa* which was formerly current in Bengal. The system of *tridaṇḍa san-*

nyāsa as was the custom in Southeast India with the Vaiṣṇavas who follow Ramānujācārya, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta introduced it for the modern age.

✽ MISCONCEPTION: ATTACK IT—CRUSH IT! ✽

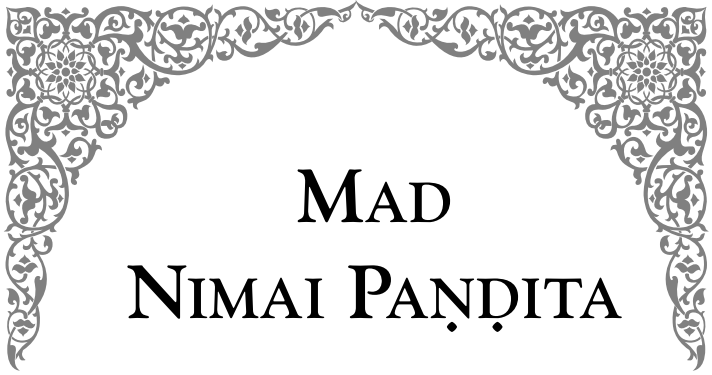
Nityānanda Prabhu’s approach was somewhat peculiar. His strategy was to uplift the most fallen. Like Napoleon, whose policy was to attack the strongest position of the opposing army, Nityānanda Prabhu wanted to capture the most sinful. Generally, we think that a saint flies away from this world of *māyā* and goes to a solitary place where he can enter into a cave and engage himself in meditation. Indian saints generally preach, “Give up everything, go to a solitary place in the jungle, find a cave, and engage yourself fully in understanding Godhead.” But our *guru mahārāja* was different. Like Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu, he wanted to attack *māyā* and, like a great general, he declared totalitarian war on illusion and even all other existing conceptions of religion. “Why is there this misunderstanding and misconception?” he thought. “Everything belongs to Krishna: *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*. It is plain and simple and sweet. How can we think, ‘This is for me, that is for Him?’ Why should we let this misconception stand here at all? Attack it—and crush the whole thing!”



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He declared totalitarian war against *māyā*, illusion, and even all other existing conceptions of religion.

He told us, “*Kīrtana* means to preach against misconception. As soldiers, you must go door to door and preach Krishna consciousness—Krishna’s interest—the Krishna conception. If they understand that everything is for Krishna, they will be saved. This truth is plain and simple. Why should they not understand this? Try to capture them, to release them from the world of misconception and misunderstanding where they are now suffering from reaction.”

In this way, we are not afraid of anything. A Vaiṣṇava who loved solitary life once asked our *guru mahārāja*, “Why do you stay at Calcutta? That is the place of Satan, where fighting for selfish interest is so acute. Leave that—come to the holy *dhāma*.” But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura especially chose that place, saying, “I prefer to represent Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s creed in an extremely contaminated place.” For this reason, he wanted to send men to the West. “The East is captured by the glamour of Western civilization,” he said, “so Western civilization must first be crushed. Then, its glamour will vanish and the whole world will come to join the campaign of divine love of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.” This was the same spirit with which Nityānanda Prabhu canvassed the fallen souls of this world, in his attempt to take them to the lotus feet of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.



MAD NIMAI PAṆḌITA

At the time of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's advent, Bengal had fallen far away from Krishna consciousness. The people of the day had become so much degraded that they would pass their time spending money like water to see the marriage of cats. Deviating from the worship of the Supreme Lord, Krishna, they used to worship the serpent-goddess, Viṣaharī, or the controller of the demons, Kālī. Very rarely would the name of Krishna be heard from their lips. Only a few of the Hindu gentleman, when bathing in the Ganges, would chant the holy name of Govinda, Hari, or Krishna. And Navadwīpa Dhāma, place of the advent of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, was under Mohammedan rule in those days. The Kazi was in power in Navadwīpa, and the Hindu's religious feelings were checked by the strong hand of his Islamic rule.

Advaita Ācārya was a great scholar and the most senior among Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's followers.

He appeared in Navagrāma in Śrī Haṭṭa, in the eastern province of Bengal, and resided in Śāntipura. Ontologically speaking, Śrī Advaita Ācārya is the *avatāra* of Mahāvisnu, who creates the material cosmos through the agency of His illusory energy. Advaita Ācārya is the devotee who earnestly invited Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to descend here as the *yugāvatāra* to look after the welfare of all souls. He began to worship the Lord with Ganges water and *tulasi* leaves and invoked His grace, praying, “O Lord, please come and deliver these people; the time has come to relieve them by the distribution of the sweet name of Krishna. Come, My Lord—they are most poor!” In this way Advaita Ācārya attracted Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu by pleading the cause of the fallen souls. Of course, the time had come for the advent of the incarnation for this age, the *yugāvatāra*, but still Advaita Ācārya performed the function of inviting and welcoming Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

✽ THE ADVENT OF ŚRĪ CHAITANYA ✽

And when the Supreme Lord was about to appear, Advaita felt in his heart, “My prayer is going to be satisfied—He is coming!” Ultimately, He detected that Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had personally appeared in the house of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and Śacīdevī as

their newborn boy, Nimāi Viśvambhara. And so, Advaita Ācārya went to pay due respects to the child and His parents on the divine advent day.

When the boy was a little grown up, Śrī Advaita Prabhu came down to bow at the feet of the child, Nimāi. Śacīdevī, Nimai's mother, shuddered: "What are You doing? You are an old *paṇḍita*, a Vedic scholar. If You show this kind of respect to my young boy it will spoil His future! What are You doing?" It was said that whenever Advaita Ācārya used to bow down His head to a Deity, the statue would shatter into pieces if it was a sham, if there was no genuine presence of the Lord. But here, when Advaita put His head at the feet of the boy, Nimāi put one foot on Advaita Ācārya's head. Everyone was astounded and wondered, "What kind of spiritual power does this child have? Such a great devotee-scholar and senior man as Advaita has bowed down to this child, and the child has stepped on Advaita's head, but the child is quite unaffected! Who is this child?"

❀ NIMAI'S CHILDHOOD ❀

When Nimāi was a boy, sometimes He would disguise Himself with a blanket and enter into the banana grove of a neighbor's house. With a push of His head He used to break down the banana trees. The neighbors would come out and think, "A bull

must have entered and demolished our garden!” In these pastimes the Lord was teaching His devotees, “I am demolishing all your banana trees that will be used for some other purpose besides My service. In the highest sense, you are My eternal associates, and I can do anything and everything with your possessions to suit My fleeting pleasures.” Sometimes He would snatch fruit from the hand of Śrīdhara Paṇḍita, saying, “Oh, give Me this banana. I won’t be able to pay you any price.” Śrīdhara Paṇḍit would tell Him, “Why are you doing this? You are a *brāhmaṇa* boy; I can’t refuse You. But You should not do these things. I am a poor man. If You snatch away my best things, how can I make a living?” In this way, Nimāi performed His pastimes of stealing fruit.

As Nimāi Paṇḍita grew up, He used to show Advaita Ācārya great respect. But Advaita could not tolerate it. He said, “I know that You are not an ordinary person. You are a supernatural, transcendental personality of the highest order. Still, in the worldly sense, You are younger than Me, so You show Me respect, but I can’t tolerate it. It is too much for Me.” But what could Advaita do? Nimāi used to show His formal respect to Advaita Prabhu every time They met, so Advaita made a plan to stop this, and thought to Himself, “I shall see how clever You are.”

He left Navadvīpa, went to Śāntipura, and began to preach against the devotional school. The news

came to Nimāi that Advaita Ācārya, after such a long time as a devotee, was preaching against the devotional school. He was preaching that *jñāna*, knowledge, is higher than devotion. “Devotion makes the Lord far away,” He argued, “and knowledge tries to bring Him very near. With knowledge, one thinks, ‘I want to experience You, O Lord.’ And devotion says ‘He is *adhokṣaja*: transcendental. He can’t be traced by our senses.’ So devotion makes Him far away by saying, ‘It is only His sweet will that may connect us.’ But according to the path of knowledge, the supreme authority is within you, in your heart. The devotional school is clearly secondary.”

❀ “DON’T KILL THAT OLD MAN!” ❀

In this way, Advaita Ācārya began to preach. And when that reached the ears of Nimāi Paṇḍita, He went with Nityānanda to punish Advaita. They jumped into the Ganges and swam all the way to Śāntipura, where they found Advaita Ācārya. Nimāi confronted him: “What are you doing, Ācārya? Why have You invited Me to come here? With Ganges water and *Tulasi* leaves, You prayed for Me to appear, and now You are making fun of Me? You are speaking against devotion, against Me? What is the matter with You?” In this way, Nimāi Paṇḍita began to punish Advaita. He began to slap Him. The old wife of

Advaita Ācārya began to cry, “What are you doing? Don’t kill that old man!”

Nityānanda Prabhu was smiling, and Haridāsa Ṭhākura, perplexed, was standing at a little distance trying to understand, “What is the matter?” Then Advaita Ācārya Prabhu felt great satisfaction. He said, “I have taught You a lesson now—You have come to punish me. You are defeated—I have gained victory over You!” Advaita Prabhu began to dance. “Today I have defeated You, My Lord! You had to punish Me. Where has that formal respect You were always showing Me gone now?” In this way, Advaita Ācārya rejoiced, and offered Mahāprabhu a feast of śāk, His favorite delicacy.

The Lord gave so much grace to Advaita Prabhu that although he was an old scholar and *ācārya*, He was punished with slaps. It is not possible to punish or dishonor anyone we respect, but only our intimate friends. Disrespect and dishonor is possible only when there is great intimacy. Pure devotees want punishment. “Punish us!” they pray, but punishment from the high quarter is not very cheap.

✽ ADVAITA’S MYSTIC POEM ✽

Many years later, just before Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu began to manifest His final pastimes of divine ecstasy, Advaita Ācārya Prabhu wrote some

mystic lines of poetry which He sent to the Lord through Jagadānanda Paṇḍita:

bāulake kahiha—loka haila bāula
 bāulake kahiha—hāṭe nā vikāya cāula
 bāulake hahiha—kāye nāhika āula
 bāulake kahiha—ihā kahiyaṅche bāula

**Tell our Prabhu, who acts as madmen do,
 that everyone has lost their sanity,
 And rice once high in price has no value.
 In love of God, half-crazed humanity
 neglects this world and all they once held dear;
 tell Him a madman brings this to His ear.**

When Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu read that mystic poem, His mood became serious. Svarūpa Dāmodara was there: “What is written here?” he said. Mahāprabhu replied, “I do not know what is the real meaning, but Advaita Ācārya is a great ‘worshiper,’ and a certain class of ‘worshippers’ are accustomed to think, “We shall invite the Deity, and for some time we shall try to keep Him here for worship. Then, when we are finished with our worship, finally we shall bid Him adieu.’ Perhaps Advaita thinks, ‘Now it is time for the Deity to go.’ I don’t know what is the real meaning, but perhaps this is His purpose.” Svarūpa Dāmodara took the poem, read it, and became very thoughtful: “Oh. Advaita Prabhu is say-

ing that the requirements for Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance have been fulfilled, and now, He is no longer needed to preach the Holy Name of Krishna as the incarnation for this age. The *avatāra's* duty is finished, and so He may go."

❀ THE LAST TWELVE YEARS ❀

After this, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu remained within this world for twelve more years, but not as before. His mood was quite changed. From that day on, He felt great separation from Krishna in the mood of Rādhārāṇī. Divine madness became predominant in Him and His social connection was almost closed. Ramananda Raya and Svarūpa Dāmodara were His attendants at that time. He no longer kept any social connections; the fire within Him was burning—the fire of separation. He was absorbed in Rādhārāṇī's search for Śrī Krishna after Krishna left Vṛndāvana. In that mood of divine madness, He spent twelve years in a closed room within the house compound of Kāśī Miśra.

Sometimes at night, unconsciously crossing the boundary wall, He would run to meet Lord Jagannatha. When Svarūpa Dāmodara and His other attendants would suddenly find that no sound of Krishna's name could be heard within His room, they would begin searching: "Mahāprabhu is not there, where is He?"

Sometimes they would find Him fallen before the main gate of the Jagannātha temple, His legs and hands drawn within His body like the limbs of a tortoise drawn within its shell. A very sweet fragrance could be detected emanating from Him, and the cows would flock there, smelling His body. While Mahāprabhu was lying in his trance, He was internally experiencing the pastimes of Rādhā and Govinda with the *gopīs* in Govardhana. At that time, Svarūpa Dāmodara and the others tried their best to revive Him from His trance by chanting the Holy Name of Krishna.

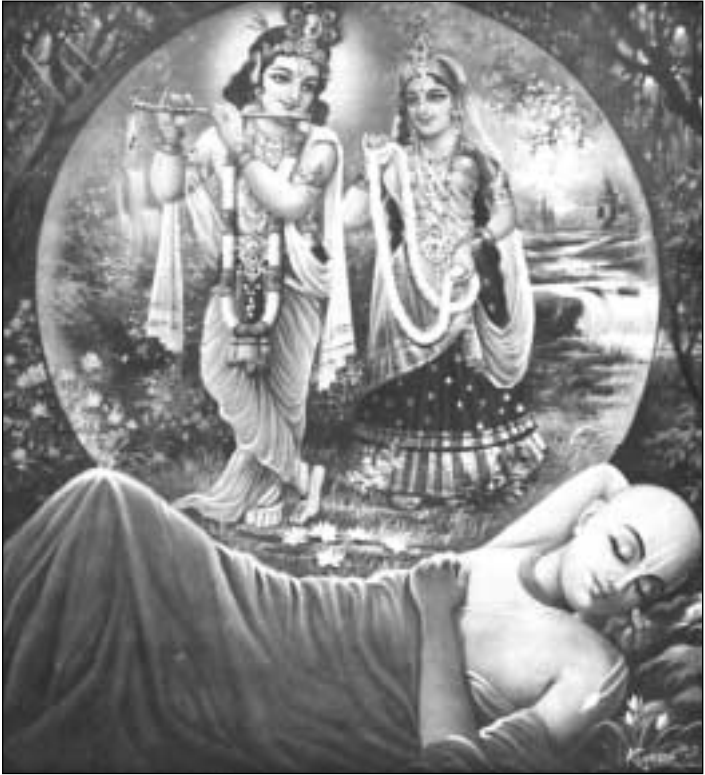
When Mahāprabhu was roused, He complained, “What have you done? I was enjoying a most happy experience there but by raising a clamor, you have drawn me down here.” And what raised a clamor? The chanting of Hare Krishna. And who was chanting the name of Krishna? Svarūpa Dāmodara and others of his caliber. The depth of the experience of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu in His divine trance was so great that He took the chanting of Hare Krishna to be noise. So, we may chant the Holy Name of Krishna, and that may be simply noise. From another angle of vision, however, it may be seen that *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is of such immense value that it was given preference over direct participation in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. But the direction given to us by our *ācāryas*, the spiritual preceptors of our line, is that we should consider our own chanting to be merely noise.

One day, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu was wandering near the seashore. A girl was fervently singing in praise of Lord Jagannatha, and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu ran straight towards that sound. He began running through thickets of dangerous thorns. Then Govinda, His attendant, somehow stopped Him. When He understood everything, He said, “Oh, a girl is singing? Govinda saved my life.”

✽ HALF-MAD IN ECSTASY ✽

Sometimes He would suddenly feel that Krishna is playing with the *gopīs* in the Yamunā. In that mood He would jump into the ocean, crying, “Krishna!” He jumped there and became unconscious, as the waves were playing with Him. Finding Him gone, His devotees would wonder, “Where is Mahāprabhu?” and, headed by Svarūpa Dāmodara, would begin their searching. Once, the night was almost over and they still couldn’t find Him. At last a fisherman came running, half-mad, chanting, “Krishna, Krishna, Krishna!”

“What is the matter?” Svarūpa Dāmodara asked. The fisherman replied, “Every night I catch fish, but tonight I threw out my net and caught something very heavy. When I began pulling it in, I thought it was a big fish, but when I took it on shore I found a big human figure, and when I went to remove the



A Vision of Reality. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu described the *līlā* of Krishna that He had seen in His trance.

body from my net, somehow I touched Him; now I am half-mad.” Then, Svarūpa Dāmodara said, “You must have seen our Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu?” “No, I have seen Him before,” the fisherman said, “He has a beautiful figure. It is not Him. It is something else.” Svarūpa Dāmodara told him, “Anyhow, try to show us where He is.”

They went and saw the long figure of the Lord, His joints dislocated, lying on the sands, senseless. Svarūpa Dāmodara and the others began to chant the Holy Name of Krishna in His ear, until He came to His senses. At that time Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu began to describe the *līlā* of Krishna that He had seen in His trance. In this way, after Advaita Ācārya's poetry was sent to him, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu lived His last twelve years in the mood of intense separation that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī felt for Krishna.

❀ MAD NIMAI PAṆḌITA ❀

This intense degree of divine madness was exhibited by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu in His last days on this Earth. But even in His life in Navadvīpa, when Mahāprabhu was the great boy-scholar Nimāi Paṇḍita, everyone thought He had become mad after He had returned from Gayā and had begun showing signs of devotion to Krishna. The normal-thinking men of the day said: "This Nimāi Paṇḍita was a good man, a gentleman, but after returning from Gayā, He is totally changed, and is doing so many undesirable things. He wants to preach so many new ideas. What is this? He has become a madman. He doesn't care for any rules and regulations, social customs, or ancient scriptures—only 'Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.' Before, He was normal, but recently He has become abnor-

mal. Of course, He has a powerful intellect. When He was a professor, He did not care for the scholarship of even the greatest of *paṇḍitas*. He easily defeated the champion scholar, Keśava Kāśmirī, and many others. But now we have lost Him. Now He is different. He does not care for the *brāhmaṇas* or the scriptures we follow. He has a new opinion and He is presenting that to the world. His ways are incomprehensible.” The neighbors complained to His mother, Śacīdevī: “Śacīdevī, what is this? Nimāi was not like this before; now He doesn’t care for us anymore. He even has no charm for His wife. What has He become? You are the daughter of a gentleman, but just see your misfortune! What to do? The fact is this, Saci, your only son, who was so brilliant, has become mad. You must arrange for proper medical treatment.” Then, Śacīdevī called for the *kavirāja*, the doctor.

The doctor made an arrangement for a small, brick bathing tank to be filled up with *Viṣṇu* oil, which is supposed to be a very cooling thing. And Nimāi Paṇḍita was asked to bathe in that tank. He did so, and suddenly began laughing and playing in the tank. As He was diving and swimming in the oil, He was laughing madly. At that time, Śrīvasa Ṭhākura arrived for a visit and asked, “How is Nimāi Paṇḍita?” Śacīdevī told him, “Just see my misfortune! My Nimāi has become completely mad. I called for the doctor and he arranged for this treatment.” As she showed

Śrīvasa how Nimāi was playing in the tank, he asked, "What is this?" Saci replied, "My neighbors advised me to do this." Śrīvasa said, "You are a very gentle lady. You do not know how to deal with others. What Nimāi has—I want! Your boy has *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and I want a drop of that. If only we are allowed to live a few days longer, we shall have the opportunity of seeing many wonderful pastimes of Krishna."

Then, Nimāi became sober for the time being and told Śrīvasa, "If you had also remarked that I was mad, then I would have run to the Ganges and finished My life. At least you have understood what I am; that is my solace, Śrīvasa. If you would have told the public, "He is mad," then I would have found that there is no man here to accept what I have come to give, so I must enter the river and drown myself without hesitation."

Before Nimāi Paṇḍita went to Gayā, He was a big scholar. When He returned from Gayā surcharged with devotion, He began to explain grammar again, as before, but now He would show Krishna in the grammar. He would give interpretations of the roots of Sanskrit grammar which showed the relationship between Sanskrit and Krishna. He explained that sound is only a vibration, and vibration means the potency of Krishna. It is the potency of Krishna that makes everything pure, that makes everything move. If that potency is withdrawn, everything is dead and

gone. In this way, Nimāi Paṇḍita wanted to explain grammar in terms of Krishna.

Then, His students became very much disturbed. “What is this!” they thought. “We have come to learn Sanskrit from Nimāi Paṇḍita, but our academic requirements will not be satisfied now. Still, the coaching we got from Him is never to be had anywhere else, so we can’t abandon Him. But how to improve the style of His teaching?” They went to the previous teacher of Nimāi Paṇḍita, Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita. He had been Nimai’s tutor in His childhood. Gaṅgādāsa said, “You are all fortunate to be students of Nimāi Paṇḍita. He is such a nice professor. What is your complaint?” The students said, “We were very much pleased by studying under Nimāi Paṇḍita. But now, since He has returned from Gayā, He is explaining everything in quite a new way. He teaches Sanskrit in terms of the Holy Name of Krishna. He understands a very high philosophy, but that won’t serve our purpose of studying grammar. It is certainly valuable, but it will not help our studies. Please ask Him to change His ways. He has regard for you because you are His teacher. Only you can influence Him.” “All right,” he said, “Ask Him to see me tomorrow.”

The students went to Nimāi Paṇḍita and told Him, “Your former professor has called for You. He wants to see You.” Nimāi said, “Yes, I shall go and

see him.” Later that day, He went to Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita, and offered His respectful obeisances. Gaṅgādāsa said: “How are You my boy? I am happy to hear that You went to Gayā and performed Your religious duties for Your ancestors. This is all very good, but what is the matter? Your students are complaining to me. Is it true that You do not care to teach them properly? Why don’t You care to teach them as You did before? They all appreciate Your teachings, but after returning from Gayā You have adopted a novel style of teaching. Don’t continue this, I say—teach them properly. I hear from the people that You have become a devotee. But were Your forefathers not devotees? Of course, You have become a devotee of an extraordinary type. But don’t go astray. What You speak about devotion seems unnecessary—that is not really grammar. Do You think You are giving new light with Your new meanings? Do You think your former professors were all idiots? What do You have to say?” Nimāi was silent. “All right then. Don’t go astray. Remain calm and follow Your predecessors and teach the boys well, so that we will not have to hear any complaints against You in the future. Your students won’t go to any other school. They are very fond of You, so teach them well.” Then, Nimāi Paṇḍita took the dust of His teacher’s feet and told him, “Yes, I shall try to obey your order. By dint of your footdust, no

one can challenge Me in scholarship. Don't worry. I shall teach them well."

❀ "WHY SHOULD I WORSHIP KRISHNA?" ❀

A few days later, Nimāi Paṇḍita began to chant the name *gopī*, *gopī* while He was in a trance of devotion. Some big scholars that held a high social position went to Him and said, "Nimāi Paṇḍita! You were a big *paṇḍita* and now You are a devotee. That doesn't matter, but why do You chant the name *gopī gopī*? Take the name of Krishna. According to the scriptures, that will bring You some benefit. But You are chanting *gopī gopī*. What benefit will You get from that? You are mad." Nimāi said, "Who is this Krishna? Why should I worship him? He is a dacoit and a woman-hunter!" And Nimāi picked up a stick and chased them away.

Later they began to talk among themselves, saying, "Nimāi Paṇḍita has become stark mad. We went to speak something good to Him, and He came with a stick to kill us! We are not sons of ordinary men. We have our high position in society and our family dignity. We will show Him!" They began a conspiracy to teach Nimāi Paṇḍita a good lesson by giving Him a good beating.

At that time, Nimāi suddenly cried out: "I took the greatest measures to deliver these wretched souls, but I

see now that they are simply creating more sins by abusing Me and conspiring to punish Me. Why have I come? What will be effective in delivering them? I shall have to take the role of a *sannyāsi*. Otherwise, they will think that I am simply one of them, a householder. But if I become a *sannyāsi*, a preacher, then they may have some respect. They will say, 'We are all householders, he has become a *sannyāsi*. He should be revered.' Then, from that reverence, they will get some benefit. Otherwise, they will have to go to hell for thinking that I am an ordinary man. To create some respect, so they may benefit, I shall have to accept the role of *sannyāsi*." And He revealed to Nityānanda Prabhu and a few others, "On the last day of the first month of this year, I shall take *sannyāsa*."



A TRAGEDY OF SEPARATION

According to solar calculation, it was on the day of Makara-saṅkrānti, an auspicious conjunction of the stars, that Nimāi Paṇḍita went to Kāṭwā to take *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. After this, He would become known as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He swam across the Ganges and in wet cloth ran towards Kāṭwā. Just before this, He told only a few of His friends, including Nityānanda Prabhu, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Mukunda, and others, “The time when I will accept the robe of renunciation is very near.”

Just a few days before this, an opposition party had been raised against Nimāi Paṇḍita. Those who believed that material nature is the highest principle, and that consciousness is a product of matter, began to abuse Nimāi Paṇḍita. He thought, “I came to deliver the lowest of men, but if they commit offenses

against Me, there will be not hope for their upliftment.” Suddenly, He said, “I came with that medicine which gives the greatest relief, but now I find that their disease is rapidly growing worse and seems beyond treatment. It will take its own course towards doom. The patients are committing offenses by abusing their doctor. They are making arrangements to insult Me. They take it that I am a family man—their nephew. They take Me as one of them. I came with the best medicine for the present degraded age, but now I find that they are plotting against Me. Now they are doomed. At least I have to show them that I am not one of them.” He thought, “I shall leave family life and take *sannyāsa* and wander from village to village, town to town, preaching the Holy Name of Krishna.” That was His decision, and within a few days He went to take *sannyāsa* at Kāṭwā from Keśava Bhāratī Mahārāja.

Just the day before He left to take *sannyāsa*, from the afternoon until the evening, there was a spontaneous gathering of devotees in the home of Nimāi Paṇḍita. Every year in Bengal, that day was celebrated as *Lakṣmī-pūjā*, worship of the goddess of fortune, when special cakes are prepared and distributed. Nimāi, knowing that early the next morning He would leave Navadvīpa to take *sannyāsa*, attracted His followers in such a way that almost every leading devotee came to see Him that evening.

❀ THE HARE KRISHNA MAHĀ MANTRA ❀

They came with flower garlands and many other offerings to be presented to the Lord. Nimāi accepted their garlands and then placed them on the necks of the devotees who gave them. Only four of His most intimate devotees knew He was leaving; the ordinary devotees did not know this would be His last night in Navadvīpa. With His own hands He garlanded the necks of His devotees and appealed to them, “Always chant the name of Krishna. Under no condition should you give up this *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. And don’t do anything else. While working, eating, sleeping or walking, day or night—in whatever you do—continuously take the name of Krishna. Always talk about Krishna—nothing else. If you have any real attraction for Me, then don’t do anything without chanting the name of Krishna.

“Cultivate Krishna consciousness. Krishna is the origin of us all. He is our father; we have come from Him. The son who shows no gratitude towards the father is sure to be punished birth after birth. Always chant these names of the Lord:

**Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare**

No other religious principle is required. Chant Hare Krishna. This is not an ordinary *mantra*, but this

is the *mahā-mantra*, the greatest of all the great *mantras*, the very essence of all the *mantras* known to the world. Only take to this, always. No other prescription is to be followed.

“Remember your Lord, your home. This is a foreign land; you have nothing to aspire after here. Try always to go back home, back to Godhead.” In this way, the Lord spoke, and all His devotees intuitively came because it was Nimāi Pandita’s last night in Navadwīpa.

❁ THE LORD AND THE FRUITSELLER ❁

Late at night, one devotee named Kholāvecā Śrīdhara arrived. He used to make trade on the plantain tree and its fruit. He would sell the fruit, ripe or green, and the big leaves which are used as plates. Sometimes Nimāi would pay him less for his fruits than what they were worth, and sometimes He would snatch the best fruits from him. Śrīdhara came to see Him late at night to offer Him a choice pumpkin. And Nimāi thought, “I have spent almost My whole life snatching so many things from him, and now, on this last night he has brought this wonderful pumpkin. I can’t resist.” He asked Śacīdevī, “Mother, Śrīdhara has given me this pumpkin. Please think of how it can be prepared.” At bedtime, someone came with some milk. Nimāi said, “Mother, with this milk

and this pumpkin, please prepare some sweet-rice.” So Śacīdevī prepared some pumpkin sweet-rice: pumpkin boiled with milk, rice and sugar.

Late at night, at about three o’ clock in the morning, Nimāi went away. He left Viṣṇupriyā-devī asleep in bed. His mother Śacīdevī, sensing what was to come, was staying awake all night guarding the door. Nimāi bowed down to her and went away. And like a stone figure, Mother Śacīdevī sat there by the gate as Nimāi left. She could not say anything, but was struck dumb.

A little after three o’ clock in the morning, Nimāi swam across the Ganges and in His wet cloth went straight to Kāṭwā, a distance of twenty-five miles. He reached there by nine or ten o’ clock. There, He approached Keśava Bhāratī to take *sannyāsa*.

❀ MOTHER ŚACĪ’S SADNESS ❀

In the early morning, the devotees came to see Nimāi and found Śacīdevī like a statue, sitting at the door. The door was open. Everything was empty. “What’s the matter Śacīdevī?” they asked. She told them, “Oh, I was waiting for you devotees. You take possession of the house. I shall go somewhere else. I can’t enter this house any more. You are His associates; you are the true heirs. Take possession.” They began to throng around her and console her. “You will

go? What about the young wife He left? The girl is only fourteen years old. Who will protect her? You can't shun the responsibility given to you. It is on your shoulders." In this way they came and consoled her and tried to give her some hope.

Suddenly the devotees heard that Nimāi Paṇḍita, Śrī Gaurāṅga, had left Navadvīpa. They learned that He had gone to Kāṭwā, to Keśava Bhārati's *āśrāma* to take *sannyāsa*, bidding goodbye to the people of Navadvīpa forever.

A dark shadow came down. Many began to weep and cry for Him. Many of them ran towards Kāṭwā. Nimāi Paṇḍita was an unprecedented scholar with beautiful features—tall, fair, and benevolent. He had already made the people mad with the Holy Name of Krishna. He had released the two great sinners Jagāi and Māḍhāi from their nasty life. He had checked the Mohammedan ruler, the Kazi, who had broken the *mṛdaṅga* drum. As a famous *paṇḍita*, he had defeated many scholars who came to conquer Navadvīpa, which was very much renowned for its high culture of learning, especially of logic.

At that time in Navadvīpa, logic (*nyāya*), worship of material energy (*tantra*), and official Hinduism (*smṛti*), were in high culture. Navadvīpa was highly renowned for scholarship. If *paṇḍitas* could not defeat the scholars of Navadvīpa, they could not become famous. From far away in Kashmir, Keśava Kāsmiri

had to come to Navadvīpa to get a certificate that he was a *paṇḍita*. And he was defeated by Nimāi Paṇḍita. Keśava Kāsmiri was such a big *paṇḍita* that it was rumored he was the favorite child of Saraswatī, the goddess of learning. No one could face him. Still, he was defeated by Nimāi Paṇḍita.

✽ EFFULGENT LIKE THE RISING SUN ✽

But Nimāi Paṇḍita left Navadvīpa forever and took *sannyāsa* because the people of Navadvīpa could not appreciate Him. He reached Kāṭwā, where, just on the banks of the Ganges, there was a *sannyāsi* named Keśava Bhāratī. Nimāi went to him and asked him for *sannyāsa*. Keśava Bhāratī suddenly found that his *āśrāma* was full of luster. At first, it seemed as if the sun was rising before him; then he saw that it was a bright person approaching. He rose from his seat, and with strained eyes approached in wonder. “What is this?” he thought.

Then he realized that the great devotee-scholar, Nimāi Paṇḍita, had come. He appeared before him saying, “I want to take *sannyāsa* from you.” But Keśava Bhāratī could not accept Nimai’s offer. “I am charmed by Your beauty and personality,” he said. “But You are so young, only twenty-four years old. What about Your mother, Your wife, and Your guardians? Without consulting with them, I cannot

venture to give You the robe of renunciation.”

In the meantime, as it was Makara-saṅkrānti, a famous holiday, many people had come to take bath in the holy waters of the Ganges. They gathered there and the rumor spread like fire: “Nimāi Paṇḍita of Navadvīpa has come to take *sannyāsa*.” Many men flocked there, until a huge crowd gathered.

❀ AFFECTIONATE OPPOSITION ❀

They all opposed Mahāprabhu’s *sannyāsa*. Some of them raised their voices in protest: “You—Keśava Bhāratī! We won’t allow you to give *sannyāsa* to this young man. He has a family, his mother and wife. We won’t allow it. If you give *sannyāsa* to this charming, young, beautiful boy, we will break down your *āśrāma* immediately. It can’t be!”

But Nimāi Paṇḍita kept pressing for *sannyāsa*. At last, Keśava Bhāratī asked him, “So, you are that Nimāi Paṇḍita about whom we have heard so much? Many big scholars came to conquer Navadvīpa, the famous seat of learning, and You have defeated them all. Are You that Nimāi Paṇḍita?” “Yes,” said Nimāi. Keśava Bhāratī told him, “I can give You *sannyāsa*, but You must take the permission of Your mother—otherwise I won’t, I can’t do it.” Nimāi suddenly began running towards Navadvīpa to ask permission, but Keśava

Bhāratī thought, “He has such a commanding personality, He can do anything.”

Nimāi was called back. Keśava Bhāratī told him, “With Your most extraordinary personality You can do anything. You will go there, charm Your guardians, get permission, and return. Nothing is impossible for You.”

The ordinary public was very much enraged, saying to Keśava Bhāratī, “We can’t allow you, Swāmijī, to give *sannyāsa* to this young boy. It is impossible! If you do, then we shall smash your *āśrāma*.” Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu began performing *kīrtana*, chanting Hare Krishna and dancing madly. And the angry mob grew, sometimes creating a disturbance. In this way the whole day passed with no decision. The night passed in *sañkīrtana*. And the next day, Nimai’s will prevailed, although there was still some opposition.

❀ TEARS FROM THE EYES OF MILLIONS ❀

Nityānanda Prabhu, along with Nimai’s maternal uncle Candraśekhara, Mukunda Datta and Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, gradually arrived there. And that afternoon, the *sannyāsa* function began. Candraśekhara Ācārya was asked to perform the ceremony on behalf of Nimāi Paṇḍita, who began to chant and dance and charm the audience.

lakṣa-locanāśru-varṣa-harṣa-keśa-kartanam
 koṭi-kaṅṭha-kṛṣṇa-kīrtanādhya-daṅḍa-dhāranam
 nyāsi-veśa-sarva-deśa-hā-hutāśa-kāśtaram
 prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram

“While showers of tears fell from the eyes of millions, He delighted in having His beautiful hair shaved away. Millions of voices sang the glories of Krishna, as Śrī Krishna Chaitanya accepted the staff of renunciation. From that time on, wherever He went, whoever saw Him in the dress of a *sannyāsi* cried in grief. I sing the glories of that beautiful Golden God, the giver of divine love.”

✽ MAHĀPRABHU’S SANNYĀSA ✽

The scene was at Kāṭwā. Four-hundred and seventy-four years ago, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*. He was young and beautiful, with a tall figure. He was only twenty-four and had beautiful curling hair. A barber was asked to shave Him, and approached Him, but then withdrew. The barber could not venture to touch Nimai’s body. He began to cry. “How can I remove such beautiful hair from such a beautiful head?”

And so many others were also crying aloud, “What a horrible thing is being done here! Who is the creator of this *sannyāsa*? Who is so hard-hearted that he created the *sannyāsa-āśrāma*, where one must give up all that is near and dear and go from door to door, beg-



The Sannyāsa of Nimai Paṇḍita. Plunged into an ocean of unhappiness, Mahāprabhu's devotees weep in disbelief.

ging, leaving his own friends and relatives crying helplessly? What is this creation of the Supreme? Is it logical? Is it a happy thing? It is most cruel!”

Nimāi Paṇḍita was smiling. After the barber was ordered repeatedly, somehow he was forced to shave Nimai's head. At first, he could not venture to touch His hair, saying, “I can't touch Him.” But at last, he had to do the service of shaving the beautiful, curling hair of the beautiful face of the twenty-four year old genius boy. He began with his shears. Some people could not stand the scene. Some even became mad. In the midst of the weeping, wailing, and crying of the threatening mob, it was done.

Nimāi Paṇḍita was senseless. After being only half-shaved, He stood up and began chanting in

kīrtana and dancing in ecstatic joy. After He was shaved, the barber promised, “I will never again shave anyone with this hand! I would rather live by begging. This is my last service as a barber.” After this, that barber took up the occupation of a sweetmaker.

Ultimately Nimai’s appeals pacified the mob, and a little before noon the inevitable gradually came: the *sannyāsa* function was performed. Candraśekara Ācārya, the maternal uncle of Nimāi Paṇḍita, was deputed to take charge of the rituals in the ceremony of *sannyāsa*. When the *mantra* was to be conferred, Nimāi Paṇḍita asked Keśava Bhāratī, “Is this the *mantra* you will give me? I heard it in a dream.” He whispered the *mantra* in the ear of his *guru* who accepted, saying, “Yes, this is the *mantra* I shall give You.” Then that *mantra* was given.

And the name of this *sannyāsi* was not given in an ordinary way either. A most peculiar name came through Keśava Bhāratī: “Krishna Chaitanya.” None of the ten names generally given to *sannyāsis* was given to Nimāi Paṇḍita, but the name that was given to Him was Krishna Chaitanya. As soon as they heard that name, the mob began to cry, “Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu *ki jaya!*” “All glories to Śrī Krishna Chaitanya!”

The father of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya was a class-friend of Nimāi Paṇḍita. On his way to his father-in-law’s house, he heard that Nimāi Paṇḍita had come to take

sannyāsa. He ran there, and seeing everything, he became dumb—he was devastated and went half-mad. After that, nothing came from his mouth but “Chaitanya!” After he heard the name “Krishna Chaitanya,” whatever anyone said to him, he would only say, “Chaitanya!” He became mad. After that, his name became Chaitanya dāsa. His former name vanished, and everyone used to call him Chaitanya dāsa. He could not stand the scene of Nimāi Paṇḍita’s *sannyāsa*.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, newly dressed in red robes, embraced His *guru*, and both of them began to dance, chanting the name of Krishna. After some time, the meaning of the name was given. Keśava Bhāratī Mahārāja said, “Śrī Krishna Chaitanya means that You arouse Krishna consciousness throughout the entire world. You have descended to make all people Krishna conscious. So the most suitable name for You cannot but be Śrī Krishna Chaitanya.”

✽ THE NECTARINE WORLD ✽

Mahāprabhu was very cheerful, thinking, “I am going to relieve so many souls from their eternal misery and affliction. I have promised to deliver the whole world from this ocean of misery and take them to the nectarine world, and now I am going to accept that task.” He was cheerful, but everyone around

Him was diving in the ocean of despair and sorrow.

Some scholars stress that Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* from Keśava Bhāratī, who was a *māyāvādī*, an impersonalist. But although Keśava Bhāratī may have externally showed himself in that way, it is seen that by coming in connection with Mahāprabhu, he became a devotee. Otherwise, we may also think that he was a devotee who came in the garb of an impersonalist to help the preaching of Mahāprabhu by assisting Him with the social formality of taking *sannyāsa*. At that time, all over India, *māyāvādī sannyāsis* had greater recognition than Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsis*, and Keśava Bhāratī was already situated in that post. Mahāprabhu took the garb of a *sannyāsi* from him for His own purpose, to help His preaching activity. All these things may be explained in different ways. In any case, after Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*, Keśava Bhāratī began to sing and dance with Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He joined in *saṅkīrtana* and was immediately converted.

❀ KRISHNA CONCEPTION: UNION IN SEPARATION ❀

In this way, the *sannyāsa* of Nimāi Paṇḍita took place. What is the meaning of His *sannyāsa*? Is it redundant, auxiliary, or a necessary part of spiritual advancement? Is it desirable? Although apparently undesirable, still it has its necessity. In the Krishna

conception of theism, there is a deep-rooted correlation between union with the Lord and separation from Him. Without separation, union cannot be deep-rooted. The pain of separation can enter into the depth of the heart much more than cheerfulness. Such apprehension increases our satisfaction. The greater our want, the greater our satisfaction. This is especially true in love affairs. If there is no necessity of a thing, it has no value. This principle is found everywhere. A glass of water is ordinary, but according to the degree of its necessity, its value will increase. So the degree of necessity is most important. Necessity means separation. Necessity independent of fulfillment is separation, hunger.

Separation plays the most important part in both Navadwīpa and Vṛndāvana *līlā*. How many years of union were there between Krishna and the *gopīs*? Krishna was only in Vṛndāvana from the age of seven years up to the age of twelve: five years. Then, He went to Mathura. Of course, it is mentioned in the *Padma Purāṇa* that in peculiar or extraordinary cases, growth should be measured by multiplying by one and a half. So when Krishna is eight years old, He should be considered twelve. When He is twelve, He should be considered eighteen years of age. So according to His growth, Krishna was in Vṛndāvana from the age of twelve to eighteen, but according to His years, from the age of seven to twelve.

❀ THE DEPTH OF DIVINE LOVE ❀

He stayed in Dvārakā for a long time; altogether He lived here on this Earth for one hundred and twenty-five years. After He left Vṛndāvana at the age of twelve, the pangs of separation were felt by the *gopīs* throughout their whole lives. Their long, long separation has made their devotion so dignified; the test of separation shows whether love is real. Such a long-standing separation and such a great test has never been found in history; still, the depth of their love did not diminish. Rather, an inconceivable, ever increasing depth of divine love was found there.

And in both Navadvīpa and Vṛndāvana, the background is almost similar. In Navadvīpa, to gain victory over the opposition party, Mahāprabhu left His household life. And in *vṛndāvana-līlā* it is also similar. The opposition in *vṛndāvana-līlā* came from Mathura in the form of Agha, Baka, Pūtanā, Tṛṇāvarta, and other demons who were being sent by King Kāṁsa. To uproot the opposition, Krishna had to go to Mathurā. And when He went there, He found that the opposition was widespread. Kāṁsa's father-in-law, Jarāsandha, Kālayavana, Śísupāla, Dantavakra, and many others were inimical to Krishna. So Krishna promised the *gopīs* that after finishing His enemies, He would return to Vṛndāvana to play peacefully with them. To uproot the opposition party, Krishna had to go away. And He told the *gopīs* in Kurukṣetra, "I have

some other enemies; after finishing with them, I will be reunited with you.” That sort of hope was given to the *gopīs* in Kurukṣetra.

Here also, to conquer the opposition party, Mahāprabhu had to leave Navadwīpa. Later, after His conquest of all the Indian scholars and religionists of different positions and creeds, after five years, when He returned to Navadwīpa, everyone was transformed. The mass approached Him madly. It is difficult to conceive with what madness the mass approached Śrī Chaitanya-deva, the child of their own village.

❀ THE GANGES—FILLED WITH HUMAN HEADS ❀

They crossed the Ganges. The whole Ganges, as far as it could be seen, was filled with human heads. They were running towards Him from all directions in such a way that the jungles were cleared by human feet. For a few days, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu stayed nearby in Vidyānagara, and then went towards Vṛndāvana, singing the Holy Name of Krishna. Thousands of devotees were running behind Him, digging up the earth to take the dust of His holy feet, and huge pits were being created.

For about eighteen years Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu led a scholarly life as Nimāi Paṇḍita. After that, for about six years, He wandered through the length and breadth of India, including Vṛndāvana.

The last eighteen years of His life, He remained in Jagannātha Purī continuously. For the first six years of His *sannyāsa*, He mixed with the general public. The last twelve years of His life, He almost retired from the whole human society and engaged Himself deeply in tasting the union in separation of Rādhā-Govinda. And many extraordinary symptoms of ecstasy which have never been experienced anywhere, nor even heard of, were expressed by Him. Separation can produce such wonderful effects in the body and mind.

❀ ŚRĪ GAURĀṄGA-AVATĀRA ❀

Śrī Gaurāṅga-*avatāra* has twofold characteristics: the apparent reason for His advent is to deliver to people in general from sin, and to give them the highest attainment of life—to take them towards Vṛndāvana, *vraja-līlā*, by giving the Holy Name of Krishna. This is actually the function of the *yuga-avatāra*, the incarnation of Godhead for the age. The Lord comes to distribute the divine sound and to show how one can reach the highest position through divine sound. Still, He had another purpose to fulfill. Once in Brahmā's day—in a special Kali-yuga—Krishna Himself comes in the mood of Rādhārāṇī to search Himself. He wants to taste the mood of Rādhārāṇī, to understand the nature of Her inner hankering for Krishna, how She can taste the

sweetness of Krishna by Her mood, and what is the joy She derives.

Krishna wanted to have some experience of why Rādhārāṇī is so mad for Him. He thought, “What is there in Me that makes Her so immeasurably mad for Me? What sweetness can She draw from Me? I can’t ascertain it.” He wanted to mold Himself in the mood of Śrī Radhika and try to taste His own self from that temperament. So He came as Śrī Chaitanya.

When He conceived of such an incarnation, and proposed His idea to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, we are told that Rādhārāṇī, on Her part, said, “Sometimes You will madly roll on the earth, taking My name, but I won’t be able to tolerate it. I shall cover Your body with My golden form. I won’t allow You to roll on the earth. I shall cover You with My embrace.” So it is said by those who know the ontological aspect of Śrī Chaitanyadeva, “I offer my respects to Śrī Chaitanyadeva, whose mood and color is Rādhārāṇī’s and whose inner self is Krishna searching for Himself, tasting Himself, and trying to understand why Rādhārāṇī is mad to taste Him and what sort of sweetness She finds in Him (*rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-swalitam naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam*).”

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu remained in this world for forty-eight years. In the last twelve years of His life, He engaged Himself with deep attention in tasting Himself. Just as everyone is mad to taste

sweetness, Krishna, sweetness personified, is also mad to taste Himself.

Introspection means to know oneself. Consciousness can know consciousness. And just as one can feel his own body, or consciousness can conceive of itself, ecstasy can also taste ecstasy. This is confirmed by Svarūpa Dāmodara Prabhu, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's personal secretary, who is considered to be Lalitā-sakhī, the nearest friend of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in the pastimes of Krishna. He has said what Śrī Chaitanyadeva is:

rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī-śaktir asmād
 ekātmānāv api bhuvī purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
 caityākhyaṁ prakāṣaṁ adhunā tad dvayaṁ caikyam āptaṁ
 rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam

“I worship Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Krishna Himself, enriched with the emotions and radiance of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. As the predominating and predominated moieties, Rādhā and Krishna are eternally one, with separate individual identities. Now They have again united as Śrī Krishna Chaitanya. This inconceivable transformation of the Lord's internal pleasure-giving potency has arisen from the loving affairs of Rādhā and Krishna.”

In this verse, Svarūpa Dāmodara says that the pastimes of Rādhā-Krishna and those of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu are parallel and eternal. Whether winter

is first and summer follows, or summer is first and winter follows is difficult to say. Similarly, in the eternal pastimes of the Lord, the movement is rolling in a circle. Therefore, Svarūpa Dāmodara says, “Whether Chaitanya-avatāra is first and Krishna-avatāra is next, or Krishna-avatāra is first and Chaitanya-avatāra is next is difficult to say—both are eternal.”

And who is Śrī Rādhā? She is the development of the sweetness that springs from Krishna Himself. That sweetness, in a developed form as Rādhā, springs up from within Krishna; Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is a particular potency coming out of Krishna Himself: *hlādinī-śakti*. So Rādhā and Krishna cannot be conceived of as separate entities; the two of Them are one and the same. Still, we are told that in ancient times They divided into two. And then again, both of Them combine as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Whose luster and mood is that of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and whose nature and reality within is Śrī Krishna’s. Fire and heat cannot be separated; sun and light cannot exist separately. They are one and the same. The Absolute Truth is one absolute substance (*advaya-jñāna*), but sometimes Rādhā and Govinda show Themselves as divided and again They are united. When They are together, They are enjoying each other, and sometimes They experience a painful separation without the possibility of union. That is Their divine nature.

Śrī Rupa Goswāmī explains this as follows:

aher iva gatiḥ premṇah
 svabhāva-kuṭilā bhavet
 ato hetor ahetoś ca
 yūnor māna udañcati

He says that just as a serpent naturally moves in a crooked way, in a zigzag way, the nature of love is naturally crooked. It is not straight. So the concerned parties quarrel, sometimes with cause and sometimes without cause, and separation comes. Separation is necessary for the transcendental pastimes of Rādhā and Krishna.

✽ THE PANGS OF SEPARATION ✽

There are four kinds of separation: *pūrva-rāga*, *māna*, *pravāsa*, and *prema-vaicittya*. *Pūrva-rāga* means before meeting. This is found when Rādhā and Govinda are not actually meeting, but somehow one has come in remote connection with the other's name, portrait, or something of that nature. When Rādhā hears Krishna's name or the sound of the flute—no real meeting is there, but there is some connection. The sound of Krishna's flute, a picture of Krishna, or Krishna's name may bring about *pūrva-rāga*. And Krishna may experience

something similar by hearing the sound of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's name. In this way, there are pangs of separation, but no actual meeting. The name is so sweet that He can't contain Himself; she can't contain Herself.

When the Holy Name of Krishna enters within Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's ear, She becomes perturbed, thinking, "Is a name as sweet as this possible within this world?" This is Her reaction, and She experiences this also. She feels, "I can't meet Him." A pang of separation comes within Her heart. That is *pūrva-rāga*: the pain of separation that comes before meeting.

Māna is another kind of separation. *Māna* means that when meeting, there is some difference between Them in trifling matters. This is the very nature of love. Therefore, Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī says that love moves in a curved way like a serpent. It is not diseased, but this is the nature of the path of love. Sometimes with a trifling cause, or with no cause, a feeling comes that, "He is neglecting me; He wants to avoid Me." And thereby Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī thinks, "I don't want His company." Although cent per cent appreciation is there, still, for the time being, some opposing sentiments spring up from underground; a clash comes in the sentiments of the Two, and One wants to avoid the company of the Other.

❀ TRANSCENDENTAL JEALOUSY ❀

In *prema-vaicittya*, jealousy rises to such a degree that although They are already together, still some sort of thought comes within and makes Them think that They are far away from each other. These different kinds of separation are found only in the *madhura-rasa*. *Prema-vaicittya* is that condition which arises when Krishna is there and Rādhārāṇī is just nearby, but seeing Her own shadow reflected on the body of Krishna, She is so jealous that She thinks that it is another lady. So, great pangs of separation come within Her, and She thinks, “What is this? Another lady is there!” Her mind revolts. But Her friend, Lalitā, is warning Her, “What are You saying? It is only Your own image reflected there. Can’t You see it?” Then Rādhārāṇī comes to Her consciousness. She particularly notices, “Oh, it is My own shadow.” Then that feeling is immediately gone. This is an example of *prema-vaicittya*. These are extremely high transcendental subjects, and although this is not to be discussed in details, this is the nature of divine love in union and separation. Both are interdependent, for One cannot stay without the Other, and separation is created willingly to enhance union.

Another kind of separation is called *pravāsa*. There are two types of *pravāsa*: one is when the separation is for a limited time; another is when one has

left the country for a far-off place, as when Krishna went to Mathurā to attend to other duties. These are the four types of separation pangs between the lover and the beloved.

Of course, these transcendental topics are very high, and we should not indulge in them carelessly, for if we project mundane characteristics into the higher plane, our future realization will be harmed. Our mundane experience will tend to take us down, so we must proceed with caution. What we conceive of at present is not to be found in the plane of Krishna's pastimes—it is a far higher plane of existence than the realm of our experience. Our vision is adulterated. We have only an alloyed conception of the original thing. We must keep this in mind, and with this caution we may deal with these things.

It is safer to deal with the topics of the separation between Rādhā and Govinda than with Their union. Of course, we must understand that the pain of separation experienced by Rādhā and Govinda has nothing to do with this plane. And so, with this caution, we may talk to some extent about separation, but it will be extremely dangerous for us to discuss or to think of when Rādhā-Govinda and Their intimate friends are combined, enjoying each other's company, because if we deal with the pastimes of Rādhā and Krishna with any mundane conception, we will create a great offense. So to conceive of the union of

Rādhā and Govinda is more dangerous than cultivating feelings of separation, as Mahāprabhu has shown by His example.

In separation from Krishna, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is thinking, “I can’t tolerate even My own life without Krishna! Without His grace, without His company, I can’t maintain My undesirable existence.” This kind of mood helps us, but still we should not imitate it; rather we must respectfully accept it as our highest ideal. This will help us brush aside our filthy, unwanted habits (*anarthas*). If some tears come, however, we should not think that we have realized the highest stage; that sort of thinking should be avoided. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu Himself says, “I don’t have a drop of divine love within Me, for otherwise, how could I maintain My mundane life?”

And Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* so that the residents of Navadvīpa would be drawn into this high stage of separation through affection’s force. His old mother Śacī-devī was crying hopelessly. His young wife, Viṣṇupriyā-devī, was helplessly passing Her days. Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* to create excitement, piercing into the hearts of the people the divine love that He came to give. They thought, “Who was Nimāi Paṇḍita? What great benefit did He come to give us?” That He left everything made them sympathetic towards Him.

And for all these reasons the Lord went to take *sannyāsa*.

❀ “I MUST RUN TO VṚNDĀVANA!” ❀

After the function of *sannyāsa* was finished, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu became mad. “I must run to Vṛndāvana,” He thought. “I have given up all connection with this world. I have no attraction for it. I must run to Vṛndāvana to exclusively engage Myself in the service of Krishna.” In trance, He began to chant a verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* where Krishna gives a description of *sannyāsa* to Uddhava. This verse was spoken by a *tridaṇḍī bhikṣu*, a mendicant. Mahāprabhu quoted this verse, thinking, “I have accepted this garb of a *sannyāsi* for this is favorable to My spiritual life. Now, no one in society has any claim over Me, and I will be able to exclusively devote Myself to the service of Krishna. I am going to Vṛndāvana with no other engagement or connection with anyone.” In this way, in ecstatic madness He began to chant and dance. Keśava Bhāratī Mahārāja embraced Him, and both guru and disciple joined together, chanting and dancing. At that time Mahāprabhu spoke the verse of the *brāhmaṇa* who, in the last stages of his life, took *tridaṇḍa sannyāsa* and had to tolerate the torture of society in different forms. He said:

etām sa āsthāya parātma-niṣṭhām
 adhyāsītām pūrvatamair mahārṣibhiḥ
 ahaṁ tariṣyāmi duranta-pāraṁ
 tamo mukundāṅghri-niṣevayaiva

“The previous great sages have accepted and shown the path of *sannyāsa*. I have now accepted that very form of life. Now leaving everything aside, I shall run towards Vṛndāvana. There, taking the name of Mukunda, Krishna, I shall cross over the ocean of nescience. Crossing over this *māyā*, I shall reach Vṛndāvana and fully enter the service of Krishna.”

The dress of a *sannyāsi* is meant only for an external adjustment, but the real thing is to serve Mukunda. And so, with this verse, He suddenly started towards Vṛndāvana from Kāṭwā. Near the banks of the Ganges, He entered the jungle thinking, “Now, my duty is to reach Vṛndāvana as soon as possible and there, in a solitary place, I shall sit and chant and sing the name of Krishna.”

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu ran towards Vṛndāvana and entered the jungle before evening. And Nityānanda Prabhu, Candraśekhara Ācārya, Mukunda Datta, and Jagadānanda pursued Him through the jungle. Sometimes while running He would suddenly fall on the ground and begin to cry, “Krishna, Krishna!” Getting up suddenly, He began



The Deity of Nityananda. The original Deity installed and worshiped by Viṣṇupriyādevī.

running—without any apparent direction—to the north, east, west and south.

❀ WANDERING IN TRANCE ❀

Sometimes He would run away so swiftly that the devotees could not trace Him, especially in the night, when they would lose Him in the darkness. Then, they would all be disappointed, thinking, “Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, our Lord and Master, has left us!” But suddenly they would hear Him far away, crying, “Krishna, Krishna, Krishna!” in a piteous, wailing tone. Then they would run in that direction and see that He was lying on the ground, crying,

kāhāñ mora prāṇa-nātha muralī-vadana
kāhāñ karoñ kāhāñ pāñ vrajendra-nandana

“Where is my beloved Krishna? I can’t tolerate His separation. Where is the Lord of My life, who is playing His flute? What shall I do now? Where should I go to find the son of Mahārāja Nanda?” In a piteous, heart-rendering tone, He was crying. In a bewildered state, with no consciousness of any particular direction, He would say, “Who are you? I’m going to Vṛndāvana. Why are you disturbing me?” After nursing Him, again they began to start towards the west, towards Vṛndāvana. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu continued wandering in trance. But the

great attraction of His devotees did not allow Him to go towards the west.

Taking advantage of His trance, Nityānanda Prabhu somehow coaxingly turned Mahāprabhu's face towards Śāntipura. It is mentioned in the *Chaitanya-Bhāgavata* that beginning from Kāṭwā, they went west until they reached a place near Vakraśvara, about six miles north-east of Dubrarājapura, in the district of Birbhum. In Viśramatalā, on the other side of the Adjai river, there is a place which is observed as the seat of Śrī Chaitanya. There, they say, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu turned His face from the west towards the east, or from Vṛndāvana to Śāntipura.

They wandered throughout the remaining evening, and then another day and night. Finally, on the third day, in the evening, He returned through Kālnā to Śāntipura through the arrangements of Nityānanda Prabhu, who appeared before Mahāprabhu in the red cloth of a renunciate. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, although so familiar with Him, couldn't recognize Nityānānda. He saw a *sannyāsi* before Him and thought, "I am going to Vṛndāvana, and here is a *sannyāsi* in front of me." He said, O Śrīpada *sannyāsi*, where are You going?

"I shall go to Vṛndāvana with You."

"How far is Vṛndāvana from here?"

Nityānanda showed Him the Ganges, near Kālnā, saying, "Just see, there is the Yamunā."

Mahāprabhu said, “Oh, We have come so near the Yamunā!” Then, He took his bath in the Yamunā, singing this verse:

**cid-ānanda-bhanoḥ sadā nanda-sūnoḥ
para-prema-pātrī drava-brahma-gātrī
aghānām lavitrī jagat-kṣema-dhātrī
pavitrī-kriyān no vapur mitra-putrī**

“O daughter of the sun: although you have appeared in the form of water, you are most dear to the son of Nanda, who is the spiritual sun. You dispel the sins of all sinners. Please purify this mortal body.” (Kavi Karnapura: *Chaitanya Candrodaya-nāṭaka* 5.13)

Just before Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu arrived there on the banks of the Ganges, Nityānanda Prabhu sent Candraśekahara to inform Advaita Ācārya to come. When Mahāprabhu asked Advaita Ācārya, “Is that you, Advaita? How did you know I was in Vṛndāvana?” Advaita Ācārya said, “This must be some kind of joke. Wherever You are is Vṛndāvana. And it is my fortune that You have come here, near the Ganges.”

“Oh, it is the Ganges?”

“Yes.”

Then Mahāprabhu, regaining His consciousness of this world, said, “Oh, then it is a conspiracy of Nityānanda Prabhu. He has brought Me here to the banks of the Ganges and told Me it is the Yamunā. It is all a hoax! I have fallen prey to His hoax.”

Advaita Ācārya argued, “No, no, Nityānanda Prabhu has not spoken any falsehood. You have really taken bath in the Yamunā. The confluence of the Yamunā and the Ganges is in Āllāhabād, and it is mentioned in *śāstra* that the western side is the Yamunā, the eastern side is the Ganges. Now You have taken your bath in the western side, so You have taken Your bath in the Yamunā, according to scripture. So Nityānanda Prabhu has not told any lie. Anyway, I have come with this new dress for You. Leave Your wet clothes and accept this new garb. I have also cooked something for You. For three days you have been fasting, and today, as a *sannyāsi*, you must take some charity in my house. I am a poor man,” he said with folded palms, “but You must come.” They took him by boat to Śāntipura, to the house of Advaita Ācārya. The next morning Śacīdevī came, and Mahāprabhu spent about ten or twelve days there in Śāntipura performing *kīrtana*.

❀ WHAT IS VṚNDĀVANA? ❀

What is Vṛndāvana proper? It is a stage of consciousness. In different stages of consciousness, there are different subjective realities. Everything springs from the willpower of the Lord. He is the subject, and His potency and sweet will is all subjective. The Lord said, “Let there be light,”—and there was light. He

said, “Let there be water,” —and there was water. He said, “Let there be earth,” —and there was earth. If, like a hypnotist, the higher subject wants to make the lower subject see something, he cannot but see that thing. We are all in the subjective, imaginary world, but above imagination is the supersubjective plane of reality. So, Krishna reveals Himself to one who has developed pure consciousness, and in the stage of pure consciousness one can perceive the true nature of subjective reality (*sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ vasudeva-śabditam*).

To show us that Vṛndāvana is everywhere, Mahāprabhu was running here and there in ecstasy. When They met, Advaita Prabhu told Him, “You must be jesting when You say *You* are going to Vṛndāvana. Wherever You are—that is Vṛndāvana. We have that experience. What You say is very peculiar: ‘I am going to Vṛndāvana.’ Simply to teach us the value of Vṛndāvana, You are posing in this way.”

❀ THE LAND OF LOVE ❀

Vṛndāvana, the highest plane of divinity, is a stage of consciousness. Above the plane of awe and reverence found in *Vaikuṅṭha*, is Vṛndāvana, the land of simplicity and divine love. The peculiarity of the inhabitants of that highest plane of consciousness is that they do not feel they are in Vṛndāvana. It is *aprākṛta*, supramundane.

Knowledge has been classified under five headings. The lowest is knowledge acquired through one's own sense experience: *pratyakṣa*—what we have experienced through our senses. That is the first stage. The next higher stage is knowledge we have not experienced with our own senses, but have gathered from the experience of others (*parokṣa*), just as the scientists have their experience, and we have gathered some knowledge from their inventions and discoveries.

The third stage is above the stage of human experience (*aparokṣa*). It is something like deep sleep. When we awaken, we say, "I slept very happily; I slept a very good, sound sleep." But when in deep, dreamless sleep, we have no consciousness of that state. When we return from a deep dreamless sleep, we express some awareness of that experience, but it is hazy. *Aparokṣa* is a sort of hazy experience which is indistinct, where the subject and material object come together, and the material object vanishes in the subject. Śāṅkarācārya, the great proponent of impersonalism, explains the gradation of consciousness up to this point.

✽ THE FOURTH DIMENSION ✽

On the other hand, the great devotee-scholar Rāmānujācārya, as well as other Vaisnava *ācāryas*, are of the opinion that there is a fourth stage

beyond this. That plane is called *adhokṣaja*, transcendental, or that which exists beyond the scope of the senses, whether gross or subtle. It is a plane that we can experience only when, by its sweet will, it comes down to our gross plane of understanding. If it withdraws, we are helpless; we can't find it. We cannot say that the Absolute Truth is under the control of our knowledge. We can't measure it like that. It is independent. By its sweet will it may come down and we may experience that higher realm, but if it withdraws, we are quite helpless; we can do nothing. We may cry or we may pray, but we can't enter there forcibly by dint of our own power. This is the fourth plane of consciousness, and it is grand, all-powerful, and all-inspiring. Only if it reveals itself to us can we have some experience of that plane known as *Vaikuṅṭha*, the unlimited spiritual region of awe and power

That is the *adhokṣaja* plane. So, there is *pratyakṣa* direct experience through sense perception, then *parokṣa*, learning through the experience of others, then *aparokṣa*, the negative plane of indistinct consciousness, and then the fourth dimension: *adhokṣaja*. We are underground. Real knowledge is above, on the surface, beyond our experience. If we can pierce through the thick coverings walling up our experience, we can come in connection with another plane of consciousness: that is *adhokṣaja*. *Adho-kṛtam*

indriya-jam jnānam: adhokṣaja means the superior knowledge which can force down our knowledge of the experience of this world. That transcendental, supramental knowledge is the fourth stage of knowledge. That plane is different in every way. It is not similar to this world.

But through *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, we come to know that there is a fifth stage of knowledge which is very similar to this mundane world, yet is not mundane. It is called *aprākṛta*. That is Goloka, the full-fledged theistic conception which is only found in Krishna's domain. Central knowledge of the absolute must have a connection with even the lowest level of mundane creation; it must be able to harmonize the worst portion of the illusory world. This is known as *aprākṛta*, supra-mundane. To enter that highest realm is possible only through divine love.

Everything can be compensated only through love. There is a saying that a loving mother thinks that her blind child has beautiful lotus eyes. She is blinded by affection. So, what is mean and low can only be compensated by love—that shines very beautifully. That is *prema*, or divine love. Through mercy, through pity, through grace, a king can come to play with a boy on the street. Affection can make it possible. The difference between high and low disappears at such a stage.

❀ THE SPIRITUAL ENCHANTING POTENCY ❀

The residents of Vṛndāvana think themselves ordinary. This is *jñāna-sūnyā-bhakti*, divine love which is free from any calculation and does not consider even the opulence and power of the Lord. That devotion is above even *Vaikuṅṭha* and goes on under the spell of *yogamāyā*, the spiritually enchanting potency. It is the special art of *yogamāyā* that those holding the highest position think themselves very insignificant. Love removes the difference of great and small, high and low. Vṛndāvana is such a plane of existence. There we find devotion free from any trace of calculation (*jñāna-sūnyā-bhakti*). Even the residents of Vṛndāvana may not know their own exalted position.

Advaita Prabhu tells Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, “Wherever You are, there is Vṛndāvana.” Narottama dasa Ṭhākura says wherever we find a true devotee of Krishna—there is Vṛndāvana (*yata vaiṣṇavagaṇa sei sthāna vṛndāvana. Prema-Bhakti-Chandrikā*). Outwardly we may think that they are members of this ordinary world, but the object of all their conversation and behavior is Vṛndāvana. Still, although they are in Vṛndāvana, they do not feel themselves to be there.

They are not conscious of their own exalted position. A king, when he is not very conscious of his power, thinks of himself as an ordinary person. It is something like that. Someone may be a great doctor but

through affection he may do the work of a nurse for his patient. Out of his love and affection for the patient, he may come down to do such work, but still he is great. This is the beautiful nature of Vṛndāvana life. It is great without the attitude, the air of bigness. Although they are really great, they appear to be simple. Power dressed in affection and love, couched in humility—that is Vṛndāvana. And that is also Navadvīpa.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu say that this is the highest and most laudable place for us to live. There, the Supreme Lord Krishna and the *gopīs* are living in the forest. There, we find no grandeur or big buildings, but if we have a true eye for grandeur, we will see it in Vṛndāvana. From an impartial judgement of the facts, their position is very great, but through humility they have apparently descended to our level. It is a very sweet and beautiful form of life that we find in Vṛndāvana. And Mahāprabhu came to show that to us through Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Krishna is the Lord of that land, and the cows, hills, forests, and the Yamunā river are all creating a favorable environment there.

So Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* to teach us, to take us up and make us the permanent inhabitants of that place. He says that actually, our real self lives in that plane, but unfortunately our consciousness has become focused outside. Now we are captured by the mundane aspect of this creation and think that we are suffering,

but this is all illusion. We must get relief from this mania. Mania means madness, and now we are possessed by some mania. Just as a madman leaves his home and wanders in the street collecting pieces of paper and cloth, we are focused in this world, but when this madness is gone, we will awaken in our own home.

✽ A GREAT TRAGEDY ✽

We must return back to Godhead, back to home. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “Your home is a beautiful land. You must try for that. Why are you always troubled with the horrors of war, epidemic, earthquake, undesirable disease, stealing, dacoiting, and fighting with so many neighbors? At the bottom of all this is the fact that you have identified yourself with this material world and this body of flesh and blood. You have to retrace your path and go back to your home.” That is what is necessary. Our homeland is such a lovely and beautiful and divine place. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s *sannyāsa* is all for us, and it is for the purpose of taking us back home, where we can have home comforts, home sweetness. If we have any home-consciousness within, then we must appreciate such a proposal: home sweet home.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s *sannyāsa* is apparently very cruel to His devotees, and to His family members, but it was meant only to take us to our home. To work out the ecstasy of union, it was necessary for Śrī



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura envisioned himself seeing Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu on a rooftop and expressed his heart's desire, "When will the day come when Nimai Paṇḍita will give up the robes of renunciation and again come and join us in kīrtana at the house of Śrīvāsa?"

Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to show separation from His devotees and relatives. Separation and union are mutually helpful. Mahāprabhu's *sannyāsa*, His renunciation, is a great tragedy of separation.



Nocturnal Kīrtana. Nīmai Paṇḍita and associates absorbed in the nocturnal *rasa-kīrtana* at the house of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura.

Part 2

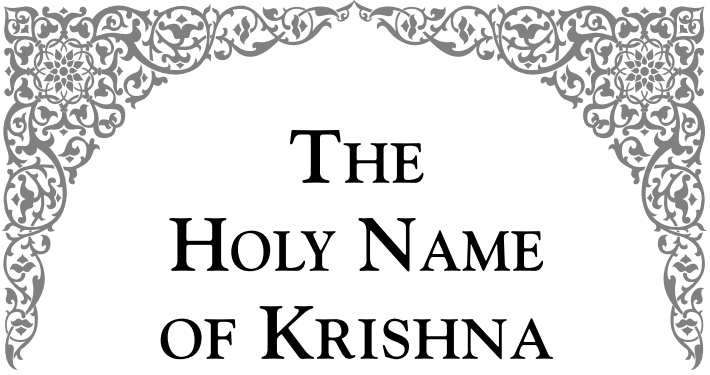
Śikṣāṣṭakam

The

Precepts of

Śrī Chaitanya

Mahāprabhu



THE HOLY NAME OF KRISHNA

SANSKRIT

चेतोदर्पणमार्जनं भवमहादावाग्निनिर्व्वापणं
श्रेयःकैरवचन्द्रिकावितरणं विद्यावधूजीवनम् ।
आनन्दाम्बुधिवर्द्धनं प्रतिपदं पूर्णामृतास्वादनं
सर्वात्मस्नपनं परं विजयते श्रीकृष्णसंकीर्तनम् ॥१२॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam
śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-varadhanam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam

TRANSLATION

“The Holy Name of Krishna
cleanses the mirror of the heart
and extinguishes the fire of misery
in the forest of birth and death.

As the evening lotus blooms
in the moon’s cooling rays,
the heart begins to blossom
in the nectar of the name.

And at last the soul awakens
to its real inner treasure
—a life of love with Krishna.

Again and again tasting nectar,
the soul dives and surfaces in
the ever-increasing ocean
of ecstatic joy.

All phases of the self
of which we may conceive
are fully satisfied and purified,
and at last conquered by
the all-auspicious influence
of the Holy Name of Krishna.”

ILLUMINATION

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is the pioneer of Śrī Krishna *saṅkīrtana*. He said, “I have come to inaugurate the chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna, and that name will reach every nook and corner of the universe (*pṛthivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*).”

What is the meaning of *saṅkīrtana*? *Samyak* means “full” and *kīrtana* means “chanting.” Together, these two words form the word *saṅkīrtana* which generally means “congregational chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna.” But *samyak* means full not only in quantity but also in quality. Full quantity means extensive in number: congregational. Full quality means complete praise. Complete praise can only mean the glorification of Krishna, and not any other gods.

So *saṅkīrtana* means complete *kīrtana*, a song in praise of the complete whole, the Absolute Truth; anything else is only a partial representation and therefore defective to a certain extent. Therefore, Krishna should be praised. His glories should be chanted, for He is everything. He is the master, the dispenser of both good and bad, the Absolute Controller of everything. Everything is due to Him. The fulfillment of all life is reached in Him alone. Just as a horse may have reins to check his movements, but if let loose will run freely, praise which is

unchecked by any mundane purpose will run straight towards the Supreme Cause, Krishna.

The word *śrī* means Lakṣmīdevī: Krishna's potency. This means that in *saṅkīrtana*, Krishna is worshiped along with His potency, for Krishna's potency is included within Him.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says that *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* should thrive throughout the world; it should be victorious without any hindrance (*param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*). It should be a spontaneous, unchecked, and natural flow. It should be exclusive, independent, and without reservation. And this praise of Krishna should be congregationally chanted—that vibration is beneficial for the whole world. Only by surrender and pure devotion can we take to *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*.

❁ CLEANSING THE MIRROR OF THE MIND ❁

What are the different stages through which we will pass while chanting the Holy Name of Krishna? The first stage is that it cleanses the mirror of the mind. If the mirror of the mental system is covered with dust, we cannot see things clearly, and scriptural advice cannot be properly reflected there. What are the different kinds of dust covering the mirror of the mind? Our infinite, fleeting, and organized desires are considered dust, and our hearts and minds are covered

**Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare**

The Supreme Syllables. The Hare Krishna *Mahā-mantra*.

with layers and layers of this dust. Therefore we cannot see things properly; they cannot properly reflect in our mind because it is covered with the infinite ordinary desires of this mundane world (*bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī—sakali ‘asanta’*).

So the first effect of *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* is the cleansing of the mind. The Vedic social system (*varnāśrama-dharma*) has been formed for this purpose. If we discharge our social duties perfectly, without any attraction for the consequences, we achieve purification of our consciousness—but the first installment of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* gives us the end result of *varnāśrama-dharma*: purification of the heart and mind. Then we can understand Vedic advice properly.

The next effect of chanting the Holy Name is that it extinguishes the fire of material existence in the forest of repeated birth and death. We are forced to come

into creation and again die. The mundane wave catches the soul which mingles with that vibration in different stages. That is stopped by the second effect of *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*, and we become liberated.

With the first stride, the intelligence is purified. With the second stride, the Holy Name effects liberation from the great conflagration of threefold miseries. The threefold miseries are *ādhyātmika*: miseries within the body and mind, such as disease and mental anxiety; *ādhibautika*: miseries from our neighbors: man, beasts, insects, and so many other living beings; and *ādhidaivika*: natural catastrophes like famine, flood, and earthquake. We have to suffer from these three kinds of miseries which burn in our heart like fire. But everything is extinguished forever by the second stride of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* which gives us relief.

✽ THE SUPREME GOAL OF LIFE ✽

The next stage is *śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vidaraṇam*: the Holy Name bestows upon us the supreme goal of life. After doing away with these two negative engagements, our positive engagement begins and ultimately takes us to reality, to the real truth, which is eternal, auspicious, and beautiful. It takes us to that auspiciousness which is above this world of difficulty, and in a general way we achieve

the supreme goal, the highest auspiciousness, the greatest good from chanting the Holy Name of Krishna. If we analyze this scrutinizingly, we find that in this stage, the Holy Name takes us to an intimate personal relationship with Krishna which includes neutrality, servitude, friendship, and filial affection (*śānta*, *dāsya*, *sakhya*, and *vātsalya rasa*). *Śreyaḥ* covers the grace of Nityānanda Prabhu, for it is by His grace that we may be allowed to worship Rādhā and Krishna in Vṛndāvana (*nitāiyer karuṇā habe braje rādhā kṛṣṇa pābe*).

The next stage is *vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam*. The Holy Name prepares us for the wholesale surrender to Krishna that is found in conjugal love (*madhura rasa*) where the devotees surrender themselves infinitely at the disposal of Krishna.

The next stage is *ānandāmbudhi-wardhanam*. When we come to the proper level while chanting the name of Krishna, we find the transcendental ocean that is above all sorts of experience. The name comes to assert Himself over us according to the degree of our surrender, and when our surrender is complete, we feel a new type of ecstatic joy; we experience an infinite ocean of joy which is not static, but always dynamic. There we find new life and a new type of blissfulness. It never becomes stale or static, but at every moment gives us a taste of the infinite ocean of ecstasy.

❁ COMPLETE SELF-PURIFICATION ❁

The last effect is that our entire existence is purified. This kind of enjoyment does not pollute—it purifies. Enjoyment means exploitation. Mundane enjoyment creates a reaction and pollution attacks the enjoyer, but here, because Krishna is the aggressor, the result is purification. All enjoyment that comes from the center, from the autocratic desire of Krishna, purifies us completely.

In this verse, the words *sarvātma śaṅkṣanam* mean that all different phases of the self which may be conceived are fully satisfied and purified at once by chanting the Holy Name of Krishna. And there is another meaning of *sarvātma śaṅkṣanam*. If we praise Krishna congregationally, we will be purified according to our capacity. Both the singer and the audience as well as anyone who comes in connection with the transcendental sound will be purified. *Śaṅkṣanam* means “purifying.” That vibration purifies everyone and everything that comes in touch with it.

So Mahārabhu says, “Go on with *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna.” Of course, *saṅkīrtana* must be genuine, so association with saints is necessary. It is not an empirical attempt. We are attempting to have a connection with the higher, unconditioned realm which can descend to help us here. We must have that connection with higher reality, for that is all-important. The

Holy Name of Krishna is not mere physical sound; it is not lip-deep only, but it has a greater and higher aspect (*nāmākṣara bāhirāya baṭe tabu nāme kabhu naya*). It is all spiritual. We are in the marginal plane of existence, so some higher connection is necessary in order that the wave will descend from that higher realm and come to us and spread its influence outside as well.

Wherever it goes, the *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name of Krishna will produce these sevenfold results. This is the purport of Mahāprabhu's first verse. The first effect is that the Holy Name cleanses the soul which is attacked by the dirt of desires from the mundane world. By the second effect it gives *mukti*, liberation, perfect independence from material forces. The third effect brings real fortune: the opening of the soul's treasure. The innate resources of the soul are gradually awakened by the Holy Name of Krishna. Here, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu includes the other forms of relationship with the Personal Absolute. In describing the next step, He takes the mood of conjugal devotion, where one is absolutely disposed for Krishna's enjoyment, unconditionally surrendering everything for His maximum pleasure.

❁ "I NEED MILLIONS OF MOUTHS!" ❁

The next effect is the tasting of his ecstatic association. In Vṛndāvana, the realm of Krishna, one who can chant the name of Krishna properly



Krishna's flute. The sound of Krishna's flute has the great mystic power of capturing and pleasing everyone and everything.

will express himself with a peculiar sort of ego:

**tuṅḍe tāṅḍavinī ratiṁ vitanute tuṅḍāvalī-labdhave
karṇa-kroḍa-kaḍambinī ghaṭayate karṇārbudebhyaḥ sprhām
cetaḥ-prāṅgaṇa-saṅginī vijayate sarvendriyāṇām kṛtiṁ
no jāne janitā kiyaḍbhir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayī**

“When the Holy Name of Krishna appears on the lips of a devotee, it begins madly dancing. Then the name takes over and handles him as if the person to whom the lips belong loses all control over his lips, and the devotee says, ‘With one mouth, how much can I gather the ecstasy of the Holy Name? I need millions of mouths to taste its unlimited sweetness. I’ll never feel any satisfaction by chanting with only one mouth.’”

When the sound “Krishna” enters the ear, he feels that transcendental sound awaken in his heart. “What are two ears?” he thinks. “This is the greatest injustice of the creator—I need millions of ears! Then, if I could hear the sweet name of Krishna, my heart might be a little satisfied. I want millions and millions of ears to hear the sweet name of Krishna.” This is the temperament of a devotee when his attention is drawn towards the Holy Name. Then he faints; he loses himself, merging in an ocean of ecstasy and joy. And in great disappointment he says, “I failed to understand the quality and quantity of the substance of Krishna’s name. I am perplexed. What sort of

honey sweetness does this name contain?” In this way, the chanter of the name wonders.

❁ KRISHNA'S MYSTIC FLUTE-SONG ❁

This has been taught to us by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who said, “Properly chant the Holy Name, the sound representation of absolute sweetness.” That sweetness is also to be found in the flute-song of the Lord. The sound of Krishna’s flute has the great mystic power of capturing and pleasing everyone and everything. Upon hearing the sound of Krishna’s flute, the Yamunā’s current is paralyzed. The sweet sound of Krishna’s flute attracts the trees, the birds, and the beasts. Everything is astounded by contacting the sweet vibration from Krishna’s flute.

Sound vibration can work miracles; sound has the highest capturing potency. Sound can make or mar. It can do anything; it has such intrinsic capacity. It comes from the subtlest plane, beyond the ether. That universal sound is absolute sweetness and goodness. How much power is there—how it can capture us! Like a blade of grass, we may be played by the current of that sweet sound in such a way that we cannot even trace out our own personality. We may lose ourselves there, but we do not die; the soul is eternal. Diving, up and down, we are played by the current of the sweet sound. We are less qualified than a straw, a

blade of grass, and the Krishna sound is so big and so sweet that it can play us in any way it likes. We cannot begin to conceive how much power is in the name, the sound which is identical with absolute goodness and sweetness.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “Don’t neglect the sound which is one and the same with Krishna.” Absolute sweetness and goodness—everything is there within the Holy Name. And the Holy Name is representing itself to us in a very cheap way: nothing is required to purchase it—no money, no physical energy. All these things are unnecessary. What is required? Sincerity.

One who simply takes this divine sound sincerely will be so enriched that no one will be able to conceive of so much goodness and development. And anyone may have it very cheaply, but one must chant sincerely with his whole heart. Of course, wholehearted sincerity presupposes going to a proper agent, a saint, and getting the Holy Name from him.

Śrī *kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* is praised by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the inaugurator of the *saṅkīrtana* movement who came as Rādhā-Govinda combined. His advice is most valuable and necessary to tell us that with a sincere spirit we must come to join this *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*, the most purifying transcendental sound, which effects liberation, gives all fulfillment, and grants us such a positive attainment that we lose

ourselves in the ocean of joy and inconceivable sweetness.

This is Śrīman Mahāprabhu's grace, and He proclaims, "Let *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* be expanded into this mortal world, that it may benefit everyone infinitely, for this is the highest and greatest benefit for the whole world. It is all-comprehensive. It releases us from all sorts of troubles, establishing us in the highest position of attainment."

And in this present degraded age of Kali, only *nāma-saṅkīrtana* can help us. Of course, *nama-saṅkīrtana* is beneficial in all ages, but it is especially recommended in Kali-yuga, because in this age all other attempts will be opposed by many forces. *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* cannot be opposed by the troubles and waves of this material world, so one must adopt it. If we exclusively give ourselves to this, we will gain the highest fulfillment of life. There is no necessity of any other campaign, for they are all defective and partial. But the most universal, captivating, and beneficial thing is *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, which takes us to the highest goal. That alone can satisfy everyone.

All souls that are now disconnected from Krishna may be helped in this way. No other movement is necessary. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu tells us, "Exclusively devote yourself to this. It is all-embracing and all-fulfilling. And you can achieve it with the least trouble and least energy. Let it flourish in this Kali-yuga—let it

flourish for the welfare of the whole universe, to reestablish all souls in their normal position.”

In the last verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the conclusion of the book is given as follows:

nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ yasya
sarva-pāpa-praṇāśanam
praṇāmo duḥka-śamanas
taṁ namāmi hariṁ param

Pāpa means all anomalies, all undesirable things: sin. Material enjoyment and liberation are also included as anomalies, sinful activities. Why is liberation considered sinful? Because it is an abnormal condition; our natural function is to serve Krishna, but we do not do that in salvation. Mere salvation does not include service to Krishna, so that is an abnormal position and therefore it is also a sin. To ignore our natural duty and stand aloof cannot but be sinful.

❁ THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF VYĀSA ❁

The concluding verse of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, “Krishna’s Holy Name can relieve us from all undesirable sinfulness, all filthy characteristics, and all miseries. Let us all bow down to Him.” Uttering this verse, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* stops; that great treatise becomes silent. The last word in the *Bhāgavatam* is *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. The *Bhāgavatam* has

given such great importance to chanting the Holy Name of Krishna, and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu developed it from there. The last publication of the compiler of Vedic literatures, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, took theism to that stage, and gave it to the public announcing, “Chant the name of Krishna! Do this; nothing more is necessary. Take this!” This is the very conclusion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the greatest spiritual gift of Vyāsadeva: “Chant the Holy Name of Krishna and begin your life in this dark age with the most broad and wide theistic conception.”

✽ NECTAR OF THE NECTARINE ✽

We may consider ourselves fortunate that we have come to the verge of this most generous and useful thought, that we have come close enough to touch it, to accept it, and float ourselves in its waves according to our capacity. After passing through so many conceptions and the charm of different prospects, we have left them all behind and have come to the shore of the ocean of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Now we may throw our bodies in this ocean and begin to swim in the waves of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, the nectar of the nectarine, by the grace of our *guru* and the mercy of the Vaisnavas.

It is their property, and we are their slaves. We have such audacity to throw our body into this ocean of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and swim in that nectarine ocean!



Sanātana and Rūpa Gosvāmī. The dearest associates of Śrī Chaitanya Mahārabhu.

Swimming in Rādhā-kunda, the highest conception of spiritual attainment, can also be found in the highest form of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. This verse represents the positive side of the unlimited ocean of *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*. The next verse explains the negative possibilities.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given his Sanskrit

commentary on the *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, as well as his Bengali translation, and his is a most original presentation. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda has also given his commentary on the *Śikṣāṣṭakam*. They should be carefully studied in order to understand these points more completely. In these talks, however, I am simply coming out with whatever I feel in my heart. Whatever comes to my mind on these verses, I am expressing, and that is the outcome of what I have collected from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Rūpa Goswāmī, Sanātana Goswāmī, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, and all the predecessor *ācāryas*. By their grace that is gathered in my storehouse, and I am trying to give the gist of these things.

❀ THE KRISHNA CONCEPTION CONQUERS ALL ❀

By accepting the path of devotion, a wholesale transformation of our internal system begins, and gradually our charm for the outside world vanishes. There is a war within, and when the Krishna conception enters into the heart of a devotee, all other thoughts and ideas gradually have to retire. This is explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.8.5):

**praviṣṭaḥ karṇa-randhreṇa
svānām bhāva-saroruham**

**dhunoti śamalaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ
salilasya yathā śarat**

When the autumn season appears, the mud within the water vanishes. In the same way, when the Krishna conception enters into one's heart, all other conceptions and aspirations will gradually have to retire, leaving Krishna in possession of everything. When a real drop of Krishna consciousness enters the heart, all opposing forces must leave and Krishna will conquer and take possession of the whole.

That is the nature of Krishna consciousness: nothing can stand in competition with it, not even the so-called devotion for the demigods or faith in creeds like Christianity, Islam, and others. All other conceptions of theism have to retire, leaving the field to the Krishna conception. No aggressors can stand in the fight with Krishna consciousness, the absolute, sweet beauty.

Beauty, sweetness, and charm can capture and defeat power. We are really aspiring after beauty and sweetness, mercy, affection, divine love (*prema*). Self-dissipation—to compensate others with one's own energy and generosity—ultimately conquers everyone. It is more rewarding to give than to take. Divine love means die to live: not to live for yourself, but to live for others. The most generous form of life—self-forgetfulness to the extreme—is found in Krishna consciousness.

Krishna consciousness is so beautiful that one who develops it loses his own identification and existence also. He becomes totally self-forgetful. Such a charm is there. Who will stand to fight against Krishna? Everyone who comes to fight against Him is disarmed. If in any way Krishna enters the heart, there can be no other consequence but that He takes possession of everything. Such a benevolent, generous, and sweet person is Krishna: reality the beautiful.



UNLIMITED NAMES OF GOD

SANSKRIT

नाम्नामकारि बहुधा निजसर्वशक्ति-
स्तत्रार्पिता नियमितः स्मरणे न कालः ।
एतादृशी तव कृपा भगवन्ममापि
दुर्दैवमीदृशमिहाजनि नानुरागः ॥१६॥

ROMAN transliteration

nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam idṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ

TRANSLATION

“O my Lord, Your Holy Name
bestows auspiciousness upon all.
And You have unlimited names
such as Krishna and Govinda
by which You reveal Yourself.

In Your many Holy Names
You have kindly invested
all Your transcendental potency.
And in chanting these names,
there are no strict rules
concerning time or place.

Out of Your causeless mercy,
You have descended
in the form of divine sound,
but my great misfortune is
that I have no love
for Your Holy Name.”

ILLUMINATION

Here it is said, “O my Lord, You have revealed the chanting of Your Holy Names, and all Your power has been invested within those names.” Both the Holy Name of Krishna and its potency are eternal. All potencies or energies are found within the Holy Name of Krishna. And there is no particular time or place which has been fixed for chanting the name. It is not that one can only chant in the morning, or only after taking bath, or only after going to a holy place—there are no such conditions. One may go on chanting the Holy Name of Krishna anytime, anywhere, in any circumstance

In this verse, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “O Krishna, You have given a most sublime opportunity to all. You are so infinitely gracious that You have given us the service of Your Holy Name (*nāma bhajana*). Still, my misfortune is the worst. I don’t find any earnest desire within me to take the name. I have no faith, no love, no tendency to take the name. I do not find any innate hankering to chant the name. What can I do?”

This is the second of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s eight precepts. He says, “O Lord, You have given everything from Your side to lift me up from this mundane world of relativity. Your attempt to deliver me is so

magnanimous that all You require from me is a little cooperation in accepting Your grace, but I turn a deaf ear to Your magnanimous call. O Lord, I am hopeless.”

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has given us great hope in the first verse of his *Śikṣāṣṭakam* or eight precepts. He explains that the chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna, when properly undertaken, may progress step by step, revealing seven consequences. The first effect is the cleansing of consciousness; the second is liberation from all mundane relativity. As the third effect, positive goodness awakens within our heart and takes us to Vṛndāvana. Then, under the guidance of *svarūpa-śakti*, the Lord’s internal energy *yogamāyā*, we come to the *vadhū* conception: we are potency, we are to serve Krishna unconditionally. *Vadhū* means that *rasa* which gives full connection with the Lord (*madhura-rasa*).

✽ ECSTATIC OCEAN OF JOY ✽

After attaining that stage, what are the other consequences that come? One becomes a particle in the ocean of joy, and that joy is not stale or static, but ever-new and dynamic; it is purifying to the utmost. Although we are allowed to keep our individual conception, still we feel that all parts of our existence become purified to the utmost when we take the name. And this will not only affect me, but all who

are connected with this *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. They will experience mass conversion, mass purification, the utmost purification. These are the sevenfold results of chanting the Holy Name.

After mentioning this thesis in His first verse, Mahāprabhu now gives the antithesis in the second verse. When such great hope is there in the Holy Name, why are we having so much trouble? Where is the difficulty? Why do we not realize the advantage of the magnanimous sanction of divinity found in the Holy Name? Inestimable grace is coming from Krishna's side. He has given us so many opportunities, with the least requirement from our side. We must have some taste, some earnestness to accept the Holy Name; but there's the difficulty—we have none. So what hope can we have? How can we attain it? We may be approaching the Holy Name formally, but not from the core of our hearts, so by what process can we really benefit and make progress? The third verse answers this question.

Although one may feel that he does not have the minimum required deposit to receive the grant, still it is not a hopeless case. The very nature of this realization takes him to the conception of humility. When one begins to practice devotion towards the infinite Lord, he cannot but feel that in relation to the infinite, there is nothing of value in himself. He thinks, "I have nothing to give in return; even the minimum

requirement for the Lord's grace is absent in me." That takes him to the conception that, "I have no qualification. I am completely empty."

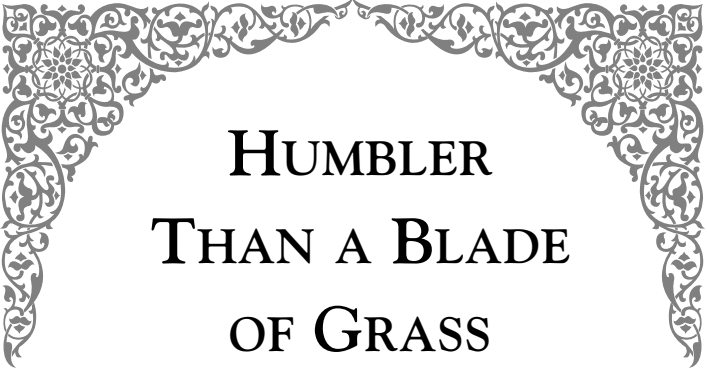
A devotee feels within his heart that he is not only unfit but too despicable for the Lord's service. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī says: "I am lower than a worm in stool and more sinful than Jagai and Madhai (*jagāi mādhai haite muṇi se pāpiṣṭha puriṣera kīṭa haite muṇi se laghiṣṭha*)." We should not be discouraged when we think we have not even the least bit of merit which is required for the service of the Holy Name of Krishna, for this kind of consciousness is natural for a devotee.

At the same time, we must guard ourselves from an insincere conception of our own devotion; this is our enemy. To think, "I do not have the least liking or taste for the Lord," is all right. But to think, "I have some taste, some earnestness, some devotion for the Lord," is dangerous.

✽ THE EGOISTIC WORLD ✽

If we are going to have a connection with the infinite, we must be fully empty; our self-abnegation must be complete. Worldly attainment is a negative thing, and we must withdraw from it completely. We should think, "I am nothing; I have no qualifications for being accepted or used in the service of the Lord. I am

completely unfit.” We must completely withdraw from the egoistic world and allow ourselves to be captured by *yogamāyā*, the Lord’s internal energy. A slave has no position; the whole position is with the master. Everything is His. Realizing this is our real qualification. As soon as we assert that we have some qualifications, our difficulties begin. So Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu Himself says, “I don’t find a trace of love of Krishna within My heart (*na prema-gandho ’sti darāpi me harau*).” This is the standard of humility. And that feeling must be sincere; it must not be an imitation. We must be careful. We must not venture to imitate the highest devotees. To genuinely feel, to conceive that we possess nothing and that everything is His—that is the only qualification for chanting the Holy Name of Krishna.



HUMBLER THAN A BLADE OF GRASS

SANSKRIT

तृणादपि सुनीचेन तरोरिव सहिष्णुना ।
अमानिना मानदेन कीर्त्तनीयः सदा हरिः ॥२१॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

trṇād api sunīcena
taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

TRANSLATION

“One who is humbler
than a blade of grass,
more forbearing than a tree
who gives due honor to others
without desiring it for himself
is qualified to always chant
the Holy Name of Krishna.”

ILLUMINATION

We should mainly couch ourselves in this mood: we should think of ourselves as the meanest of the mean. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given his analysis of the meaning of this verse as follows: even a blade of grass has its value, but we do not even have as much value as a blade of grass. We have no positive value. It is one thing if a man is not educated, but a madman is worse than uneducated. He can think—but only abnormally. Therefore, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “I have some consciousness, some intelligence, but it is all misdirected. A blade of grass has no misdirection. When trampled upon, it has no tendency to spring back in the opposite direction. A blade of grass can be blown here and there by a storm, or by the external environment, but I will always be

reluctant to go in a particular direction. If the waves of the environment want to take me in a particular direction, I'll try to oppose them. If you really consider my value, my position is lower than a blade of grass because I have an opposing tendency."

When we want to bring ourselves in a closer relationship with the infinite goodness, we should think, "I have no value. Rather, my value is negative. It is my tendency to oppose the Lord's grace. If Krishna wants to grace me, I try to resist. I am constituted of such an element that I commit spiritual suicide. Krishna comes to grace me, but I oppose Him: the energy that is within me tries for suicide. This is my position, but a blade of grass won't oppose anyone. I have such a nasty position." We must realize that we are in such a predicament. With this concern we may accept the goodness of the Absolute Truth in the form of His Holy Name.

We should not think that the path will be very smooth; so many troubles may come from outside. When the devotees go to chant Hare Krishna in the street, many people come and shout, "Hey, you monkeys! Red-faced monkeys!" So many forms of hindrances and opposition will come and try to affect us, to dissuade us from this path, but we must practice forbearance like that of a tree. Why has the example of a tree been given? It has been analyzed in this way: if no one pours any water on a tree, it does not

protest, “Oh! Give me water!” If anyone comes to disturb the tree, snatching its leaves, cutting its branches, or even chopping it down, a tree remains silent; it gives no opposition. We should try to see how insult, poverty, punishment, or other unfavorable dealings are necessary to purify us, and with minimal punishment we shall be released from material existence.

Through Krishna consciousness we have connected with the highest object of life, the highest fulfillment of life—what price are we ready to pay for that? It is inconceivable. Whatever little demands may be exacted from us, we must accept with a smiling face, considering the highest goal. If we are really confident, if we have faith in our bright future, then we can gladly pay what little price nature wants to take from us.

❀ “KRISHNA—I SHALL TEACH YOU A LESSON!” ❀

Once, Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, was going through the town of Navadvīpa begging a little rice from different houses. The village people sometimes attack or insult devotees, and as he was going to his quarters they did not spare even such an exalted soul. Some boys were pelting him with stones and throwing dirt at him, and he remarked, “Krishna, You are cruelly dealing with me!

I shall complain to Your mother Yaśodā about You.” That was his outlook, and in that way he harmonized everything. We should learn to see Krishna in anything that comes to disturb or attack us. In philosophical calculation, of course, without God’s will nothing can happen. But in a concrete way, a devotee sees, “O, Krishna! You are backing these children, You are disturbing me, and I shall teach You a lesson. I know how to deal with You. I shall complain to Mother Yaśodā, and she will chastise You.”

The advanced devotees are established in the consciousness that Krishna is behind everything, and they take everything in that way. This attitude is our beacon light, for it will guide us to adjust ourselves with those things that are apparently unfavorable to us. A sweet adjustment is found there, and so we are advised to be more tolerant than a tree. We may not give any opposition; still, opposition will come to disturb us. And we must forbear.

And we must show our respect to others. Prestige is the greatest and most subtle enemy of the devotee of Krishna. Pride is the worst enemy for the devotee of Krishna. And pride ultimately takes one to the conclusion of the *māyāvādīs*, the monists. They say, so ’ham—“I am!” Not *dāso* ’ham, “I am subordinate,” but “I am of the Supreme Element; I am That: I am He,” eliminating from their consideration the fact that we are tiny and suffering in misery. All these practical

things are ignored by the *māyāvādīs*, the impersonalists, but position, or ego (*pratiṣṭhā*), is our worst enemy. In this verse, we are advised to deal with prestige and position in a special way.

❀ THE SLAVE AREA OF KRISHNA ❀

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “You must not desire respect from anyone or even from the environment itself; at the same time, you must give prestige to everyone and everything in the environment according to its position. Show respect, but don’t desire any respect from outside.” We must be very particular about this, for pride is our hidden enemy, our worst enemy. If we can somehow avoid or conquer this enemy, we will be able to enter into the slave area of Krishna and join those who have given their lives wholesale in sacrifice to Him. The general meaning of this verse is, “Never seek position or prestige from any quarter. At the same time, give honor to one and all according to your understanding.”

❀ A GREAT INSULT ❀

When our spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura, went to Vṛndāvana in the early 1930’s, he rode a motorcar. In those days, this was unheard of for a saint. One day, a priest insulted our

guru by deprecating the position of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī, the preceptor of our highest conception of spiritual achievement. He boasted, “We are not only residents of the holy land, but members of the cast of high priests (*brāhmaṇas*). Therefore we can offer our benedictions to Dāsa Goswāmī. He was born in a low-class family, and he himself asked such a benediction from us.”

Of course, in great humility, Dāsa Goswāmī once prayed,

**gurai goṣṭhe goṣṭhālayiṣu sujane bhūsuragaṇe
svamantre śrī-nāmni vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-śaraṇe
sadā dambhaṁ hitvā kuru ratim apūrvām atitarām
aye svāntarbhṛtaś caṭubhir abhiyāce dhṛta-padaḥ**

“O mind—my brother! I fall at your feet and implore you: ‘Give up all pride and always taste ecstatic love while remembering the divine guide, the holy abode of Vṛndāvana, the cowherds and milkmaids of Vraja, the loving devotees of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, the gods on earth or pure *brāhmaṇas*, the Gayātrī *mantra*, the Holy Names of Śrī Krishna and the divine youthful couple of Vraja, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindasundara.’”

That priest remarked, “We are residents of the holy abode of Vṛndāvana, and *brāhmaṇas* as well, so we are in a position to give benedictions to Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī.” Upon hearing these

words, our *guru mahārāja*, who was at Rādhā-kuṇḍa at the time, began fasting. He remarked, “I have to hear this? This fellow is under the control of lust, anger, and greed, and he says that he can show his grace to Dāsa Goswāmī, the most respected preceptor in our line! And I am to hear that?” Without retaliating against his remarks, he decided to fast.

We also stopped eating, and our whole camp began fasting. Then a local gentleman who came to know that the whole camp was fasting managed to find the blasphemous priest and bring him to our *guru mahārāja*. That priest begged to be pardoned. Our *guru mahārāja* was satisfied and, after showing him some respect, finally broke his fast. At that time someone told our *guru mahārāja*, “They are all ignorant fools. Why should you be so much affected by his words? You should ignore it.” Our *guru mahārāja* said, “If I were an ordinary *bābājī* and heard such a remark, I could simply cover my ears and go away. But I am playing the part of an *ācārya*, one who teaches by example. What justification do I have for riding in a motorcar if I do not oppose the remarks against my *gurudeva*?”

Repeatedly he used this expression: “Why am I driving a motorcar here in Vṛndāvana?” he said, “Had I been a *niṣkiñcana bābājī*, a saint living in seclusion and wearing only a loincloth, I would have given no opposition to this man. To save myself, I would simply



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura. “. . . because I am riding in a big motorcar in the post of *ācārya*, a teacher—I must defend the dignity of the great devotees.”

leave the place and go elsewhere. But because I am riding in a big motorcar in the post of an *ācārya*, a teacher, I must defend the dignity of the great devotees. I have accepted this charge and can't evade these circumstances. I must face it and do everything in my power that such things may not go on undetected or unopposed.”

Humility must be adjusted or modified in its practical application. Once, when a Hare Krishna temple was attacked, a gun was used by the devotees to defend the temple. Later there was a complaint among the local people. They said, “Oh, they are

humble? They are tolerant? Why have they crossed the advice of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to be humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree? They can't be devotees!" So many complaints were coming to me, but I defended them by saying, "No, they have done rightly. The instruction to be humbler than a blade of grass means one should be humble to the devotee, not to a madman."

The general class of men are ignorant. They are mad. They do not know what is good or bad, so their consideration has no value. Who is qualified to judge whether a devotee is offering respect to all and not expecting any for himself? Who will judge whether he is really humble and tolerant—madmen? Ignorant people? Have they any sense to judge who is humble, who is tolerant, and who is respectful to others? There must be a standard by which to judge humility. We are interested in the criterion given by higher thinkers, not the consideration of the ignorant masses.

✽ THE STANDARD OF HUMILITY ✽

Of course, anyone may deceive the ordinary public with superficial humility. But a show of humility is not real humility. It must come from the heart, and it must have a real purpose. Everything—humility, tolerance, and pridelessness—must be considered by the judgement of a standard, normal person, not by the

ignorant who are like elephants, tigers, and jackals. Should they be allowed to judge what is humility, what is audacity and impertinence? Of course not. Should a devotee think, "The Deity and the temple is about to be molested, but I shall stand by and do nothing. I should be humble and tolerant. A dog is entering the temple; I should show him respect?" No. This is not real humility.

We must have a normal conception of reality. We must not allow these anomalies to continue in the name of offering respects to others. We must not think that we may allow anyone to harm the devotees or molest the temple, that we shall allow the dog to enter the temple, and by doing this we are humble and tolerant, we are showing all respects to others. We are not interested only in the physical meaning of the scriptures, but the real meaning.

That I am humble means that I am the slave of the slave of a Vaiṣṇava. With that consciousness we must proceed. If anyone comes to molest my master, I should first sacrifice myself, thinking, "Because I am of the least importance, my sacrifice is no loss; I must sacrifice myself to maintain the dignity of my *guru*, the devotees, and my Lord and His family."

We must always understand what is to be honored. We offer our respects to the highest truth, the Lord of Lords; our dealings should be in consonance with that. If we always keep the highest conception of

relativity within us, we will see that we are the lowest. If there is danger to our guardians, we shall sacrifice ourselves. All of this should be taken into account when trying to understand the meaning of humility, not physical imitation—but genuine humility; it is a question of practical realization. Fame and honor must be given to the Lord and His devotees, not to anyone else.

In the higher stages of devotion, of course, humility may have to be adjusted in another way for the *paramahansa bābājīs*, the topmost swanlike saints who have given up all connection with this material world. But in the preaching stage, the second class devotee must accept things differently. As our *guru mahārāja* said, “Had I been in the role of a *bābājī*, a nonassertive, reclusive saint, I would have walked away from the place without offering any opposition. But when we are preaching and have taken the responsibility of leading so many souls to the domain of the Lord, our adjustment must be made accordingly.” Generally, we may be indifferent to those who are personally inimical to us, but when we preach on behalf of the Lord in an organized way, our duty changes: we cannot be indifferent to antagonists.

It is mentioned in the scriptures by Jīva Goswāmī that according to one’s own particular status, these things should be taken into consideration and the necessary things should be done. He has given his

decision that if the devotee has a position of power, if he is a king, and if someone repeatedly blasphemes a real Vaiṣṇava, or saintly person, then the king should enforce corporal punishment by banishing the offender from his state or by cutting out his tongue (*vaiṣṇava nindaka jihvā hāta*). That is not the duty for ordinary persons; if they act in such a way, there will be a riot. We should not be eager to inflict physical punishment upon anyone.

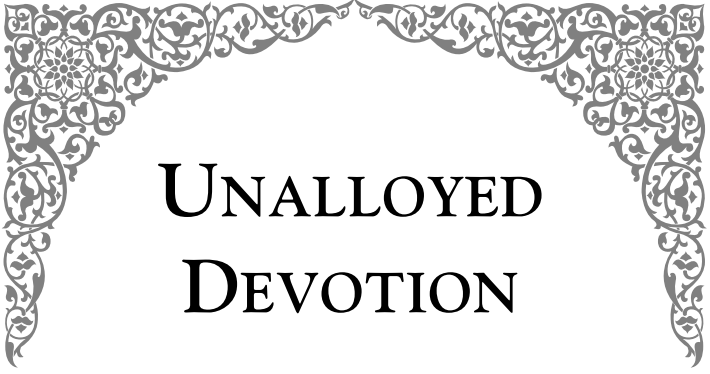
Hanuman is a Vaiṣṇava, but he is seen to destroy so many lives. The same is true of Arjuna and so many other devotees. Even Krishna and Rāmacandra are also seen to kill so many demons in war. Simply a physical show of meekness does not constitute the real meaning of humility. When there is an insult to the *guru* or the Vaiṣṇavas, a devotee will oppose the blasphemers according to his might.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, in one of his songs, says that we should not only tolerate the evil-doings of others and a disturbing environment, but we should do good to those by whom we are being tortured. The example is given of a tree. One who is cutting the tree gets shade and comfort from the tree even while cutting it down. In conclusion, he says that humility, mercy, respect for others, and renunciation of name and fame, are the four qualifications for chanting the Holy Name of Krishna.

We are the meanest of the mean. We should

always be conscious that we are beggars. We should think, “Although I am a beggar, I’ve come to beg for the highest thing; let no disturbance dissuade me from my attempt.” At the same time, our attitude toward the environment should be respectful.

In this way, by becoming educated in the Krishna conception of divinity, everyone should be given respect according to his position. It is the guiding instruction in the worship of the Holy Name (*nāma-bhajana*) that we must take the position of the slave of the slave of the slave of the Lord. If you want to chant the name of Krishna, then don’t waste your energy with the trifling things of this world. Don’t allow your attention to be disturbed by tiny acquisitions like prestige or gain which is relative to money or physical comfort. Remember, you are trying for the greatest thing, and all other things are very small in comparison to Krishna consciousness. So, don’t waste your energy and valuable time. Be economical. You have the chance to achieve the highest goal of life.



UNALLOYED DEVOTION

SANSKRIT

न धनं न जनं न सन्दरीं कवितां वा जगदीश कामये ।
मम जन्मनि जन्मनीश्वरे भवताद्भक्तिरहैतुकी त्वयि ॥२९॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam va jagad-isa kamaye
mama janmani-janmaniśvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi

TRANSLATION

“O Lord, I have no desires
to accumulate wealth, followers,
beautiful women, or salvation.
My only prayer is for
Your causeless devotional service,
birth after birth.”

ILLUMINATION

We should try to move in this direction. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “I don’t want any money (*na dhanam*), I don’t want any popularity or manpower (*na janam*), I don’t want the company of beautiful ladies (*na sundarim*). I don’t want a good name, or the fame of a poet (*kavitam vā*).” This is the general meaning of this verse, but it has been deeply dealt with in the commentaries of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Our *guru mahārāja* has commented that in this verse, wealth, followers, women, and scholarship represent duty, wealth, sense pleasure, and salvation (*dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa*). Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained that in this context, “wealth” means the wealth which comes from following one’s pre-

scribed duties. It can also mean *artha*, economic development. He says that “followers” means physical relationship for comforts: wife, children, and so forth. The word *sundarim* means *kāma*, the company of beautiful ladies. And *kavitam*, poetry, represents *mokṣa*, liberation. Liberation apparently has a high value but really, like poetry, it is only flowery words. Liberation is imaginary because the ultimate result of liberation is that one’s existence vanishes.

❀ SERVICE CAPITALISTS ❀

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “O lord of the universe, I only pray for spontaneous devotion to You without motive for any reward. I want a natural serving attitude.” *Prema* means affection, love. *Prema* means, “I shall serve You, and in remuneration You must give me more of a tendency to serve You—more energy and more hankering to serve You. My affection for You will be enhanced and the interest will become capital just as in the money-lending business.” In this way, a devotee prays to Krishna, “I am serving You, and if you want to pay me something, then give me more capital to increase my serving tendency so it may be more enhanced.

“Wherever I am born according to my karma, I aspire only for Your service, my Lord, and I pray for unmotivated service, not for anything else in return.”

The general temptation that surrounds us on four sides is of four classes: money, followers, women, and liberation, and that means *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*. In this way, the gradations of different goals of life have been scientifically represented.

But Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “I have no attraction for any of these things, but only for You, my Lord. I don’t even aspire after liberation. I will not even ask, “Give me liberation, for, being liberated, I will be able to serve You better.” That sort of condition must not be placed on divinity. This is the purest of prayers. “According to my karma, I may be bird or beast, here or there, or even in hell—it does not matter. My whole aspiration is concentrated on one thing alone: I pray that my attraction for You may never be lost. I pray that it may always be enhanced.”

Bhakti, devotion, is *ahaitukī*, causeless. It is quite natural and has no other aspiration. Someone may say, “If interest is always being reinvested as capital, I will never enjoy the profit,” but we are interested in enjoyment by self-giving. “Let others enjoy at my cost”—that is the basis of the highest enjoyment. The devotee thinks, “Let Krishna enjoy with others—I will be the scapegoat.”

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that when a baby has no knowledge, and an enemy or a disease comes to attack him, he cannot defend himself. In the same way, in the beginning, when one’s realization of the Holy

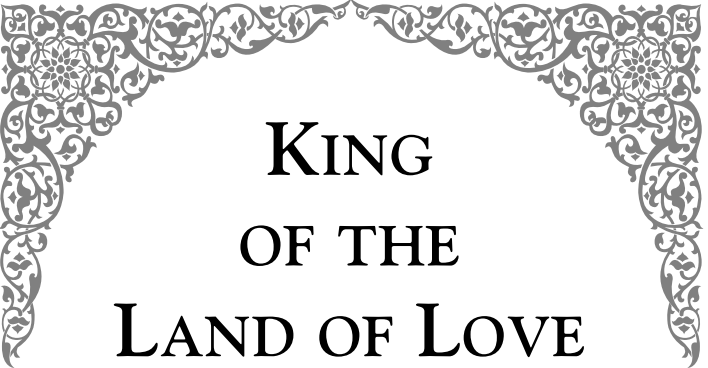
Name is in the childlike stage, then crimes and offenses against the name can prevail. When one's realization is grown up, no offense can approach him, but so many offenses may come and attack the beginner.

❁ THE SUICIDE SQUAD ❁

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "The Holy Name is so beautiful, gracious, and charming. Let me die along with all the offenses against it so others may enjoy its nectar." He wants to sacrifice himself just as in wartime, with bombs under their armpits, the suicide squad would jump into a ship's chimney. The suicide squad began with Japan's campaign against the British, and when Hitler heard of their fearlessness, he said, "We have something yet to learn from Japan." So, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura prays, "I want to finish myself along with all the offenses against the name, that others may enjoy the nectar of the Holy Name."

Vāsudeva Datta also prayed, "Give the sins of all souls to me, and throw me into eternal hell, so that they may benefit. Give them love of Krishna." By that highly generous sentiment, he does not die. It is said, "Die to live." When we have so much appreciation for the Lord that we feel this kind of sentiment, we find a living attainment of higher life. That is the enjoyment we want.

The last verse of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭakam* will explain this feeling. Another example of this is found when the great sage Narada came to the *gopīs* and asked them for the dust of their lotus feet for the treatment of Krishna's headache. Here we find self-abnegation to the highest degree, and that is the whole point of devotion. The very life of a devotee is based on sacrifice. As much as there is sacrifice, there is benefit. And sacrifice means "Die to live." This is a favorite saying of mine. These are Hegel's words: "Die to live." Krishna is the highest consumer known to the world. We should not hesitate to give ourselves to Him.



KING OF THE LAND OF LOVE

SANSKRIT

अयि नन्दतनुज किङ्करं पतितं मां विषमे भवाम्बुधौ ।
कृपया तव पादपङ्कजस्थितधूलीसदृशं विचिन्तय ॥३२॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaraṁ
patitaṁ mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau
krpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūlī-sadr̥śaṁ vicintaya

TRANSLATION

“O son of Nanda Mahārāja,
I am Your eternal servant,
yet because of my own karma,
I have fallen into this terrible
ocean of birth and death.
Accept this fallen soul
and consider me a particle of dust
at Your Holy Lotus Feet.”

ILLUMINATION

Here, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu prays, “O Lord, please consider me; I want to enter into the realm of Your merciful glance. I do not know how to take proper care of myself, and so I invite Your care. Please accept me and give me entrance. You are my guardian. I want to live under Your protection.”

And who is He? We hear of different conceptions of God, but here we have come to a beautiful conception of God—Krishna, the son of Nanda Mahārāja. This is found only in Vṛndāvana.

A great spiritual scholar, Raghupati Upādhyāya, once met Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu near Mathurā. There, they had a discussion and Mahāprabhu asked him, “Whom do we want to have as our master? Who is the final goal of our life?” Raghupati Upādhyāya answered:

śrutim apare smṛtim itare
 bhāratam anye bhajantu bhava-bhītāḥ
 aham iha nandaṁ vande
 yasyālinde paraṁ brahma

“Those who fear rebirth in this world may follow the advice of the Vedic scriptures—others may follow the *Mahābhārata*—but as for me, I follow Nanda Mahārāja, in whose courtyard the Supreme Absolute Truth plays as a child.”

In the system of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, Vedic social duty, the people in general are under the guidance of the *smṛti*, Vedic law. In this way, they are engaged in bodily duties with a color of godliness. Those who are free from physical demands, however, who are trying to transcend this life of enjoyment and exploitation, generally take their guidance from the *Upaniṣads* because higher advice is given there. Raghupati Upādhyāya says, “I don’t care for all these things, but I feel a need to follow the guidance of my heart. I am not so much concerned with the brain; I consider that real peace has its connection with the heart. And my heart is always attracted by Krishna’s father, Nanda. Krishna is said by authorities to be the Supreme Absolute Truth, and that absolute is crawling in the courtyard of Nanda Mahārāja, so I see concrete reality there.”

How has Nanda attracted the Supreme Absolute Truth? In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.8.46), the

devoted King Parīkṣit Mahārāja asks the boy saint Śukadeva Goswāmī:

**nandaḥ kim akarod brahman
śreya evaṁ mahodayam
yaśodā ca mahā-bhāgā
papau yasyāḥ stanam hariḥ**

“O knower of Brahman, you are always merged in the exclusive conscious world. No trace of any mundane objective reference can be found in you, for you are always engaged in the subjective world of spirit. Never is your consciousness thrown towards this objective world of ours. And you say that Krishna is the Supreme Absolute Truth. I ask one question of you, my master: what duty did Nanda discharge, what sort of realization did Nanda have that the Absolute Truth is so intimate with them that He appears as Nanda’s son and crawls about in his courtyard? He seems to be under Nanda’s clutches. What is this? This is a most wonderful thing. Is it possible?

❀ THE SUPREME SUBSTANCE SUCKLES HER BREAST? ❀

“The yogis, the ṛṣis, the great scholars and penance-makers say that they sometimes have a rare peek into their object of aspiration and realization, and then they come back suddenly. They can’t keep their attention in that plane for long periods of time.

How is it possible that the Supreme Substance sits on the lap of Yaśodā and sucks her breast? If such things are real, if it is at all possible, then why should I not be attracted by that method by which I can have so much intimacy with the highest entity?"

In his prayer, Raghupati Upādhyāya expresses a similar ego. He says, "I don't want to be entangled in the subtle discussion and analysis of the scriptures; I just want to surrender myself to Nanda and his party. I want to enlist my name in the group where Nanda is the master guide."

By the exercise of energy (*karma*), we can attain a good destination; without faith in the achievements of *karma*, we may try for salvation by raising our consciousness (*jñāna*). But if we inquire into the solution of life with the help of the experts of that higher spiritual realm like Nanda and his party, we can enter into the land of love and dedication.

My faith, my common sense about religion, tells me that if I see that Supreme Absolute Truth who is so rare and find Him real, concrete, and intimate, appealing directly to my heart, then why should I engage myself in wild-goose chasing? I shall appeal directly to the object of my search. If someone tells me that a hawk has snatched my ear, should I chase the hawk without first touching my ear to see if it is still there? If I can have the Absolute Truth so intimately, why should I allow myself to run hither and

thither? If I find that the Absolute Truth has kindly come with all His charm, and that His charm is not a secret and many personages are being attracted by Him, then should I run after the phantasmagoria of the the meditationists, the abstractionists and renunciationists? Never.

It is common sense. The straight understanding is given by authorities that Krishna, the son of Nanda, is Supreme. So when we have come up to that standard, then we can ask, "O son of Nanda, Krishna, king of the country of love: I appeal for Your affection. I am Your servant. I feel within myself that I have some connection with You. I am subordinate to You, but somehow, I am in adverse circumstances. I feel that there are so many enemies within me that are trying to take me away from You that I can't give my attention to You all the time. At the same time, I feel from the inner plane of my heart that You are my master, You are all in all to me. My heart won't be satisfied without Your companionship. So I appeal to You: I am under unfavorable circumstances; I am suffering, and without Your grace, I don't find any means of relief from my present imprisoned position."

✽ THE SOUL—LIKE A RAY OF SUN ✽

Here it is said, "I feel that I am not eternally connected with You; if it were so, then this separation

would have been impossible. Unlike an *avatāra*, I am not Your plenary portion.” Other incarnations of the Supreme Lord are plenary expansions of him (*svāmśa*), but the *jīva* is a partial representation of his potency (*vibhinnāmśa*). In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Krishna says that the living entities are His eternal parts and parcels. The soul comes from marginal potency (*kṛṣṇera taṭasthā-śakti, bhedābheda prakāśa*). And the soul is an atomic fragmental part of the Lord’s potency like a ray of the sun. But here, the devotee prays, “I’m not part and parcel of Your own body, I’m not even a ray, but my representation is nearer to that of a particle of sand, a particle of dust—not even a particle of the ray coming out of the luster of Your body.” In this way, Śrīman Mahāprabhu is representing on our behalf that our petition must be of this type: “I cannot indulge myself in thinking that I possess such fortune that I may be considered an inseparable part of you. I am a separable part, but I also want Your grace. Please be kind upon me; I invoke Your mercy for a special grant. Accept me in any position in Your connection—even the lowest position. At least this must be sanctioned. Consider me a particle of dust at Your feet. This is my prayer.”



HANKERING FOR PERFECTION

SANSKRIT

नयनं गलदश्रुधारया वदनं गद्गद-रुद्धया गिरा ।
पुलकैर्निचितं वपुः कदा तव नाम-ग्रहणे भविष्यति ॥३६॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

nayanaṁ galad-aśru-dhārayā
vadanaṁ gadgada-ruddhayā girā
pulkair nīcītaṁ vapuḥ kadā
tava nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati

TRANSLATION

“O Lord, when will tears flow
from my eyes like waves?
And my voice tremble in ecstasy.
When will the hairs of my body
stand on end while chanting
Your Holy Name?”

ILLUMINATION

In this verse, the devotee's prayer has been granted and he has acquired a position in Krishna's domain. Now his ambition has no end. Although he is posted in a safe position, he is again praying for further promotion. First he aspired only for an insignificant position as the dust under the soles of Krishna's divine feet. Then, the grant came. The touch of Krishna's holy feet came to the dust and the dust was converted as if by a magic wand. Now a greater, higher demand automatically comes.

The devotee thinks, “What is this? I prayed only to become the dust of the soles of Your feet, but what do I now feel within me? I am the dust of the earth, and You are the Supreme Absolute Truth. But by the very touch of Your lotus feet, dust has been converted into such a great and inconceivable substance. I won-

der, ‘How is it that I have been transformed?’ Now I find that my demand is for greater intimacy. First I aspired for servitude but now, by the touchstone of Your lotus feet, that hope has been converted into spontaneous attraction (*rāgā-marga*).”

✽ THE KING OF AFFECTION ✽

Spontaneous attraction can only mean Krishna, not Nārāyaṇa or Rāmacandra. Krishna means “one who is worshiped by divine love and affection.” He is the king of affection, the center of affection and love. The devotee’s whole conception of devotion changed just by coming in touch with Krishna’s lotus feet, and he was graced by the demand for more intimacy; greater love and affection came to grace that servitor.

He was raised to such a plane of dedication that his prayer has changed. He thinks, “What is this? I can’t check my tears. They are coming incessantly, and when I try to chant Your name, my Lord, I feel that I am losing control. Some interference from another quarter is moving me, disturbing my normal thinking and aspirations. I feel I am in the midst of another plane. I am nowhere. I have lost control; I have become a doll in the hands of some other power.

✿ LOTUS FEET—MAGIC WAND ✿

“My aspiration is taking me towards something else. Now I not only want a connection with You as a servitor from a distance, but coming in touch with the magic wand of Your lotus feet, my aspiration has changed. I see that so many devotees are engaged in Your service and chanting Your name, and seeing this, my hopes have been raised.

“I want to be lifted to that position. I can visualize that position from far away, but now my earnest prayer is that I may be raised to that level. Your connection has given me such thirst. I want to be handled by You. Play with me as You like in Your own way. My heart hankers after such a relationship with You. When I chant Your name with this feeling, I find that my previous conception has changed and my new hankering is for the standard of spontaneous love. I pray that You lift me into that plane of Your divine affection and love.”



FOREVER WITHOUT YOU

SANSKRIT

युगायितं निमेषेण चक्षुषा प्रावृषायितम् ।
शून्यायितं जगत् सर्व्वं गोविन्द-विरहेण मे ॥३९॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

yugāyitaṃ nimeṣena
cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitaṃ
śūnyāyitaṃ jagat sarvaṃ
govinda-viraheṇa me

TRANSLATION

“O Govinda!

Without You, the world is empty.

Tears are flooding my eyes like rain,
and a moment seems like forever.”

ILLUMINATION

Sometimes this verse is translated, “O Govinda, without You, I feel a moment to be twelve years or more.” The word *yuga* is sometimes translated “twelve years.” Some devotees say this is because Mahāprabhu experienced the most intense separation from Krishna in the mood of Rādhārāṇī for twelve years. In the Sanskrit dictionary it is said that one *yuga* means twelve years. That is one conception. Another meaning is “millennium” or “age.” A *yuga* can also mean an unlimited amount of time.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says, “One moment seems like an unlimited period of time. And my eyes are shedding tears like rain. The rainy season produces so many floods, and now it seems to me that my eyes are flooding. The visible is becoming invisible to me. I am so withdrawn from the present environment that I can’t see anything. My mind feels so much internal attraction towards the center of the infinite that wherever I cast my glance I see nothing.

Everything appears vacant, because I feel as if Govinda has withdrawn from me.

❀ ŚRĪ KRISHNA—REALITY THE BEAUTIFUL ❀

“Such a peculiar sort of feeling is within me—I have no interest in anything. All my interest is drawn towards Govinda, and to such a degree that I am a stranger to my present environment. I have nothing: no consciousness. It has gone somewhere else—towards the infinite. When there is a drought, all the rivers and lakes dry up. The water is drawn towards the gas world. Nowhere is a drop of water to be found. It is something like that. All charm is withdrawn so extensively that everything is empty. My senses, mind, and everything else has been drawn up, attracted by the all-attractive, all-charming, all-sweet Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna, reality the beautiful.” Sometimes it seems that the gap between union and separation is like so many millennia. A devotee thinks, “I have lost the consciousness of meeting Krishna long, long ago.” He has a faint remembrance: “I had some union with Krishna, but I left that so far behind, so far off, that it appears to be an unlimited gap of time. I once had a faint recollection, but now it is gone, perhaps forever.” He feels such a great degree of disappointment and despair.

This is the standard of the infinite world. Just as

we measure the distance of the planets and stars by light years, here the transcendental temperament is being measured by such a standard. What audacity we have to deal with things so great and beyond our jurisdiction.

At first the devotee thought, "If I am raised to that standard of service, my heart will be fulfilled. My thirst will be quenched, and I will feel some ease and satisfaction within me." But the development of his devotion took him to an unexpected plane of life. It is the nature of divine love that when a drop of that medicine is given to a hankering patient, the patient thinks he is cured, but he is taken into a dangerous position.

He thinks, "Seeing the devotees shedding tears incessantly, the hairs of their bodies standing on end, their voices choked up while chanting the name of Krishna, I was charmed. Those symptoms attracted me and I thought that if I could attain this, I would feel real satisfaction, but upon attaining that plane, what do I find? Just the opposite."

Coming into real connection with the infinite, he feels hopeless. He thinks, "There is no limit to progress. Rather, as much as I come in intimate connection with the infinite, I feel hopeless." The more we advance, the more we find it unlimited, and finding it unlimited, we become hopeless but we can't turn back. There is no possibility of retracing our

steps; we can only go ahead. This is the spirit of a genuine devotee.

Finding the infinite characteristic of our prospect, we can't leave—we become hopeless, thinking, “The highest kind of nectar is just before me, but I can't taste it—I am unable to touch it or get it in my fist. Still, its charm is so great that I can't retreat from this entanglement. And without that, a small span of time seems like millions of years.”

❀ RIVERS OF TEARS ❀

The devotee thinks, “Oh, long, long ages have passed away; still I am in want! I am trying to get it, but I can't get it, and time is passing. Time is also infinite. So many rivers of tears take birth from my eyes; tears profusely run down from my eyes over my body, but I don't find the position of success within my reach. My mind is fully vacant. I can't find any trace of my future. I have no charm, no attraction for anything else that might seem to console this diseased body.

“I find no possibility of solace from any other quarter. All alternatives have been eliminated. I am fully in the clutches of Krishna consciousness and love of Krishna. If there is anyone who can come to my relief, help me! I am lost. I am helpless. If there is anyone who can help me, please come to my rescue.”



O Govinda! "Without You, the world is empty. Tears are flooding my eyes like rain, and a moment seems like forever."

Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says that when we are deeply situated in love of Krishna, we can't leave it, but our thirst increases and we feel no satisfaction. We are in the midst of such an apparently horrible position.

The hankering for Krishna which awakens in one's mind takes this direction. When a devotee really comes in connection with Krishna, his position will be all-eliminating and all-exclusive. His complete concentration will be on Krishna.

In this verse, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu describes how a devotee goes further, awakens a higher conception of Krishna, and then, seeing Krishna just before him but not getting Him, feels this kind of separation. The more he progresses, the more he finds himself in this position of hopelessness. This highest advice of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu helps us adjust ourselves to this intense mood of separation. He tells us, "You are going to be lost in Krishna consciousness. And what will be your position? You are a drop and you will be thrown into the ocean of divine love."



UNION IN SEPARATION

SANSKRIT

आश्लिष्य वा पादरतां पिनष्टु मा-
मदर्शनान्मर्महतां करोतु वा ।
यथा तथा वा विदधातु लम्पटो
मत्प्राणनाथस्तु स एव नापरः ॥४७॥

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION

āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣṭu mām
adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampaṭo
mat-prāna-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ

TRANSLATION

“Krishna may embrace me in love
or trample me under His feet.
He may break my heart
by hiding Himself from me.
Let that debauchee do whatever He
likes, but He will always be the only
Lord of my life.”

ILLUMINATION

This is the greatest medicine for the devotees. We have come to measure the immeasurable, but we must always embrace this principle. In attempting to connect ourselves with the infinite Lord of love and beauty, we must remember that He is the infinite. He is only one to us, but He has many devotees like us to deal with. He may embrace us with much affection and adoration, but we must be prepared for the opposite. We may stick to His feet, but He may cruelly trample us. We have caught hold of His holy feet with great hope, with our whole heart; still we may find that He tramples us and does not care for all our attempts and affection.

We may be giving our best and find that our offering is being hatefully dishonored. He may embrace us, but at the same time we must be prepared that His deal-

ings may be extremely cruel. He may trample all our offerings beneath His feet. We must be prepared for both His adoration and His hateful negligence. We should be prepared for any adverse circumstances.

Krishna may be indifferent. He may not care. And when He is punishing us, He is nearer, but when He is indifferent it is even more intolerable than punishment. The devotee thinks, "Krishna is ignoring me, neglecting me so much that He does not like to keep any connection with me. Doesn't He know me? Am I a foreigner, unknown to Him?" We may accept punishment as a boon, but indifference is even more heart-rending.

The pain of separation felt by a devotee may even go a step higher. Krishna may affectionately embrace another right before our eyes, in front of our face, without caring even a little for us. We may think, "This is my claim, my right," but that may be given to another right in front of our faces. That will be a source of increasing trouble to us.

This is the law of affection. The law of love cannot tolerate indifference. It is too much to tolerate, but we must be prepared for that. We must be prepared from the beginning that this is the meaning of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, divine love for Krishna, because He is an autocrat. He is love. Divine love means mercy, and not justice. There is no law there. And we have selected divine love to be our highest fortune, so we must be prepared

to be treated without justice. There is no justice in divine love; it is free. It may flow anywhere and everywhere. This is the very nature of divine love, so we can't make any claim—we have no rights.

This is the nature of the highest thing, and it is extremely rare. But unhesitating adherence to that principle is required from our side. It is real love, and you must be prepared for that. In all adverse circumstances, this is the real nature of *kṛṣṇa-prema*: die to live. If you can accommodate all these different stages, good or bad, then you can enter this exalted plane.

❀ LOVE IS ABOVE LAW ❀

Justice is within law; mercy is above law. *Prema*, divine love is also above law, but it has its own law. Another verse whose meaning runs parallel to this one is given by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhupāda:

**viracaya mayi daṇḍam dīnabandho dayām vā
gatir iha na bhavattah kācid anyā mamāsti
nipatatu śata-koṭi nirbharam vā navāmbhas
tad api kila payodaḥ stūyate cātakena**

There is a kind of small bird named *cātaka* that only drinks rainwater. It never drinks any water from the earth, whether it is from a river, fountain, or lake. Its very nature is that with its mouth upward, it hankers after rainwater. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī gives this

example to show how a devotee should always be waiting in expectation of the “rainwater” of Krishna-love, and no other love.

The devotee prays to the Lord, “You are the friend of the fallen, so I have some hope. You may grant Your grace, or severely punish me—in either case, I have no other alternative but to wholly surrender to Your lotus feet.”

Our attitude of surrender should be just like that of the *cātaka* bird, who always has his eyes fixed upward, praying for rainwater. Rainwater may come profusely—not only enough to fill up his small belly, but enough to drown his whole body. Thunder may come from above; a bolt from the blue may come and finish his small body, and send him to the nonexistent quarter, but still the nature of that bird is to pray exclusively for rainwater. He won’t take water from any other place under any circumstance. Our attitude towards Krishna should be like that: whether or not He extends His gracious hand towards us, it is our duty to surrender unto Him.

In this connection, one verse comes to my memory. When Śrī Krishna met Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the *gopīs* in Kurukṣetra after a long separation of perhaps a hundred years, He felt that He had committed a great crime by separating Himself from them. Approaching near the *gopīs*, especially Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and remembering their qualities of love and surrender, He

felt like the greatest criminal, so much so that He bent down to touch the lotus feet of Rādhārāṇī.

One poet has represented the scene in this way, and that poem has been collected by Rupa Goswāmī in his *Padyāvalī*. Krishna was at that time the paramount king of India. But when He came in connection with the *gopīs* and the atmosphere of Vṛndāvana, He felt like a criminal, and bending down, He was just about to touch the lotus feet of Rādhārāṇī, when Rādhārāṇī, drawing back, remarked, “What are you doing? Why are you coming to touch My feet? This is astounding. Have You lost Your mind?”

❁ “I AM THE REAL CRIMINAL” ❁

“You are the master of everything. No explanation can be demanded of You. You are *swāmī*. You are My husband and master, and I am Your maidservant. It may be that for some time You were engaged in some other quarter, but what’s the harm in that? What is the fault in You for that? That does not matter, for that right is given to You by scripture and society. There is no crime, no sin on Your part. You have done nothing wrong.

“I am the real criminal. The meanness is with Me, the defect is wholly with Me. You are not responsible for Our separation, so why do You consider that You are faulty, or that You have committed some wrong?”

The positive proof that I am the real criminal is that I sustain My life; I did not die from the pangs of Your separation.

“I am showing My face to the world, but I am not faithful to You. I could not approach the standard of faith which I should have maintained for Your love, so I am the criminal, not You. It has been written in the scriptures by the saints that the wife should be thankful and exclusively devoted to the husband. This has been ordained in the scriptures. A woman should be devoted exclusively to her husband, her lord. So in this meeting, I should fall at Your feet and beg for Your pardon, for Your forgiveness that I have really no love for You. I am maintaining this body, and showing My face to society; I am not a proper partner for You, so please forgive Me. You are begging My forgiveness? This is just the opposite of how things should be. What is this? Please don't do this.”

This should be the ideal of our affection for Krishna. We, the finite, should take this attitude towards the infinite. At any time, He may only give a little attention to us, but we should be all-attentive towards Him. And there is no alternative. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu advises that we have exclusive devotion towards Krishna, and as we are insignificant, our attitude must be of this type.

If we want such a great thing, then it is not an injustice that we should be treated hatefully. Our

prospect, understanding, and adjustment must be that of self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, just as when someone goes to fight for his country on the battlefield, there is no room for luxury or excessive desires.

I remember in this connection that when Gandhi formed his nonviolence army, one of the volunteer soldiers asked, "Please arrange tea for us." Gandhi told him, "The water of the river may be supplied to you, but no tea. If you are ready for that then come forward." If we want to connect ourselves with the *vṛndāvana-līlā* of Krishna, we can make no conditions. Then, we shall understand the method recommended by Śrīman Mahāprabhu: humility greater than that of a blade of grass. There should be no complaint from our side. Not only in the external position of our present life, but even in eternal life, any complaint from our side should be carefully eliminated and we must fully accept the ways of the Lord. Krishna may accept us or reject us; we have to take that risk. Only then may we make progress.

In some way or other, if we can enter the group of Krishna's servitors, we will find that everyone has such a nature, and when they meet together, they will console each other in their respective groups. In different serving relationships there are different sections of servitors of a similar nature, and they console

each other with talk of Krishna (*kṛṣṇa-kathā*). In *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.9, 12) Krishna says:

mac-cittā mad-gata prāṇā
 bodhayantaḥ parasparam
 kathayantaś ca mām nityam
 tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca

“My devotees mix together, talk about Me, and exchange thoughts that give consolation to their hearts. And they live as if this talk about Me is their food. It gives them a high kind of pleasure, and they find that when they talk about Me among themselves, they feel as if they are enjoying My presence.”

teṣām evānukampārtham
 aham ajñāna-jaṁ tamaḥ
 nāśayāmy ātma-bhāvastho
 jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā

“When sometimes the feeling of separation from Me is very acute in My devotees, I suddenly appear before them and quench their thirst for My company.”

❀ SWEETNESS WITHIN PAIN ❀

In this last verse of His *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has given another very fine and high type of solace. And this has been confirmed by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī, who has written:

**bāhye viṣa-jvālā haya
bhitare ānandamaya
kṛṣṇa-premāra adbhuta carita**

“Don’t be afraid. Outwardly you may feel a horrible pain of separation, but internally, you will feel an unparalleled type of *rasa*, the most pleasing feeling of peace, joy, or ecstasy.” Externally, there may be pangs of separation, but internally there is the greatest satisfaction.

In this way we are advised by the scriptures, and our practical experience corroborates our faith in this subtle matter. The English poet, Shelley, has written:

**“Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those
That tell of saddest thought.”**

When we are reading an epic where there is cruel separation between the hero and the heroine, it is so sweet to us that although we shed tears, still we cannot leave the book. When we hear about the pangs of Sitā-devī, how Rāmacandra banishes Her and leaves Her uncared for in the forest although She is with child, this is very painful. We shed tears, but still we read on. There is sweetness within pain. It is possible.

Separation from Krishna is like that. The special characteristic of *kṛṣṇa-prema* is this: externally, we feel extreme pain, like lava, but internally our heart is

filled with some extraordinary ecstatic joy. This is what Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has given us. As much as we can catch the meaning of His instructions, we shall be prepared for that kind of life. This is the fare to go to Vṛndāvana, and when we are introduced to so many others like us, then our joy knows no bounds. When we meet others who have the same nature and mind as us, we get solace from them. We need not be afraid. In spite of all these things, we should think firmly that there is our home, and we should want to go back to home, back to Godhead.

We are not foreigners there. Here we are foreigners: every man treats me in any way that he likes. But Vṛndāvana is most hopeful and full of the highest prospect. It is the place of inner satisfaction. We aspire after that; we cannot but continue aspiring for our real home. What is real joy and ecstasy? We are not acquainted with that. This is our present trouble. Yet as much as we progress in Krishna consciousness, we shall become conscious of a practical feeling of real joy and ecstasy, beauty and charm, and in this way, we shall become more and more encouraged.

Yāmunācārya says:

yad-avadhi mama cetaḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravinde
 nava-nava-rasa-dhāmany udyataṁ rantum āsīt
 tad-avadhi bata nārī-saṅgame smaryamāṇe
 bhavati mukha-vikāraḥ suṣṭhu niṣṭhīvanam̐ ca

“Before I came in touch with the Krishna-love of Vṛndāvana, worldly pleasure was of much importance to me; but now, if any mundane taste comes in my memory, my face becomes disfigured, and I spit at the thought.”

So if we get a slight taste of that ecstasy, then at once we come to the conclusion that there can be no comparison between that and any peace or pleasure here in this mundane world. At the same time, once we are settled in that atmosphere, no pain can disturb or affect us in any way.

There is another side also: although we are advised to be prepared for painful separation, the fact is not so cruel in reality. Krishna says, *mayi te teṣu cāpy aham*: “I am always with My devotees.” Wherever there is an exclusive devotee, Krishna is there like his shadow, always invisibly moving after him. This is the Lord’s nature:

**ahaṁ bhakta-parādhīno
 hy asvatantra iva dvija
 sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo
 bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ**

The Lord tells Durvāsā, “I am the slave of my devotees; I have no freedom apart from their will. Because they are completely pure and devoted to Me, My heart is controlled by them, and I reside always in their hearts. I am dependent not only on My devo-

tees, but even on the servants of My devotees. Even the servants of My devotees are dear to Me.”

❀ KRISHNA IS NOT A SWEETBALL ❀

We must be prepared for any unfavorable circumstances, but we must not be discouraged. Krishna is most affectionate; His care towards us is most acute and sincere. His affection towards us has no rival. Still, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has given us a warning in this verse: “You are coming to search after Krishna? Krishna is not a sweetball from the market that you can purchase and finish so easily. You are trying to attain the highest of the high, so you must be prepared for anything.”

At the same time, the devotees will come to us saying, “Have no fear. We are all like you. Let us all walk together in a straight line. Don’t be afraid—we are here.” We are told that Krishna’s devotees are even more sympathetic to us than Krishna Himself. The solace of our life and our fortune is his devotees, and Krishna says: *mad bhaktānām ca ye bhaktāh*, “One who is a servant of My servant is My real servant.” *Sadhu-saṅga*, the association of saints, is the most important and valuable thing for us. To make our advancement and progress towards the infinite, our association is our guide; it is all-important. We must stick to this conclusion:

**‘sādhu saṅga,’ ‘sādhu saṅga,’—sarva śāstre kaya
lava-mātra sādhu saṅge sarva-siddhi haya**

“The conclusion has been given in the scriptures that all perfection can be attained by the help of the saints. Good association is our greatest wealth in reaching the supreme goal.”



Part 3

Conclusion



A DROP OF DIVINE LOVE

Only Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu can give the conception of full-fledged theism. It is His grace, His sweet will. It is His own wealth, not the property of many. Krishna is an autocrat. He is the highest. And whomever He selects to receive His own wealth will get it. No one can raise the question of “no taxation without representation”—there is no room for that sort of slogan here.

In order to explain this for our benefit, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, taking himself as a fallen soul, says, “My position is that of a servant of Krishna, but I am devoid of Krishna. What am I? I am a slave of Krishna, a slave of the Lord, but I am devoid of my master? What an ironic thing it is.” You can wail, you can repent, you can mourn, but all rights are reserved by Him. And when you awaken to that higher stage of self-surrender, you will get that wealth. But still, we must conceive that Krishna is above all law. Otherwise, surrender is meaningless.

If we analyze the very basis of surrender, we must ask where does surrender begin? In full surrender, there are no rights. Whenever any rights are established, surrender becomes unnecessary. We cannot think, “We must fight for our innate rights.” To a certain extent we may try for our rights in this world, but in Krishna’s pastimes this mentality has no place.

✽“ALL RIGHTS RESERVED”✽

Even the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmīdevī, cannot enter there, what to speak of others. It is inconceivable. Krishna is not under any law or within anyone’s fist. “All rights reserved.” Everything is His sweet will. But He is absolute good; that is our solace. We cannot enter His domain as a matter of right. Even Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Lakṣmīdevī cannot enter there. But still, if we take the path chalked out by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, we can enter and achieve a position there.

It is so dear, so rare, so valuable and desirable. We must look for the magnanimity of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu which is aspired for by Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva. They are praying for a drop of His mercy, but Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu brought that here in a flood and inundated everyone with that nectar, a drop of which is rarely to be had or even thought of. We must approach His mercy with such an attitude of hankering and expectation. His gift is

so great and magnanimous—who can understand it?

With two verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, one from the mouth of Krishna Himself, and the next from the mouth of Uddhava, He takes us straight to that highest place, eliminating so many external things. Krishna says:

na tathā me priyatama
 ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ
 na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr
 naivātmā ca yathā bhavān

“O, Uddhava! Neither Brahmā, nor Śiva, nor Baladeva, nor Lakṣmī, nor even My own self are as dear to Me as you are.”

And Uddhava says,

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāṁ
 vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
 yā dustyajaṁ svajanam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā
 bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām

“The *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons, and other family members, who are very difficult to renounce, and they have sacrificed even their religious principles to take shelter of the lotus feet of Krishna, which are sought after even by the *Vedas*. O! Grant me the fortune to be born as a blade of grass in Vṛndāvana, so that I may take the dust of those great souls upon my head.”

❀ THE PROGRESSIVE MARCH TOWARDS DIVINITY ❀

The gradation of theism can be traced from Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe, to Krishna's intimate friend Uddhava in Dvārakā. And Uddhava takes us directly to Vṛndāvana to reveal the highest devotion, eliminating various prospects in our progressive march towards divinity. We have to march on. And the way is that of surrender, of loving devotion, not mere formal devotion.

vaikuṅṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād
vṛndāraṇyam udāra-pāṇi-ramaṇāt tatrāpi govardhanaḥ
rādhā-kuṇḍam ihāpi gokula-pateḥ premāmṛtāplāvanāt
kuryād asya virājato giri-taṭe sevām vivekī na kaḥ

“Superior to the spiritual realm of Vaikuṅṭha is Mathurā, where Śrī Krishna first appears. Superior to Mathurā is the Vṛndāvana forest where Krishna enjoyed the *rāsa* dance. Better still is Govardhana hill, which was the site of even more confidential pastimes of love. But best of all is Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which is situated at the foot of Govardhana hill, and holds the supreme position because it is overflowed with the nectar of the highest kind of divine love. Who is acquainted with the science of devotion who will not aspire for the divine service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī at Rādhā-kunda?”

❁ THE HEART OF KRISHNA ❁

We must place our faith in these subtle things. Only through faith of a finer order can we be led to that highest quarter. The highest conception is in the heart of Krishna, and we have to enter into the heart of Krishna, not any other place.

Although Krishna's conjugal pastimes with the *gopīs* (*mādhurya-līlā*) are supreme, they cannot stand alone: there are many other things which are present in His pastimes. Krishna's pastimes with His friends and parents are essential in supporting His pastimes of amorous love. Conjugal love is, of course, the main thing, but still it is dependent on the other paraphernalia of Krishna's pastimes. There must be Krishna's family and friends and all the different groups of servants. Even the environment of Vṛndāvana itself also has its valuable part to play.

And what is Vṛndāvana? The sands of the river Yamunā, the jungle, the birds, peacocks, and deer, the cows, cowboys, and caves of Govardhana hill, the motherly relatives—everything is there, and it is well-designed and most suitable for the pastimes of Śrī Krishna.

Vṛndāvana is necessary for the pastimes of Rādhā and Govinda. When Rādhārāṇī meets Krishna in Kurukṣetra, Her mind runs to Vṛndāvana. She thinks,

“Krishna is here and I am also here,” but Her mind runs to Vṛndāvana. In Kurukṣetra, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is hankering for the environment of Vṛndāvana; She wants to have Śrī Krishna’s company there. All of Krishna’s paraphernalia and divine associates have their own unique value, and cannot be eliminated.

Rādhā-Govinda cannot be taken away from Vṛndāvana anymore than Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu can be taken away from Navadvīpa. The whole thing is a system. One part cannot be snatched away from the other parts. All the devotees have a necessary part to play in order to create the harmony of Krishna’s pastimes. Otherwise, it would not be living, but dead, artificial, useless. It cannot even be imagined. *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* is an organic whole.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī says, “My mind is running straight towards Vṛndāvana. I have the main object of pleasure, Krishna Himself, but it is useless without the favorable paraphernalia of Vṛndāvana.” So Rādhārāṇī’s pain of separation rises to the highest point in Kurukṣetra, where She has attained the object of Her union after a long separation. There, Krishna is very close, but, without being surrounded by the favorable paraphernalia of Vṛndāvana, She cannot have the real advantage of union. In this way, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in Kurukṣetra.

✽ A REVOLUTIONARY GURU ✽

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura once revealed the importance of Kurukṣetra in a unique way. The words of our *guru mahārāja* were mostly very revolutionary. When I was a beginner with only two years or so in the Gauḍīya Maṭh, I was in charge of the Kurukṣetra temple. Once, I came to the Calcutta headquarters at the hired house in Ulṭā Ḍāṅgā for the yearly preaching festival. After the festival I was to return to Kurukṣetra. Śrīla Prabhupāda was thinking of opening a “Theistic Exhibition” in Kurukṣetra, showing with dioramas how Krishna and His friends came there from Dvārakā, and the *gopīs* came there from Vṛndāvana.

It is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that during the solar eclipse, they came to bathe in Rāma-hrad, a sacred lake in Kurukṣetra. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to show that pastime with a diorama, and so the exhibition was arranged. He ordered handbills to be printed, and twenty thousand circulated in the area, inviting people to come for the exhibition.

✽ VRNDĀVANA—FOR SHALLOW THINKERS? ✽

In this connection, he told us, “You all know that only the bogus, hollow people and men of shallow



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. “I would like to spend the last days of my life in Kurukṣetra.”

thinking like Vṛndāvana.” I was very much perplexed to hear this. I had been told that Vṛndāvana is the highest place of spiritual perfection. I had heard that one who has not mastered his senses cannot enter Vṛndāvana. Only the liberated souls can enter Vṛndāvana and have the opportunity of discussing *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Vṛndāvana is for the liberated souls. Those who are not liberated from the demands of their senses may live in Navadvīpa, but the liberated souls may live in Vṛndāvana. Now Prabhupāda was saying that the shallow thinkers appreciate Vṛndāvana, but a man of real *bhajana*, real divine aspiration, will aspire to live in Kurukṣetra.

Hearing this, I felt as if I had fallen from the top of a tree. “What is this?” I thought. I am a very acute listener, so I was very keen to catch the meaning of his words. The next thought he gave us was that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, after visiting many different places of pilgrimage, remarked, “I would like to spend the last days of my life in Kurukṣetra. I shall construct a cottage near Rāma-hrada and pass the rest of my life there. Kurukṣetra is the real place of *bhajana*.”

❁ SHREWD MERCHANTS ❁

Why? Service is more valuable according to the intensity of its necessity. Shrewd merchants seek a market in wartime because in that dangerous posi-

tion, money is spent like water, without any care for its value. They can earn more money if a war comes. In the same way, when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's necessity reaches its zenith, service to Her becomes extremely valuable. According to its necessity, service is valued. And in Kurukṣetra, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is in the highest necessity because Krishna is so close, but Their Vṛndāvana līlā is impossible. In a football game, if the ball is just inches from the goal, but again comes back, it is considered a great loss. In the same way, after a long separation, Krishna is there in Kurukṣetra, so the hankering for union felt by His devotees must come to its greatest point, but because He is in the role of a king, they cannot meet intimately. The circumstances do not allow the Vṛndāvana līlā to take place. So at that time, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī needs the highest service from Her group, the sakhīs.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that in that situation, a drop of service will draw the greatest amount of *prema*, divine love. In the pastimes of Rādhā-Govinda, there are two aspects: *sambhoga*, divine union, and *vipralambha*, divine separation. When Rādhā and Krishna are very near to each other, but can't meet intimately, service at that time can draw the greatest gain for the servitors. Therefore, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "I shall construct a hut on the banks of Rāma-hrad in

Kurukṣetra and contemplate rendering service to the Divine Couple. If I can achieve that standard where the prospect of service is so high, then there is no possibility of returning to this mundane plane at any time.”

❀ THE FIFTH NOTE ❀

Upon arriving in Kurukṣetra, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī said:

**priyaḥ so 'yam kṛṣṇaḥ saḥacari kuru-kṣetra-militas
tathāhaṁ sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-pancama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya sṛḥayati**

“O My dear friend, now I am at last reunited with My most beloved Krishna in Kurukṣetra. I am the same Rādhārāṇī, and He is the same Krishna. We are enjoying Our meeting, but still I wish to return to the banks of the Kālindī, where I could hear the sweet melody of His flute sounding the fifth note beneath the trees of the Vṛndāvana forest.” (*Padyāvalī*)

Wherever Rādhārāṇī and Krishna are, Vṛndāvana is necessary. And Vṛndāvana means the favorable paraphernalia. In this way, Vṛndāvana is unique.

When Krishna met the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana in Kurukṣetra, He first came to Nanda and Yaśodā's camp after their long separation, to show parental

respect to them. In the midst of their great disappointment, they felt, “Oh, our boy has come to see us at last.” It was as if life had returned to the dead. After some courtesy was shown to them, Krishna made arrangements to meet privately with the *gopīs*, and suddenly He appeared in their camp. Externally, Krishna was the leader of so many kings in India. And the *gopīs* had come from some unknown quarter, where they lived in the jungle in the society of milkmen. Externally, they had no position, and Krishna held the highest position in the political and royal society. He was the central figure, like the eyeball in every eye. And they were in a helpless, poor and neglected condition. The *gopīs* pleaded with Krishna, saying:

āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindaṁ
 yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ
 saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam
 geḥaṁ juṣāṁ api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ

The group of *gopīs* told Krishna, “O You who have a lotus navel, we know that the great master yogis who have nothing to do with this mundane world try to meditate upon Your holy lotus feet. Their interest is in higher realization in the conscious world. They are said to center their highest attention on Your lotus feet. And those who are busy elevating their life in this world of exploitation are also busy worshipping

Your lotus feet to escape the entanglement of action and reaction. The center of interest for the elevationists (*karmis*) and the salvationists (*jñānis* and *yogis*) is Your lotus feet.

❁ KRISHNA COUNTRY ❁

“And what are we? We are simple people from the country with cows as our wealth. We are animal traders who live in the country, trade in the cow business, and sell curd and milk on the outskirts of society. We are neither scientific exploiters, nor are we the kind of exploiters who do research in the world of consciousness. We only know family life. We have no other qualifications. We are busy with our family life in the lower section of society. But in our audacity, we pray that if at any time You would kindly condescend to extend Your lotus feet to our negligible hearts, we would think ourselves blessed. We are busy in our family matters. We do not know scriptural life or the methods of the salvationists. We know nothing of *yoga*, *jñāna*, *Vedānta* or the *Vedas*. Our ultimate concern is neither with scriptures or moral standards. We hold a negligible position in society and simply pray that in the midst of our family life we may remember Your holy lotus feet. Please grant this to us. We can’t expect anything more from You.” That was their petition.

Krishna replied to them, saying:

**mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām
amṛtatvāya kalpate
diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho
bhavatīnām mad-āpanaḥ**

“Yes, I know. People want devotion to Me to achieve eternal life. To cross the limit of mortality and to have eternal life, they come to Me and worship Me. For these reasons they want My service, but fortunately for you, you have some natural affection towards Me. That will ultimately bring you to Me.”

That is the formal or superficial meaning of what was spoken by Krishna and the *gopīs*. But the great preceptors of our line have squeezed out another meaning from these prayers. They are conscious of the real, private relationship between the two parties, so they have drawn out another meaning based on the divine sentiment between the lover and beloved.

When the *gopīs* prayed to Śrī Krishna at Kurukṣetra, their real meaning was this: “Oh, we remember that one day You sent Uddhava to console us. He recited many scriptural references about how the whole world is mortal, how it is nothing, how we shall all have to die—affection has no great value; attachment must be cut out. He said that we must try to liberate ourselves from any attraction for the environment and attain salvation. You wanted to tell all

these apparently sweet things to us through Uddhava.

“Now, You Yourself are also showing us the same path. You say that You are great and that everyone should try, for their highest interest, to think of You.” This explanation is found in *Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*. The *gopīs* tell Krishna, “Do You think we are yogis who will be satisfied with abstract meditation on You? Can we be satisfied by imagination? We are not a party to that. Neither are we *karmīs*, fruitive workers who are incurring a great debt from nature, who come to Your door to get relief, praying, ‘O God, please relieve us from all our previous sins.’ We do not belong to either of these two sections.

“What are we? We want to live with You as Your family. We are interested neither in abstract thinking, nor in using You to clear off the faults of *karma* to nullify our sinful activities. We don’t want to use You for any other purpose. We want to have a direct family life with You. Don’t You know that? And still You send messages through Uddhava, and now this! Aren’t You ashamed of Yourself?” This is their inner meaning.

❀ KRISHNA’S INNER ANSWER ❀

Krishna’s answer also has an inner aspect. He replies, “You know, everyone wants Me. Through devotion they want Me to help them attain the high-

est position in the world of eternal benefit. If they have a connection with Me, they consider themselves fortunate. But on the other hand, I consider Myself fortunate because I have come in touch with the valuable affection that I found in your hearts.”

The *gopīs* read the inner meaning in that way. And when Rādhārāṇī could see into the inner meaning of Krishna’s reply, She became satisfied. “Wherever He may be in the physical sense,” She thought, “At heart, He is mine alone.” She composed Her troubles within and returned to Vṛndāvana thinking, “He cannot but come to join our party again very soon.”

In *Padyāvalī*, Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī reveals the inner meaning of this verse. When Krishna came to the camp of *gopīs* in Kurukṣetra, He suddenly found Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and stooped down as if to touch Her feet. Rādhārāṇī began backing away, saying, “What are You doing! You are trying to touch My feet?” she shuddered, “You have done nothing wrong. You are my master. You are at liberty to do whatever You want. I am Your maidservant and should try with every nerve to satisfy You. You have committed no crime. I am the criminal. How? I still drag on My body and life. This is My crime—I could not die from Your separation! Still, I show My face to the public—I am not worth Your divine affection. The whole burden of breaking the law of love is on My head.”

❀ NOT A BIT OF DIVINE LOVE ❀

In this way Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī spoke. And in a similar verse, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu says:

**na prema-gandho 'sti darāpi me harau
krandāmi saubhāgya-bharaṁ prakāśitum
vaṁśi-vilāsy-ānana-lokanaṁ vinā
vibharmi yat prāṇa-pataṅgakān vṛthā**

“I have not even a bit of divine love for Krishna within Me. Not even a scent of love for Krishna is to be traced within Me. You may ask, ‘Then why are You shedding tears profusely, uninterruptedly? Day and night, You are always shedding tears for Krishna. How do You explain this?’ Oh, you don’t know. I only do this to make a show and deceive the people in general into thinking that I have divine love for Krishna. In this way I want to become famous as a great devotee of Krishna. But I am a hypocrite. Why do I say so? The positive proof is this: I still live. I could not die! If I had any real love for Krishna, I would have died from His separation. That is the positive proof that I have no trace of *kṛṣṇa-prema* within Me.”

Kṛṣṇa-prema is so high and attractive that once coming in contact with it, no one can maintain his life without it. It is so high, so beautiful, so enchanting—it is heart-swallowing! It is impossible even to conceive

of it. Divine love of such a high degree is known as *prema*. That divine love for Krishna is not to be traced in this mundane world. If by chance someone had any experience of that high and vital kind of devotion, then by any separation from that, he would die instantly. It is so beautiful and magnanimous. We are out to search only for that divine love in this world. And Śrīman Mahāprabhu came to distribute that to the world for our sake.

✽ “LET US TAKE POISON . . .” ✽

I have heard that a group of people in South America committed collective suicide because they felt that their faithful way of life was going to be destroyed by the present civilization. They could not tolerate that, but rather, they thought, “Let us take poison and leave this world behind. Then we can live safely in the world of our faith. We have no charm for anything in this mundane world. Let us go with peace. We are members of the peaceful world. Let us enjoy that peace which is independent of material acquisition.”

We can agree that there is no charm here that shall make us hesitate to withdraw from this world, but we must also disagree and say that our life in this world is valuable. Why? With this life we can acquire a higher aspiration. We can have the chance of

acquiring the goal from this plane. This human life is so valuable that with it we can take the path of the highest divine conception. This human body is highly valued and rarely achieved. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.9.29) it is stated:

**labdhvā su-durlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam artha-dam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anu-mṛtyu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viśayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt**

“The human form of life is very rarely attained, and although temporary, gives us a chance to achieve the supreme goal of life. Therefore, those who are grave and intelligent should immediately strive for perfection before another death occurs. There are so many forms of life: the aquatics, the vegetable kingdom, the animals, the birds, ghosts and other living beings, but only in this human position do we hold the key to the complete solution of the problems of life.”

If we can use this human life in a valuable way, we can acquire the key by which to become free from the whole chain of life in this troublesome world. We can get rid of the bondage of all sorts of physical and mental troubles. The key is here, in this human form of life. Jīva Goswāmī says that lower life-forms have insufficient understanding to realize the highest truth. And in the higher life-forms, such as demigods,

because previously acquired energy or *karma* has accumulated on all sides, the chief enjoying elements are surrounding the living being. It is difficult to escape the charm of those influences and begin the prospect of a fresh life in a higher plain of consciousness. This human form of life is the most advantageous position to escape this entanglement and reach the highest object of our divine life.

❀ THE HIGHEST CONCEPTION OF MAGNANIMITY ❀

Sometimes people ask, “Why did Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu choose to give the highest conception of divine love—*kṛṣṇa-prema*—to the lowest class of people, to the people of Kali-yuga?” But that is the very nature of Śrī Chaitanya-*avatāra*. Why did the *gopīs* who are considered to be in the most exalted devotees come from a neglected social position? What is the meaning of the highest conception of magnanimity? What should be its nature? To help the most needy.

And because Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu comes from the highest position, He cannot give ordinary things, and His attention must be drawn to the most needy. Is it unnatural? The highest magnanimity must take notice of the lowest and most needy. And if He wants to help them, He will do so with His own coin. He cannot distribute to them

only glass or stone chips. When He has the opulence of jewels and gems, why should He search for stone chips to distribute to the lowest level? He must extend to the lowest and poorest people what He thinks to be real wealth.

✽ MAHĀPRABHU—THE GREAT MESSIAH ✽

So we should all fall at the feet of the great Messiah, Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. His devotees say, “If we had to conceive of a place where Gaurāṅga had not appeared, we could not maintain our lives. We shudder to think of living without such a magnanimous friend as Śrī Gaurāṅga,” How could one live his life without Gaurāṅga? It is impossible. The world is not worth living in without Gaurāṅga.

Śrī Gaurāṅga is most magnanimous. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates the Panca-tattva have come to raise all souls from their fallen condition. Generally, only deserving persons can gain entrance into Vṛndāvana, into *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. But as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Krishna Himself has come down to cure the offenders of their offenses and grant them entrance into Vṛndāvana. Simply by chanting the names of the Pañca-tattva and by remembering Their *līlā*, we can be purified even from the lowest position and prepare for participation in Vṛndāvana *līlā*.

In Goloka Vṛndāvana, Rādhā-Govinda are enjoying Their pastimes of divine love within Their own circle. And there is another quarter, where Rādhā-Govinda are combined as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu—Krishna Himself in the mood of Rādhārāṇī is tasting His own sweetness with His entourage. We have to realize this through the recommended process. Who is Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu? He came here to bestow upon us the gift that will promote us to the highest goal of life.

❁ GAURA CONSCIOUSNESS ❁

To bring Śrī Gaurāṅga nearer to our soul is to get, even unconsciously, a guarantee of our achievement in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. For the fallen souls it is more useful to cultivate devotion for Śrī Gaurāṅga. That will give us the complete fulfillment of life with the least trouble. Devotion to Gaurāṅga will not lead us to any haphazard or misconceived Krishna consciousness, but real Krishna consciousness. We can have full Krishna consciousness—plus something more. What is that? The distribution of Krishna consciousness.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī, the giver of Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the most valuable theological literature that has ever seen the light of day, has written:

kṛṣṇa-līlā amṛta-sāra, tāra śata śata dhāra,
daśa-dike vahe yāhā haite
se caitanya-līlā haya, sarovara akṣaya,
mano-haṁsa carāha' tāhāte

“What is *kṛṣṇa-līlā*? It is the real essence of nectar. It is the gist of sweetness, happiness, and ecstasy. The sweetness of the sweetest thing that can ever be conceived is represented in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Then what is *caitanya-līlā*? In *caitanya-līlā*, that sweet nectar of *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is flowing in all ten directions in hundreds of streams as if from a fountain. That fountain is *caitanya-līlā*.” Although *caitanya-līlā* appears later than *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, *caitanya-līlā* is the source, the foundation. We see that Krishna appeared in Dvāpara-yuga, in the previous age, and then Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu appeared later, in Kali-yuga. Still, Their *līlā* is eternal. First there is the giver, then the gift. And the gift of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is that in all the ten directions, He is distributing unlimited streams of sweet *kṛṣṇa-līlā* to the world.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī concludes, “O devotees, come! Like so many swans, you must swim in the lake of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s pastimes. From that lake *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is flowing to the world in different streams. Devotees, like clouds, take nectar from that lake, and distribute that nectar freely to the fortunate souls. Come and live in that lake. Ask the swan of

your mind to take shelter in that lake. May that swan swim in the nectarine lake of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's life and precepts, from where so many hundreds of streams of nectar are flowing in all directions. O devotees, I offer this humble prayer to you."