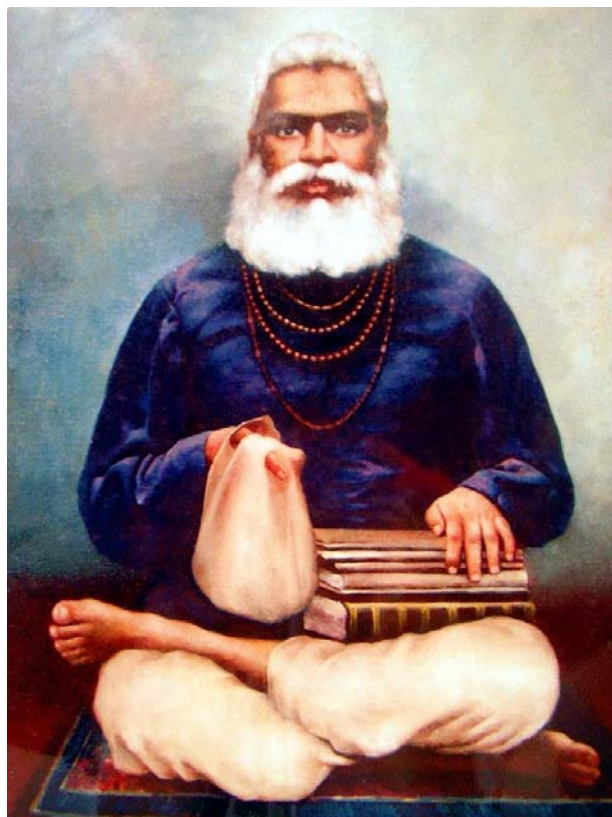
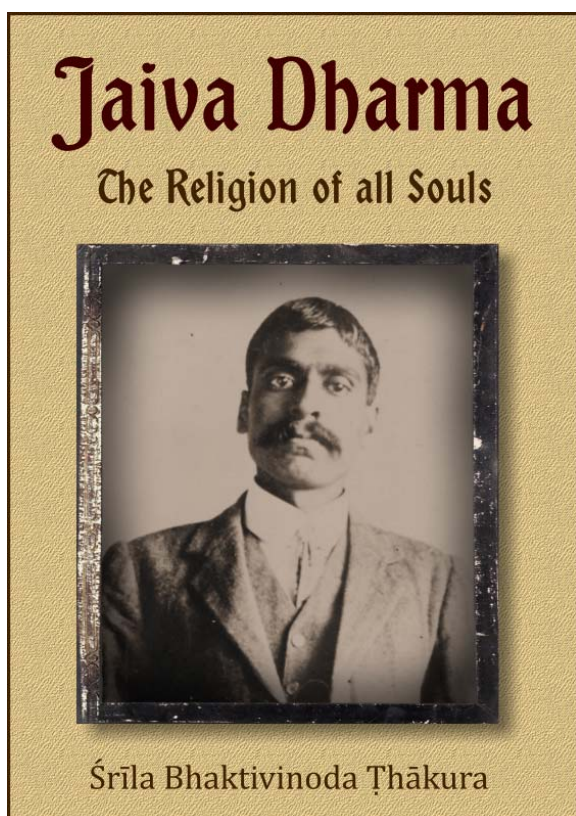


JAIVA DHARMA

The Religion of all Souls

By: Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

(Original text from the HARMONIST)



Jaiva Dharma

***Important note from the publishers of this
Jaiva Dharma edition from the Harmonist***

Out of deep respect for the original editor and publisher of THE HARMONIST, Śrīla Bhakti-siddhanta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura—and not least out of respect for the printing shop of the *Math* (Mission), the original text has been taken from the original without any changes, As It Is. That includes typographical “errors” such as extra blank spaces, missing quotation marks, and em dashes in places where the regular hyphen would have been “correct.” And the 3 or 4 spelling mistakes.

The texts were evidently composed with love and dedication by the devotees of the *Math* in the early 1930s, with movable lead type by hand and sort by sort. Typographical “errors”, more often than not, occurred for very trite reasons. The sorts (individual glyphs) made from lead were the “grey gold” of the printing shops. The supply of sorts for a certain font family in the type cases was limited.

This resulted in bottlenecks when movable type was bound up in work for several publications (standing type)— improvisation was therefore a common practice.

To honor the writings of r la Bhaktivinoda Th kura and r la Bhaktisiddh nta Sarasvat Th kura, the publishers of this website have decided to publish the original text, as found in the Harmonist magazine, without changing a single word. No one letter, not even a comma has been changed or added.

Introduction

Thakur Bhaktivinoda as an Author

It is very difficult to understand the nature of Thakur Bhaktivinoda's contribution to the world's literature of the Absolute Truth. The path of devotion is liable to be confounded with a surrender to the guidance of the emotional side of one's mundane nature. There are also the familiar arguments in support of persons who choose to follow the guidance of their emotions.

This unwarrantable view is responsible for that undue under valuation of the two other sides of human nature which has produced disastrous moral consequences in the ranks of the votaries of such emotionalism.

The writings of Thakur Bhaktivinoda offer a perfectly clear exposition of the spiritual principle of *bhakti*. From the stand point of art His writings are distinguished by the qualities of simplicity of style and precision, richness, and naturalness of vocabulary. He is a wonderfully well informed writer. Almost every sentence that He has penned is reminiscent of some well known text of the vast Shastric literature. Those who are acquainted with the philosophical and theological portions of the Sanskrit literature, would appreciate this classic quality of His writings. But Thakur Bhaktivinoda is no less fully acquainted with the modern thought of the world. This combination of the old and new produces a never failing impression of freshness and a keen expectation of real enlightenment.

No person with any taste for the truth can refuse to be attracted by His illuminating pages. He is always almost severely condensed both in His thought and expression. But it never produces any sense of fatigue or loss of interest in the reader. It is possible to read His Jaiva Dharma almost with as much ease and interest as a high class modern novel. This is no mean praise for the charm and lightness of His style if we remember that the subject treated in that work is the whole field of religious enquiry by the comparative method.

But unequalled as the style of Jaiva Dharma must certainly appear to all lovers of art, its thought is nothing short of a revelation. The Shastras are literally made to live and talk to us on a footing of unreserved familiarity. I can do no better than let the author speak for Himself by offering a few passages from His wonderful '**manual of the religion of all souls**'. I take the passages from different parts of the book quite at random.

[Text from the 'eight-volume' Harmonist (As It Is) Magazine]

Jaiva Dharma

CHAPTER I

The eternal and causal functions of a Jiva

1. Asia is pre-eminently the greatest continent in the whole world and India stands foremost in Asia, and the finest in India is the land of Gaud, and the most beautiful tract of land in Gaud is the nine-island-region called Navadwip, in one part of which stands eternally the lovely hamlet of Sree Godroom on the east bank of the Ganges. In the days of yore many an adept in worshipful service used to live here and there in the groves of Sree Godroom. Not very far from the arbour where Sree Surabhi, the Divine Cow of yore worshipped the Supreme Lord Sree Gaur-Sundar, was a holy cot of devotion named the grove of Pradyumna, after the name of Pradyumna Brahmacharin, a personal attendant of Sree Gaur-Sundar. There his disciple Paramahansa Sree Premdas Babaji Maharaj used to spend his days in ceaseless confidential service of the Supreme Lord in his cottage densely covered with creepers.

2. Being versed in all the Scriptures, Sree Premdas Babaji resorted to, with singleness of mind, the grove of Sree Godroom, one and the same with Sree Nandagrama in the district of Mathura. Chanting the Holy Name two lakhs a day, numberless prostrated obeisances to all the Vaishnavas and strictness in the begging of alms for bare living, were the daily routine of his life. His spare moments were spent not in idle gossips but in reading Prembibarta, the famous Divine Lyric, written by Pandit Sree Jagadananda, one of the most favourite associates of Sree Gaur Sundar. When he read that holy book, tears of love rolled down his cheeks and the neighbouring devotees of his stamp used to come and listen to him with devotional aptitude. And why not ? The book was so full of themes of Rasa (liquid mellowness), and, to crown all, his mode of reading was so sweet and attractive that it dissipated the fiery venoms of abject worldliness from the minds of his devotional listeners,

3. One afternoon, after finishing the full counts of his beads, when Paramahansa Babaji was reading 'Prembibarta' in his shady bower covered with *madhabi* climbing plants, deeply absorbed in the ocean of ecstasy, a *sanyasin* of the fourth stage came to him and fell down at his feet. At this, he soon came to his consciousness and, finding the *sanyasin* in that plight, prostrated himself before him and began to sob with abject lowness of heart, saying, "O my Lord Chaitanya ! O my Lord Nityananda ! have mercy on this vile wretch ;" and then turning to the ascetic, thus accosted him, "What makes you, Lord, to shame me, lowly and wretched as I am ?" Taking the dust of his feet the ascetic took his seat on a cushion made of banana barks. Paramahansa Babaji also sat by him and asked him, "What service can I render thee, O lord ?" Leaving aside his staff and bowl, the ascetic thus replied.

4. "My Lord ! I am the most unfortunate fellow in the whole world who, having spent the greater portion of his life in vastly studying the systems of Sankhya, Patanjali, Logic, Vaishesik of Kanada, Purbamimansa of Jaimini and Uttaramimansa or the Vedanta of Vya-

sa, as well as the Upanishadas, in various shrines, such as Benares, and in wrangling logomachy with the Pandits, renounced the world and assumed *sanyasa* and its staff from His Holiness Sree Satchidananda Saraswati of Benares twelve years ago; and, during my travel all over India, I visited all the shrines and associated with all the Shankara *sanyasins* of India. Passing over the three stages of 'Kutichaka', 'Vahudaka', 'Hamsa', I thought I reached the fourth stage of 'Paramahamsa', and resorted to, in pious velleities, the words of Shankara, "I am Brahman", "Pure intelligence is Brahman", "Thou art that" etc., at Benares. One day a Vaishnava saint was seen passing by me chanting the Holy Name and Deeds of Sree Hari, bathed in tears of ecstasy, his whole body thrilling with joy, his voice choked as he uttered the Holy Name of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya Prabhu Nityananda, and his feet tottered as he danced in ecstasy. The holy personage as well as the song did send in me such a thrill of ineffable delight that it simply beggars description ; but the pity was that I could not talk with him lest my dignity of a Paramahamsa should be at stake. Alas ! fie to me ! fie to my rank ! since that day, I do not know why my heart is forcibly drawn to the Lotus Feet of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya. With great avidity the Vaishnava saint was searched, but unfortunately was found nowhere ; I could distinctly understand that the unstinted delight at what I saw and heard was never experienced before. I never knew beforehand that such an unspeakable joy can ever exist in human life. I, therefore, thought it expedient to resort to the feet of a Vaishnava. I left Benares and went to Sreedham Brindaban and saw many sincere devotees there lamenting over the holy names of Sree Rupa, Sree Sanatana and Sree Jiva Goswami, meditating on the Divine Pastimes of Sree Sree Radha-Krishna and rolling on the dust out of love for Navadwip for which a yearning naturally arose in my mind. Gyrating 84 crosh (168 miles) of Sreedham Mathura-Brindaban I reached Sreedham Mayapur some days ago, where I have had the fortune of hearing the Divine Glory of Thy Holy Feet and taking shelter in them today. Pray, bless me with Thy causeless mercy as one of Thy unworthy humble servants".

5. Considering himself humbler than a blade of grass and with tears in in his eyes, Paramahamsa Babaji said, "O Sanyasi Thakur ! I am the vilest of all creatures; my life was spent in vain in eating, sleeping and gossiping ; and now I deemed it prudent to spend the remainder of my life in taking shelter in the sportive realms of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya. But, to my utter misfortune, I could not realise what Krishna-Prema (love for Krishna) really is. I thank you as much as you have tasted it even for a moment gazing at a Vaishnava. You really deserve the Grace of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya. I shall be thankful if you kindly remember me; this poor wretch, when you taste the sweetness of Krishna-Prema'. With this he clasped the Sanyasi Thakur in his warm embrace and bathed him in tears of affection and love. The touch from a Vaishnav sent a thrill of unprecedented joy in the heart of the Sanyasi Thakur who began to dance and sing thus,—

'All glory to Sree Krishna-Chaitanya and Sree Prabhu Nityananda, All glory to the Divine Master Prem das, all glory to him, the Delight Incarnate of worshipful service'.

6. The chanting and dancing went on for a while, after which both of them took rest and had a long talk with each other. Premdas Babaji then said with all humility,—“O great soul ! I would you live here for a few days and sanctify me with your presence”. “I consecrate thyself to Thy Lotus Feet”, replied the Sanyasi Thakur. “Not to speak of a few days, may I serve Thee till my last breath ?”

7. The Sanyasi Thakur is well versed in all Scriptures. He knew well the beneficial effect of spiritual training during spiritual pupilage under a spiritual master. So he was glad to stay there for a few days. Some time after, Paramahansa Babaji said to him, "O great soul ! I received my initiation from His Divine Grace Paramahansa Sree Pradyumna Brahmachari Thakur who is now lost in the worship of Sree Sree Nrisimhadeva in the village of Sree Devapalli lying at the south-east corner of Sree Navadwip circle. Let us go and see His Lotus Feet today after finishing our begging. "As thou pleasest", was the reply from the Sanyasi Thakur. "I'll do as I am bid".

8. They reached the village of Devapalli at two in the afternoon, crossing the river Alakananda and Suryateela, and saw the Lord's associate Sree Pradyumna Brahmacharin in the temple of Sree Nrisimhadeva. From a reasonable distance Paramahansa Babaji made his prostrated obeisances to his Divine Master who came out of the temple and, being too full of the milk of divine kindness and affection to his disciple, held and hugged him (Babaji Maharaj) in his loving embrace and asked him how he fared in his worship. After a long good discourse, the Sanyasi Thakur was introduced by Paramahansa Babaji to his Divine Master who expressed his delight for his (Sanyasi Thakur's) receiving such a genuine master, and asked him to learn 'Prembibarta' from him (Babaji Maharaj) saying, 'He who is well versed in the Transcendental Knowledge of Krishna is a *Guru*, be he a Brahmin or a *Sanyasi* or a *Shudra*' (Ch. 11. 8. 127).

9. The Sanyasi Thakur also offered his most humble greetings to the Lotus Feet of his Grand Master and said, "O Lord ! Thou art the associate of the Supreme Lord Sree Chaitanya. A kind glance from Thee can sanctify hundreds of arrogant *Sanyasins* like myself. Have mercy on me". The Sanyasi Thakur was quite ignorant of the reciprocal dealings accorded by a devotional circle of friends. He saw the good rule of life that exists between a *Guru* and a *Parama-Guru*, and later acted accordingly. After seeing the evening wave-offering to the Deity Nrisimhadeva they came back to Godroom.

10. Things went on for some time in this way after which the Sanyasi Thakur was desirous of knowing the truth. He looked like a Vaishnava in all respects but one, and that was his dress. He had already acquired perfect steadiness in Brahman by controlling his inner and other senses. Over and above, he was now imbued with the firm conviction of the spiritual pastimes of the Supreme Lord and a corresponding lowliness of heart which automatically graced his dignified character.

11. One early morning when the crimson rays of the sun were tinging the eastern horizon with their purple hue, Paramahansa Babaji sat down in his Madhabi-grove with his rosary, keeping counts of his beads, his eyes overflowed with profuse tears of love arising from the recollection of the Transcendental Pastimes of the Divine Couple in the morning when they were about to be separated from each other, and he began to lose his consciousness deeply absorbed in his the-then-confidential service with his perfect body. The Sanyasi Thakur, who was close by, was deeply impressed with those *Sattwik* sentiments of Paramahansa Babaji who said to him, "Friend ! benumb the monkey or her chanting will disturb the cosy sleep of the Divine Youthful Couple, to the great displeasure of my friend Lalita who, I am afraid, will take me to task for such dereliction. Look here, my friend Ananga-manjari is also beckoning to this effect. You are Raman-manjari. This is thy service meted out to you. Look sharp." Saying this Paramahansa Babaji lost his

consciousness. Thus acquainted with the service in his perfect body the Sanyasi Thakur was all attention to his respective service since then. The day dawned and the morning twilight spread its brilliant lustre in the east. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with the melodious songs of birds. The gentle breeze was blowing all around. The picturesque beauty of the Madhabi-grove of the Pradyumna *Kunja* was simply indescribable when the first ray of crimson light made its appearance at the gate.

12. Paramahansa Babaji was seated on a cushion of banana bark, and, regaining his consciousness, began to chant the Holy Name. The Sanyasi Thakur, in the mean time, made his prostrated obeisance to the feet of his *Gurudeva*, and, sitting close by, thus spoke with folded hands,—“O Lord ! may Thy humble servant venture to ask a question hoping to be cooled down with the answer from Thy gracious self? Be thou graciously pleased to infuse the nectarine liquid mellowness of Braja into this agonising heart scorched by the fire of the principle of attributeless Brahman ?” “You do deserve to be blessed ; and suitable reply you shall have of your questions,” replied Babaji Maharaj.

13. The Sanyasi Thakur said,—“O Lord ! hearing the celebrity of religion above all, I have asked many an adept in religious love about the principle of religion, but sorry to say, the answers I received were at variance with one another.

Q. 1. Wouldst thou mind to tell me what religion or the real nature of a Jiva is ? Why the teachers of different religions differ from one another in their views ? And if religion be one why the learned teachers do not care to seek after that religion which is without a second ?”

14. Contemplating on the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, Paramahansa Babaji said, “O lucky one ! listen to the principle of true religion I am telling you to the best of my knowledge.

Ans. “The eternal nature of a thing is its eternal religion. Nature springs up from the very constituent or the making of a thing. When Krishna wills to form a thing, a concomitant nature goes hand in hand with the formation of the thing, and that nature is its eternal characteristic. When that thing is contaminated due to unforeseen event, or is perverted by coming in contact with another thing, then its nature is also perverted or changed. This changed or perverted habit, as it becomes inured with the roll of time, accompanies the thing, and bears a semblance with the original eternal nature of the thing. But semblance is not identity or reality. This changed or perverted nature is not inborn or innate in the thing, but causal or accidental, which passes or gives currency to the real nature of the thing. As for example, water is a thing. Liquidity is its property. When it happens to be ice, solidity or rigidity becomes its causal or accidental property and is current with the real nature. In fact, causation or accident is not eternal but temporary cause, and vanishes with the disappearance of its cause. But nature that springs up with the formation of a thing is eternal and remains latent though it is perverted or changed. That in course of time or due to favourable circumstances, the real nature of a thing assumes its original character, admits of no doubt.

15. The eternal nature of a thing is its eternal function. Its accident is its causation He who is well-acquainted with the knowledge of a thing, knows well the distinction between the real nature and the causal nature of the thing. Those who are deprived of such knowledge, consider causal to be the real nature of the thing and temporary religion to be

the eternal religion". The Sanyasi said,—“What is meant by the words ‘*Vastu*’ (thing) and its ‘nature’ ?” Paramahansa Babaji said,—

16. The derivative meaning of the word ‘*Vastu*’ (thing) is this that which exists and conveys a meaning is ‘*Vastu*’, which again is two-fold, real and unreal. A thing real is transcendental. Unreal things with their names, forms and attributes are mundane. Real things have eternal existence. Unreal things have semblance of existence which is somewhere real, somewhere feigning. As in Sreemad Bhagabat (1.1.2)—“The thing knowable here is real and is the spring of all well-being”—which means that the real thing is transcendental. The Supreme Lord is the only real thing. His discrete part is known as Jiva, and His External Potency is known as *Maya*. Hence ‘*Vastu*’ i. e., the real thing denotes three things viz., the Supreme Lord, Jiva and *Maya*. To know their mutual relationship is pure knowledge. There are innumerable semblances of these three things and they are regarded as unsubstantial things. The matter and qualities of the Vaisheshik school are merely speculations on unreal things. The special quality that characterises the real thing is its nature. Jiva is a real thing and the eternal quality which characterises it is its real and eternal nature.” The Sanyasi Thakur said,—“O Lord ! I would I could thoroughly understand the subject.”

17. Babaji Maharaj said, — “Sreela Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami, a disciple of Sree Nityananda Prabhu, showed me a manuscript of Sree Chaitanya Charitamrita in which Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has given us His Teachings on the subject thus :—

18. The eternal nature of a Jiva is the eternal servanthood of Krishna. A Jiva is the *Tatas-*tha** (border line) potency of Krishna and exists simultaneously as a distinct and non-distinct entity. When he forgets Krishna he is averse to serve Krishna and his aversion has no beginning as it dates before his incarnation within the four walls of time and space. For this act of averseness towards God he is found guilty by *Maya*, the Deluding Potency of the Supreme Lord, and is, therefore, hurled into the vortex of worldly relativities of happiness, misery etc., as condign punishment.

19. Krishna is Transcendental Absolute. He is the Self-effulgent Spiritual Sun of the spiritual Realm. The Jivas are so many emanating rays of the Sun Krishna. They are His atomic parts. Unlike pieces of stone of a mountain, Krishna is Infinite Transcendental and loses not a bit when infinitesimal Jivas emanate from Him. They are compared to innumerable sparks of a blazing fire in the Vedas. But no comparison whether sparks of fire, rays of the sun or gold of the alchemist stone is well appropriate in imparting a clear conception of the true nature of a Jiva in our unbiased mind unless and until the mundanity of these comparisons are totally eliminated. Krishna is Transcendental Whole, Jivas are the atomic parts of the Whole. Both are similar in respect of the quality of consciousness or animation, but dissimilar and eternally distinct in respect of the quantitative aspect. One is the whole; others are its parts. One is the Infinite, others are the infinitesimals. Krishna is the Eternal Lord of the Jivas who are His eternal servants by their essential nature. Krishna is the Eternal attractor, the Jivas are the attracted ; Krishna is the Supreme Ruler of the universe, the Jivas are the ruled ; Krishna is the Lord Observer, the Jivas are the observed ; Krishna is the Entire Whole, the Jivas are the poor and lowly; Krishna is the All Powerful Supreme Being, the Jivas are powerless unless otherwise empowered. Hence eternal servitude of and obedience to Krishna is the eternal nature or religion of a Jiva.

20. The Omnipotency of Krishna is fully manifest in the revelation of the Spiritual Kingdom. So in the demonstration of the Jiva world his *Tatastha* power is in display. A special potency exercises some influence in bringing forth imperfect worlds. This potency is known as *Tatastha* or marginal potency—the function of which is to create such an entity between animate and inanimate things that can keep in touch with both the spiritual and nonspiritual kingdoms. A purely spiritual animate thing is in opposite relation with the inanimate thing and so is in no way connected with it. A Jiva is no doubt a spiritual atomic part impelled by some Divine power to be in touch with the inanimate world and that Divine power is known as *Tatastha* potency. A *Tata* is an imaginary line of demarcation between land and water. It is neither in land nor in water but is in both. That Divine power lying midway, i. e., in between land and water, upholds an entity having both the terraqueous properties. Jivas are no doubt spiritual entities, but in formation they are so infinitesimal that they are liable to be engrossed by the mundane principle of Maya. So they are not absolutely spiritual like the transcendental entities of the spiritual kingdom, nor are they absolutely mundane like the phenomena due to their spiritual tendency or aptitude. Hence the principle of Jiva is quite distinct from the principles of Spirit and Matter. This is why there is an eternal distinction between the Supreme Being and a Jiva. The Supreme Being is the Lord of Maya who is entirely dependent on Him, but a Jiva is liable to be enthralled by Maya under some circumstances. Hence the Supreme Lord Bhagawan, Jiva and Maya are the three eternal and spiritual principles of which the Supreme Lord is the ever Transcendental Primordial Truth: According to the Vedic hymn—‘He is the Eternal of all eternal, the Fountain Sentient of all sentient’.

21. A Jiva is, by his essential nature the eternal servant of Krishna and is a display of His *Tatastha* Potency. From this it can safely be concluded that a Jiva is simultaneously distinct and non-distinct from Bbagawan and hence His distinct and non-distinct manifestation. A Jiva is subject to Maya under special circumstances but Godhead, being the Supreme Ruler of Maya and all his potencies, is never subject to Maya. Hence God and Jiva are eternally distinct. A Jiva is, in essence a spiritual entity like Godhead of whom Jiva is a potency ; and in this respect they are eternally non-distinct.

22. If eternal distinction and non-distinction are simultaneous then eternal distinction stands foremost. Service of Krishna is the eternal nature of a Jiva. When he forgets this relationship he is overwhelmed by the influence of Maya—the deluding potency lying at the back-ground of the Lord. Thence forward a Jiva shows his backwardness in the service of the Supreme Lord Krishna. Since the backward condition of a Jiva springs up along with his coming into this *mayaik* world, the history of his downfall within the bounds of time and space is out of the question. Hence the significance of the expression ‘eternally backward’. His eternal function with the service of Krishna has been perverted since his entrance into the plane of three dimensions due to his forgetfulness. When he becomes in contact with Maya his perverted nature prevails giving room for his causal or accidental functions. The eternal nature is one, eternal and pure while the accidental religion assumes different forms under different circumstances and is described in different ways by different men of divergent principles.

23. Paramahansa Babaji Maharaj stopped and began to chant the Holy Name of Hari, The Sanyasi Thakur gladly hearing all these transcendental truths offered his humble

greetings to the Lotus Feet of his Divine Master and said, "O Lord ! let me ponder over these truths this day and I shall lay before Your Feet tomorrow in case any doubts arise in my mind".

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Jaiva Dharma

CHAPTER II

The natural function of the soul is spiritual and eternal.

1. Next day during the morning the good ascetic found no opportunity of asking any questions for the solutions of his doubts. Paramahansa Babaji was then fully immersed in his exclusive mood of loving service on the transcendental plane of Braja (Realm of Krishna). After accepting their food of midday, obtained in small quantities by the daily round of begging in the village, both of them were seated in the natural awning of Madhabi creeper. Paramahansa Babaji out of his mercy now began to speak. "O great devotee", said he, "what definite conclusion has been reached by you on hearing my answer to your enquiry about '*dharma*' (man's natural function) ?"

(Q. 2 and 3.) The ascetic now preferred with the greatest joy his further questions. "Lord, if the soul be a very small thing, how can his natural function be full and unmixed ? If the natural function of the soul be formed at the same time when his entity is constituted, how can such function be also eternal ?"

2. (Ans.) On hearing these two questions Paramahansa Babaji meditated for a short time on the Lotus Feet of Sree Sachinandana before he proceeded to answer them. He then said, "Respected sir, even although the soul is a little thing, his function is nevertheless full, unmixed and eternal. His littleness has reference only to his substance. The Ultimate Great Principle (Para-Brahman) Krishnachandra is the only absolutely Great Substance. The souls of jivas are the endless particles of the One Great Absolute. In the way analogous to that in which sparks of fire are generated by the undivided substance of fire, the souls of jivas emanate from the Entity of undivided cognitive Substance who is Krishna. In the way that each individual spark of fire possesses the full power of fire, each individual soul can also be a basis for the manifestation of the full function of the cognitive Substance. A single spark of fire by coming in contact with combustible substances can, by gradually manifesting the nature of the great fire, burn the whole world. In a similar way even a single soul can bring about a great inundation of love by serving Krishnachandra, the real Object of Love. So long as he does not come in touch with the real Object of the function of his soul, his entity of infinitesimal cognitive substance, i.e., the soul of the jiva, manifests himself in the position of ineligibility for displaying the natural activity of the full spiritual function. As a matter of fact the proper function of the soul manifests itself only in relationship to the Object of Love. It is very necessary to search with due care for the true answer to the question as to what constitutes the spiritual function of the jiva. We should then be in a position to realise that love is his eternal spiritual function. The jiva is not insentient matter. The spiritual entity transcends to the material principle. Unmixed cognition is the stuff of his constitution. Love is his function. Pure love is identical with the service of Krishna. In other words love, in

the form of the servitorship of Krishna, is the natural function of the real entity of the jiva.

3. The jiva may possess one of two states. He may be either in the conditioned or in the pure spiritual state. In his unconditioned state the jiva is uneclipsed cognitive substance. In that state the jiva has no relationship with non-sentience. Even in his unalloyed spiritual state the jiva is infinitesimal substance. By reason of his infinitesimality he is liable to undergo change of condition. The Entity of Krishna is plenary Cognition. He is naturally free from the possibility of any change of His Condition. He is substantively Great, Perfect, Pure and Eternal. The jiva is substantively infinitesimal, part of the Whole, liable to contamination and not ultimate. But in respect of his spiritual function the jiva is great, undivided whole, pure and eternal. As long as the jiva retains his pure spiritual condition he exhibits his spiritual function in his uneclipsed form. When the jiva is contaminated by relationship with the eclipsing potency (Maya) only then, by reason of the perversion of his proper function, he is not fully pure and feels helpless and afflicted with mundane pleasure and pain. The worldly course makes its appearance simultaneously with the jiva's loss of all recollection of the servitorship of Krishna.

4. So long as the jiva continues pure, he cherishes his spiritual function as his own. His egoism then identifies itself with his servitorship of Krishna. His pure egoism, however, suffers contraction and assumes various forms when he is defiled by relationship with Maya. In relationship with Maya the pure entity of the jiva is overlaid with a subtle and a gross material form. This gives rise to a different egoism of the subtle body. This in its turn gives rise to a third form of egoism in association with the egoism of the gross body. In his pure spiritual body the jiva is the exclusive servant of Krishna. In his subtle material body the jiva entertains the egoism of being the enjoyer of the fruits of his own activities. In this position his spiritual ego, which identifies his entity with servitorship of Krishna, is covered up by the egotism of the subtle body. The gross form of mundane egotism, which arises when the subtle body is further enveloped in the gross physical body, leads the jiva to identify himself with the gross physical body. At this stage the jiva introduces himself to the world, in terms of gross material relationships as a Brahmana, a king, as poor, miserable, afflicted with disease, as wife or husband of another person, etc., etc. The spiritual function of the jiva is perverted in association with these false egotisms. Unalloyed love is the only proper function of the jiva in his pure state. Spiritual love manifests itself pervertedly in the subtle material body in the forms of pleasure and pain, likes and dislikes. This perverted love, thereafter, appears in the physical body in more concentrated material forms as pleasures of eating, drinking, sensuality. So you should now be in a position to see that the eternal natural function of the jiva manifests itself only in his pure state. The function that makes its appearance in his conditioned state is adventitious. His eternal function is naturally full, purely spiritual and ever present. I shall explain the nature of the adventitious function more fully at another time.

6. The '*dharma*' of a pure Vaishnava, recorded in Srimad Bhagavatam, is the eternal

spiritual function. All the different conceptions of '*dharma*' or the natural function of the jiva, that have been promulgated in the world, are divisible into three classes, viz., as referring to his eternal, adventitious or temporary function. Those systems of the Norm, that have no reference to Isvara (Supreme Personal Ruler of the Universe) and eternal existence of the soul, treat only of the temporary function. Those systems, that admit Isvara and eternity of the soul but seek to gain the favour of Isvara by temporary means, confine themselves to the consideration of the adventitious function. Those that seek to gain the servitorship of Krishna by unalloyed love should alone be regarded as directed to the investigation of the eternal function. The eternal religion may have different designations due to differences of country, race and language ; but they are really one and are also perfectly wholesome. Nevertheless the Vaishnava '*dharma*' that is current in India, is the standard of the eternal religion. And the religion that has been taught to the world by Lord Sachinandana, the most beloved Lord of our love, is admitted and accepted by all great souls, who delight in the loving service of the Absolute, as representing the unalloyed slate of the Vaishnava religion.

7. At this point Sanyasi Thakur spoke with folded hands. "Lord", said he, "I am constantly realising the superior excellence of the pure Vaishnava religion that was revealed by Sree Sachinandana. I am also feeling the unwholesomeness of non-distinct monistic thought promulgated by Shankaracharya. But one thought is constantly running in my head which I do not wish to entertain without submitting at Your Feet. Am I to understand that the exalted state of concentrated love that has been manifested by Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, is different from that of realised at-one-ment with non-distinct Brahman ?"

8. At this mention of the name of Sree Shankaracharya Paramahansa Babaji with great reverence made his prostrated obeisance to the Acharya. He then said, "Respected sir, we should always remember that Shankara was Mahadeva himself. Shankara is the Master (Guru) of all Vaishnavas. For this reason the Supreme Lord has referred to him as Acharya. Personally Shankara is a perfect Vaishnava. In the period when he made his appearance in India there was a great need for Shankara, the incarnation of the destructive quality of the Divinity. In India the culture of the Veda and the performances of the *varnashrama* '*dharma*' which grades the people into classes according to spiritual disposition and also regulates individual life, were rendered almost nugatory by the prevalence of philosophical nihilism of the Buddhists. The negative cult of Buddhism has no reference to Isvara. It is an extreme advocacy of the temporary function, although it admits, in a measure, the principle of the spiritual nature of the jiva. At that time most of the Brahmanas, in pursuance of the teaching of Buddha, renounced the Vedic religion in all but name. Sree Shankaracharya, the incarnation of Mahadeva, possessed of super-human power, appearing at this crisis, transformed the prevailing '*shunyavada*' of Buddhism into the cult of the non-distinct Brahman by re-establishing the prestige of the Vedic Shastras. This was an uncommon feat. India will remain for ever grateful to Sree

Shankara for this great benefit. All work in this world is judged from two points of view. Certain achievements have a value for the particular needs of the time, while others possess value for all time. The great deeds of the incarnation of Shankara were in accordance with the pressing needs of that critical period. They were undoubtedly productive of many beneficial results. The edifice of pure Vaishnava 'dharma' has been reared by Sree Ramanujacharya and Sree Madhvacharya on the foundations that were laid by the incarnation of Shankara. The Avatara of Shankara was thus one of the greatest friends of Vaishnava religion and one of the pioneer Acharyas of the eternal religion.

9. The substantial benefit of the line of argument pioneered by Sree Shankara is now being enjoyed by the Vaishnavas without any effort on their own part. There is the greatest need of a knowledge of real reference to the Absolute (Sambandhajnana) for souls in the State of bondage to material energy which obscures their spiritual vision. Shankaracharya is in agreement with the Vaishnavas in his conviction that the spiritual substance is both super-mundane as well as separate from the gross and subtle body, in this world. There is also no disagreement between them as regards their conceptions of the substantive entity of the jiva. Both accept the view that liberation (Mukti) refers to the renunciation of relationship with the material world. Up to the stage of the attainment of liberation there are many points of agreement between the teaching of Sree Shankara and that of the Vaishnava Acharyas. It is also the teaching of Sree Shankaracharya that the worship of Hari is the means of the de-materialisation of the mind and attainment of liberation. Shankara is silent about the non-antecedent course that is realised by the jiva subsequent to the attainment of unmixed liberation. Shankara knew quite well that if the jiva could be made to move on the path of liberation by the method of the worship of Hari, he would gradually come under the influence of the bliss of loving devotion (bhajana) and turn into a pure devotee. It is for this reason that Shankara, although he pointed out the path, did not further reveal the mystery of the Vaishnava religion. Those who study his commentaries with particular care can understand this underlying view of Shankara. It is only those who waste their time in fruitless speculations over the external portions of his teaching are thereby deprived of the chance of being established in their eternal function.

10. Exclusive at-one-ness and love appear to be identical from one point of view. The narrow interpretation of realised at-one-ness makes it to be different from love. You should consider carefully the substantive nature of love. Love may be defined as the constituent function (*dharma*) by which one spiritual entity is attracted naturally to associate with another spiritual entity. Love cannot be realised without the separate existence of two spiritual entities. Krishna Prem is that natural tendency by which all spiritual entities are eternally attracted to Krishnachandra, the Supreme Spiritual Entity. The eternally abiding facts in regard to the entity of love are the eternally separate position of Krishnachandra and the permanence of the separate existence of the totality of the jivas in the relation of reciprocity. The position of the three separate categories of

relisher, relished and relishing is true. If there is identity of unity between the relisher and the relished, love cannot assert itself as eternal. If the pure state of spiritual entity, which has no reference to the non-spiritual, is the connotation of at-one-ness with the Brahman, then it is the same as love. But now-a-days the Pandits who profess to follow Shankara are not content with such at-one-ment in respect of spiritual function, They promulgate a false interpretation of the principle of the unity of the Absolute that is declared by the Veda by their attempt to resolve the substantive entity of the Absolute into the unity of identity with other entities. This opinion prejudices the eternity of love. Such view has accordingly been judged by the Vaishnavas to be wholly opposed to the Vedic position. Shankaracharya calls the uncontaminated position of the unalloyed spiritual substance as the state of non-duality. But those who later on professed to follow his leaching failed to understand his inner purpose and have gradually ascribed to him a position which is not his own. They have declared the different phases of unalloyed love to be temporary phenomena. This is the cult of Mayavada which is probably the most worthless of all the creeds that have ever been preached in this world. The professors of Mayavada are not prepared to admit more than one spiritual substance. They do not admit the existence of the function of love in the spiritual substance. They declare that the Brahman is located beyond the jurisdiction of Maya only so long as he is a single entity. When he assumes any form of his own or receives plurality of forms as jiva, he is under the power of Maya. They accordingly consider the Body of God, who is Eternal, Pure, Concentrated Spirit, to be a product of Maya. They suppose the separate entity of the jiva as also due to Maya. As a result of this, under the impression that love and its various manifestations are Mayik occurrence, they seek to establish non-dual cognition as the only principle that is uncontaminated by Maya. Thus the conception of at-one-ment of these misguided persons is by no means identical with love.

11. But the love that the Supreme Lord Chaitanyadeva has enjoined us to taste and taught the world by His Own Transcendental Conduct and Personality, is located wholly beyond the jurisdiction of Maya. It is in fact the final result of the realisation of true unalloyed at-one-ment. Mahabhava (the superior substantive spiritual love) is a distinctive transformation of such unalloyed love. In Mahabhava the bliss of love for Krishna is most intense and, therefore, the separateness and intimate relationship of the knower and object of knowledge therein reach a unique condition. Mayavada is a shallow speculation and cannot really enlighten us in regard to love in any of the stages of its activity.

12. Sanyasi Thakur with great reverence replied, "My Master, I am fully convinced in my heart that Mayavada is essentially trivial. Any doubt that had lingered in my mind about the same is today solved by your mercy. I am experiencing a great desire to give up my dress of an ascetic of the Mayavada school".

13. Babaji Mahashaya said, "Great soul, it is not advisable to have any kind of preference or repugnance about outward garb. With the purification of the inner function the outward garb also attains the pure form quite naturally. When the external garb is es-

teemed for its own sake it indicates very great indifference to the inner function. To the best of my judgment inner purification is the first essential. It is only when in consequence of his purification of the inner function a person feels attracted to the outward conduct and garb of pure devotees that such a person may assume the external garb, etc., without offences. You should make your heart completely submissive to Sree Krishna-Chaitanya. You will then be in a position to conduct yourself in external matters in accordance with the dictates of your purified heart. Keep these words of the Supreme Lord constantly before your mind : “Do not practise hypocritical asceticism like the monkey, to be seen by the people. Enjoy the things of the world that it is proper to enjoy without being attached to them. Cultivate constant purity of the heart. In external conduct comply with the ordinary conventions of civilised society. Krishna will then deliver you very soon” (Ch. Ch. Madhya 16/238-239).

14. Sanyasi Thakur understood the principle of the process and did not press his proposal for changing his external garb. He continued with folded hands, “My Master, I have accepted the shelter of your feet by offering to be your disciple. I will follow with unreserved reverence and without argument whatever you may be pleased to advise me as my duty. By listening to your instructions I have been able to understand that unalloyed love for Krishna is the only real Vaishnava religion. It is also the eternal religion of all jivas (individual souls). The same function is also perfect, pure and natural. May you be pleased to enlighten me as to how I am to regard the various other religions that are current in the different countries ?”

15. Babaji Mahashaya said, “Great soul, the eternal religion is one. There cannot be two or different religions. All jivas have but one religion. The name of that eternal religion is Vaishnava dharma. There is no reason why the religion of the jiva should vary according to race, language and country. The natural function of the jiva is designated by different names by many persons, but no one can create a different function. Jaiva dharma or the function appertaining to the soul is that unalloyed spiritual love that is inherent in the fractional infinitesimal entity of the Supreme whole. Jaiva dharma appears in a perverted form by being moulded into various mundane shapes due to jivas being endowed with a variety of mental dispositions. For this reason the unalloyed state of the function of the soul has been designated Vaishnava dharma. Other religions are pure in proportion to the degree of Vaishnava dharma that they display.

16. “Some time ago at Sree Brajadhama I submitted this question at the holy feet of Srila Sanatana Goswami, associated counterpart (Parshada) of the Supreme Lord. My question was whether the meaning of the word ‘*Esk*’, that is used in the books of the Yavanas, is unalloyed love or something else. The great Goswami (lit. one who is an authorised world teacher or saviour) is also a great scholar of the Shastras and profoundly erudite in the language of the Yavanas. Sree Rupa, Sree Jeeva and other most eminent spiritual teachers were present in that assembly. Srila Sanatana Goswami Prabhu kindly gave this reply :

17. “Yes, the word ‘Esk’ means Love. The Yavana worshippers use the work ‘Esk’ in their prayer to God. But the word often means physical demonstration of love. The life-history of ‘Loyal-Majnu’ and the idea of ‘Esk’ as depicted by Hafez bear testimony to the fact that Moslem preachers could not understand the real significance of unalloyed spiritual existence. By the word ‘Esk’ they mean either physical or mental demonstration of love on the mundane plane. But they could not differentiate and hence failed to realise that Divine Love for Krishna, which is the eternal unalloyed function of a jiva in his unadulterated existence, is pure and transcendental and does not belong to this mundane plane of time and space. Such pure love is not found in any Yavana literature nor in any other than the Vaishnava religion. The ‘Roo’ of the Yavana preachers does not seem to mean pure soul, but only the conditioned soul. No other religion of the world teaches that pure Divine Love for Krishna which is found in Vaishnavism. In the Srimad Bhagavata Divine Love for Krishna, as in the expression ‘the supreme religion from which hypocrisy has been totally uprooted’, is vividly described. But so far as my experience goes I am convinced that no other teacher in the world before the Advent of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya could give us a fuller representation of pure Divine Love for Krishna. If you believe me you are at liberty to accept this conclusion. Hearing this lesson from Srila Sanatana Goswami Prabhu I offered my prostrated greetings to him, time and again”. The Sanyasi Thakur prostrated himself on hearing this.

18. Paramahansa Babaji then said, “I am giving the answer to your second question, O great devotee. (Q. 2—How the spiritual function of a fractional infinitesimal soul can be eternal ?) Be pleased to listen to the same with an undivided mind. Ans. Terms such as ‘creation’ or ‘formation’ of a jiva are used by reference to mundane conditions. The language of this world functions more or less by dependence upon experience of matter. The time that is divided into the three positions of past, present and future is material time subject to Maya. In the Absolute Realm of the spirit the time is ever-present. In it there is no such intervals, corresponding to the past and future, of material time. Jiva and Krishna exist in that time. For this reason the jiva is eternal and ever-existing and his function (dharma) in the form of love for Krishna is also eternal. Subsequent to his enthrallment in this material world those functions that are incidental to material time, viz., the creation, formation, fall etc., have been attributed to the jiva. The jiva is an infinitesimal entity. But he is nevertheless spiritual and eternal. His formation is prior to his coming into the material world. For the reason that there are no such conditions of the time of the spiritual realm as past and future, everything that exists in that time is eternally present. The jiva and his function are per se ever present and eternal. I am only stating this proposition. But the pure realisation of the true meaning of this proposition will be in proportion to the degree of your actual experience of the unalloyed spiritual existence of the Absolute Realm that you have been enabled to receive. I give you only a glimmering indication, but it is for you to realise its meaning by the process of spiritual isolation. You will not be able to understand these proposi-

tions by means of reasoning and discussion that are products of the mundane connection. The more you can loosen the power of consciousness from the fetters of matter the greater will be the manifestation of your realisation of the Absolute Realm which transcends all material existence. The first experience of transcendence on the path of spiritual endeavour is that of one's own pure self. The function of the soul manifests itself with increasing energy of expression in course of serving the Pure Spiritual Name of Krishna by one's pure self. Neither the process of *Astangayoga* (the eight processes of mind and body resorted to for spiritual concentration) nor the conception of the Brahman as undifferentiated monistic cognitive substance is efficacious for the attainment of the purity of spiritual realisation. The direct service of Krishna is the only process that is really efficacious for bringing about the manifestation of the spiritual function of a jiva, which by its nature is eternally self-perfect (*nitya-siddha*). May you practise constantly and with zeal to chant the Name of Hari. Serving the Name of Hari is the only true form of spiritual culture. If you do so in no time an unprecedented relish for the Holy Name accompanied by the simultaneous realisation of the spiritual realm of transcendental relativities will awaken in your purified heart. Of all the forms of *bhakti* the practice of chanting the Holy Name of Krishna stands foremost and is quick in its effect. The following statement is accordingly recorded in the excellent work of Sree Krishnadasa as purporting to be the instruction of Sree Chaitanya, "Among the various modes of spiritual culture nine varieties are superior to all the rest. They possess very great power as a means for the realisation of Krishna and Love for Krishna. The perfect chant of the Name is the highest of these nine forms of *bhakti*. If a person chants the Name without offence he receives the treasure of love". (Ch. Ch. Antya. 4/70-71).

19. Great soul, if you now ask, "Who is a Vaishnava ?" I should say that the person who chants the Name of Krishna without offence is a Vaishnava. The Vaishnavas are again divided into three grades viz., junior-most, superior and super-excellent. One who chants the Name of Krishna at intervals is junior-most Vaishnava. He who takes the Name of Krishna without interruption comes up to the real spiritual standard and may be termed as a superior Vaishnava. The person, by gazing at whom the name of Krishna comes to one's lips, is a super-excellent Vaishnava. According to the Teaching of Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu we should not ascertain the entity of a Vaishnava by any other criterion.

20. Deeply immersed in the nectarine teaching of Paramahansa Babaji, Sanyasi Thakur could no longer contain his joy and began to dance as he chanted the following Name of Krishna :—

"Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare,
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare".

On that day a natural liking and relish for chanting the Name was felt by him for the first time. He prostrated himself at the lotus feet of the Master and said, "My Divine Master, may you be pleased to have mercy on your unworthy servant".

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Jaiva Dharma

CHAPTER III

*The conditioned function of the jiva
is imperfect, unwholesome, adulterated and transitory.*

1. One night, at the end of the first quarter, as Sanyasi Thakur, seated on a knoll in a remote corner of the grove of Sree Godroom, was chanting the Name of Hari, he happened to cast his glance towards the North. The full moon had then risen in the eastern horizon displaying far and wide the charming beauty of the circle of Navadwip. Sree Mayapur presently came within his view. It appeared to be not very far from the place where he was sitting. Sanyasi Thakur was amazed at what he saw. He mechanically muttered within himself, "Oh, what a wonderful Abode I see yonder ! It gives me ineffable delight. Streams of light issuing from lofty edifices, temples and arched gateways, all made of jems, are flooding the country-side along the banks of the Ganges. In many places the tumultuous sound of congregational chant of the Name of Hari is rending the firmament. Hundreds of devotees, resembling Narada, are singing and dancing in ecstatic joy to the music of the guitar and *mridanga*. At one place Mahadeva, god of the gods, the colour of whose body is spotless white, is dancing in a vigorous and unrestrained manner, to the music of his *dambaru* held in his right hand. He falls to the ground ever and anon crying all the time, "O Vishwambhara, have mercy on me". At another place the four-faced Brahma is giving to the assembly of the Vedic sages clear expositions of the Vedic hymns, "That Purusha (the Absolute Person) is the Supreme Lord (Mahaprabhu). He is the Originator of our intelligence. By His Grace unalloyed peace can be had. He is the only Guide and is eternal and unchangeable". On another spot all the gods headed by Indra are bounding with joy as they shout, "All Glory to Gaurachandra, all Glory to Nityananda !" The birds, perched on the branches of the trees, are singing the Names of "Gaura-Nitai", in praise. The bees, drunk with the honey of the Name of Gaurasundara, are humming on all sides in the flower-gardens. The goddess of Nature, frenzied with the liquid sweetness of Gaurachandra, is broadcasting her beauty and loveliness all around. "How wonderful !" exclaimed Sanyasi Thakur. "I never find these things when I see Mayapur at day time. What is this that I see to-day ?" Then he called to his mind the lotus feet of his Master and was evidently speaking to him, "Divine Master I have learnt the truth this day. You have enabled me out of mercy to have the sight of Mayapur, the Transcendental Abode of Godhead. I shall find the method by which I may introduce myself as Sree Gaurachandra's own from to-day. I see that in spiritual Navadwip all persons are decked with necklaces of *tulasi* beads, *tilaka* and letters of the Name. I also shall do the same". As he was speaking in this manner Sanyasi Thakur was reduced to a condition resembling the unconscious.

2. He came to his senses again in a short time. He recovered, indeed, his external

consciousness but those spiritual happenings, which he had never experienced before, did no more come within range of his vision. Thereupon, Sanyasi Thakur began to weep and said, "I am most fortunate because by receiving the mercy of the Divine Master I have been blessed, even for a short time, with the vision of Sree Navadwipdham".

3. On the following day Sanyasi Thakur discarded his ascetic staff, which he now consigned to the water, and, having decked his neck with a three-stringed necklace of tulasi beads and his forehead with the upward tilaka mark, began to dance as he chanted aloud the Name of Hari. All the Vaishnavas, who abode in Godrooma, on beholding his new garb and condition for the first time, showered upon him their admiring congratulations and prostrated themselves humbly to his feet. At this Sanyasi Thakur felt a little embarrassed. He thought within himself, "Alas ! I have assumed the Vaishnava garb for deserving the mercy of the Vaishnavas. But it has brought this new risk. I have heard repeatedly from the lips of my Holy Master the Teaching of the Supreme Lord that one should chant the Name of Hari at all time by being humbler than a blade of grass and more forbearing than a tree, by giving all due honour to others without being honoured oneself (Ch. Ch. Antya. 20-21)".

4. "What will be my fate", he thought, "as the Vaishnavas whom I consider to be my superiors are now humbly bowing to me ?" Pondering this subject with great anxiety Sanyasi Thakur made his way to Paramahansa Babaji and prostrated himself at the feet of His Divine Master.

5. Seated under the awning of the Madhabi creeper Babaji Maharaj was chanting the Name of Hari. On noticing the complete change of garb and the appearance of love for the Name, Babaji Maharaj embraced his disciple bathing him with his tears of love. He then said, "Vaishnavadasa, I feel the satisfaction of the fulfilment of all my desires by touching your body which is charged with all auspicious quality".

6. As soon as these words were spoken the former name of Sanyasi Thakur was removed and he became known by his name of Vaishnavadasa. From this day Sanyasi Thakur realised a unique life. All his vanities of pantheistic asceticism, his conceited name of impersonal asceticism, his garb of a *mayavadi sanyasi* and his ideas about his own superiority, left him.

7. The same afternoon a good number of Vaishnavas, resident in Sree Godrooma and Madhyadwipa, came to the holy grove of Sree Pradyumna Brahmachari for the sight of Paramahansa Babaji. All of them are now seated in a circle around Paramahansa Babaji. All are mentally reciting the Name of Hari on the string of *tulasi* beads. Some of them are shedding tears as they give utterance to a variety of pious ejaculations—Ah Gauranga Nityananda ! O Sitanath ! Oh, Glory to Sachinandan ! All the Vaishnavas are talking among themselves in performance of their confidential associated service (Isthagosthi). The assembled Vaishnavas are prostrating themselves to one another after gyrating the sacred *tulasi*. Presently Vaishnavadasa also comes to the place and, after gyrating Sree Vrindadevi, begins to roll on the holy dust sanctified by the touch of the

feet of the pure devotees. Some of those great souls speak in whisper among themselves, 'Is he not the same of Sanyasi Thakur! How wonderful does he look today !'

8. As he rolls on the ground in the presence of those devotees, Vaishnavadasa makes this humble confession, "I realise to-day the object of my life by receiving the dust of the feet of the Vaishnavas. By the mercy of my Divine Master I have been able to understand very well that there are no other means for the good of the soul than the dust of the feet of the Vaishnavas. The dust of the feet of the Vaishnavas, the nectar of their feet-wash and that of the remains of food touched by their lips, these three things are the medicine of the disease of worldliness as well as the only wholesome diet for patients suffering from the disease of mortality. It not only completely cures the disease of worldliness but it also enables all persons who are fully free from the disease to obtain the supreme object of their highest enjoyment. Most revered Vaishnavas, may you have mercy upon me that I may not suppose that to-day I am also expressing only the vanity of my learning. During these days my heart has become free from all vanities. I was born in a Brahmana family. I studied all the Shastras. I entered the fourth *asrama* viz., of the ascetic order. During all that time my vanity knew no bounds.. From the moment I have been attracted towards the principle of the Vaishnava Religion a seed of humility has been planted in my heart. I have been able step by step by your mercy to discard the vanities of high birth, learning and the exalted position of an ascetic. At present I feel that I am an insignificant, helpless creature. There is no other course open to me for my good than seeking the refuge of the feet of the Vaishnavas. The state of a Brahmana learning and asceticism were slowly but surely leading me on the downward path of degradation. I have confessed at your feet everything frankly as I feel. May you be pleased to deal with your servant in any way that you like."

9. On hearing the humble confession of Vaishnavadasa most of the assembled devotees gave vent to their feeling in the following words, "Great servant of the Supreme Lord, we have been eagerly seeking for the dust of the feet of Vaishnavas like your good self. May you be pleased to fulfill the object of our life by mercifully bestowing on us the dust of your feet. You have been the recipient of the mercy of Paramahansa Babaji. May you be pleased to purify us by bestowing on us the privilege of your company. It is recorded in the Brihannaradiya Purana that one attains devotion to the Feet of the Supreme Lord if one is blessed by association with such as you : "Bhakti (spiritual serving aptitude) verily manifests itself by the influence of association with the devotees of the Supreme Lord. Association with pure devotees is obtained as the result of accumulated good works performed during previous lives." We possess no doubt great stores of accumulated virtuous deeds congenial to devotion to our account, on the strength of which we have been able to obtain spiritual association with you. We are now filled with the hope of attaining devotion to the feet of the Supreme Lord Shree Hari by the influence of your society."

10. After this reciprocation of humility and prostrations of the Vaishnavas had been

finished, high-souled Vaishnavadasa, taking his seat in a corner, added to the glory of the assemblage of the brotherhood of those pure devotees. The fresh rosary of tulasi beads for chanting the Name of Hari gleamed in his hand,

11. On that day there was also another fortunate person occupying a seat in that assembly. He had learnt the language and literature of Islam from childhood. With the help of this knowledge and by imitating the external mode of living of the Mohamedan rulers he had come to be recognised as a person of high social standing among the people. He was a native of Shantipur and a high-born Kulin Brahmin by caste. He was the owner of extensive landed properties and was specially skilled in conducting factious quarrels. Having enjoyed all these advantages for a long period he did not find them altogether pleasant. At last he had taken to the practice of chanting the Name of Hari. He had studied in his younger days the different modes and tunes of music under renowned experts from Delhi. By dint of his previous musical training he became also a kind of a leading person among groups who practised the chant of the Name of Hari in company. But although the Vaishnavas did not love his studied musical airs he did not hesitate to impress his musical greatness by occasional display of those airs, scanning the countenance of his companions for signs of admiration. After he had continued to be this for some time he began to experience a certain degree of pleasure in chanting the Name. Thereafter he came up to Shree Godrooma and took up his residence in one of the hermitages of the Vaishnava devotees, with the intention of joining in the chanting of the Name by the Vaishnavas of Shree Nabadwip. It was in the company of the Vaishnava in whose hermitage he was staying that he had come that day to the grove of the Shree Pradyumna Brahmachari where he was sitting under the awning of Malati and Madhabi creepers. Having observed the behaviour of the Vaishnavas among themselves and specially their humility, and listened to the words of Vaishnavadasa, he felt a number of doubts in his mind. As he happened to be an accomplished speaker he picked up courage to put the following question to that august assembly of the Vaishnavas.

12. His question was to this effect,—“The dharma Sastras (treatises containing the regulations for domestic and social life) compiled by Manu and other sages have declared the Varna of the Brahmanas as superior to that of all others. They have prescribed the performance of daily worships and recitals, in the morning, noon and evening, as the eternal (nitya) duty of Brahmanas. If those performances are eternal why then are the Vaishnava rules of life opposed to them?”

13. The Vaishnavas have no liking for controversy. If any wrangling Brahmana had put such a question they would not have cared to answer it, for avoiding a useless quarrel. But as the enquirer in question was in the habit of singing the name of Hari the assembled devotees expressed their desire to learn the answer of the question from the lips of the revered Paramahansa Babaji. Paramahansa Babaji prostrated himself in submission when he heard the command of the Vaishnavas and said, “Revered sirs, if it meet your wishes Sree Vaishnavadasa, a great devotee, may give us the complete answer

to the question. All the devotees expressed their approval of the proposal.

14. On hearing the words of his Gurudeva (Divine Master) Vaishnavadasa, with due appreciation of the blessing conveyed by them to himself, addressed the assembly after expressing his sense of humility. "I am the least among all creatures and destitute of every good quality. It is extremely improper for me to speak anything in this assembly of the most revered devotees to whom the Truth is perfectly known. But as the command of the Guru must always be obeyed with complete submission I shall attempt to answer the question to the best of my power in conformity with my recollection of the honeyed instructions from the lotus mouth of my Sree Gurudeva regarding the true principles, that I have had the good fortune of drinking in with my ears". With these words Vaishnavadasa, after rubbing the dust of the feet of Paramahmsa Babaji all over his body stood up before that holy assembly and spoke as follows.

15. "May Sree Krishna Chaitanya, Who is the All-blissful Supreme Lord, Whose effulgent aspect is Brahman, Whose partial immanent aspect is Paramatman, and Who is the support and source of all manifestations and blissful activities, inspire with pure intelligence ! The dharma Sastras by Manu and other sages have come to be honoured all over the world by reason of the fact that they seek to regulate human life by their injunctions and prohibitions in conformity with the Teaching of the Veda (revealed knowledge of the Ultimate Truth). The nature of man has a twofold characteristic. He may seek to be regulated by a standard. He may also seek to follow the impulse of his spontaneous liking. So long as human judgment remains subject to the deluding power the nature of man must necessarily be inclined to be regulated. When the judgment of man is freed from subjection to the deluding power the inclination for regulation automatically ceases. In its place the inclination for following one's natural liking is manifested. The disposition that seeks to follow its own spontaneous liking is the pure nature of the soul. It is naturally perfect, spiritual and absolutely free from all material contamination. The affinity of the soul who is unalloyed spirit, for matter is dispelled by the Will of Sree Krishna. So long as He wills otherwise this affinity for matter may at best tend to continue in the state of readiness for discontinuance. In that condition, when the affinity for worldly relationship is ripe for waning, the judgment of man is internally immune from material relationship ; or in other words, liberation of the body of the soul from the external casings of matter has not yet been actually effected. When the spiritual body of the soul is actually disengaged from the material casings the inclination of spontaneous liking of the unalloyed soul for Krishna is manifested both in the inner essence as well as in the uncovered spiritual form. The nature of the denizens of Braja is of the essence of spontaneous love. In the state, when worldliness has taken the turn towards attenuation, the soul, following the pure spontaneous loving disposition of the denizens of Braja, is internally proselytized into the path of loving devotion (raganuga). This is the supremely wholesome state for the soul. So long as this state has not yet been realised the judgment of man continues to show its affinity towards material

entities. By the force of this habit the deluded soul mistakes this addition to material entities as the natural affinity of his real self. Pure love for the. Spiritual Object of Love is not manifested up till the disengagement of one's spiritual body from the material casings. "I and mine", these twin principles of egoistic consciousness, continue to act in a concentrated form towards material objects. Under the impression "this physical body is mine and this physical body is myself", love and repugnance respectively for persons and objects that minister to or retard the happiness of this physical body, are naturally generated. By being subjected to these likes and dislikes the deluded soul expresses bodily, social and moral liking and repugnance towards other entities according as he regards them as his friends or enemies. He now quarrels over mundane objects. He becomes subject to pleasure and pain by indulging his unnatural affinity towards gold and woman. Such is this temporary worldly sojourn (samsara). Through their addiction to the worldly sojourn souls, in fetters to the deluding power, wander in this world undergoing birth and death, and attaining as the fruits of their material activities high and low conditions on this mundane plane. To such souls spiritual love does not appeal as their birth-right. They cannot even conceive what such love is really like. Alas ! what a pity that the soul, who is by his essence an infinitesimal spirit, should forget that spiritual love is his own natural function and internal disposition, and that through such forgetfulness and being intoxicated with his unnatural addiction to mundane entities he should be enjoying his own degradation ! Almost all persons in this world are unprepared to admit this deplorable state as being really such.

16. The disposition that is identical with love is confined to the denizens of Braja. Its active existence is never possible in this world. But even the disposition that is attracted towards such love is also extremely rare in this world and altogether unfamiliar to fettered souls. It is a very rare occasion when, by the grace of pure devotees, the disposition of affinity for the path of love is manifested in the mind of any conditioned soul. It is both rare and most difficult to attain. Such disposition is withheld from this world.

17. But Godhead is Omniscient and All- Merciful. He took notice of the fact that the soul, entangled by the deluding power, was debarred from his spiritual aptitude. By what method was he now to attain his good ? By what provision would the soul, deluded by the mundane energy, be supplied with a means for obtaining the awakening of his lost memory of Krishna ? The soul could, of course, remember himself to be the servant of Krishna by association with the pure devotees. But there is no definite provision for the occurrence of such association with the pure devotees. Where was then the hope that such association will be available to all persons ? So people in general would be bereft of any chance of attaining Spiritual benefit if there were no chalked out path of regulation. From the Glance of Mercy of Godhead the Shastras accordingly manifested themselves. The sun of the Shastras, born of the Mercy of God, thereupon rose on the firmament of the Aryan intellect and promulgated the path of obedience to the Command of God to all the people.

18. The Veda is the first of the Shastras. In different parts of the Veda Shastra the doctrines of karma (fruitive mundane good works), jnana (pursuit of the path of knowledge free from all mundane features) and spiritual service in the form of love were declared as the courses commanded by Godhead. Souls deluded by Maya (the power that imposes mundane conditions on the soul) happen to differ as regards their individual conditions. Some of them are extremely ignorant. Some are found to possess knowledge to a limited extent. Some are well versed in many matters. The Shastra commands each individual to follow a different course authorised by itself to suit the state of intelligence of each person. Adhikaras (spiritual eligibility) of individual souls are numerically speaking countless. But those infinite gradations of eligibility are divisible into three distinct groups by reference to their dominating characteristic. These distinctions are due to eligibility for karma, jnana or prema. The Veda Shastra lays down this threefold course to suit the different conditions of different individuals. The Veda has made authoritative regulations and thereby has fixed both the duties as well as prohibited activities of the three different groups. The dharma (the function that is proper to one's nature) that has been thus settled is called Baidha dharma (dharma commanded by Godhead). The inclination that leads the soul to obey the Divine Command is also called Baidhi. The person who is devoid of the Baidhi inclination is opposed to the Divine Law. Such persons are habitually given to sinful activities. The life of such a person is constantly devoted to the transgression of the Divine Command. He is designated by the terms Mlechha, etc., who are outside the pale of the Vedic Law. The threefold eligibility which has been defined by the Vedas is further elaborated by the Rishis in the Samhitas and other Shastras, in pursuance of the teaching of the Veda. Manu and other scholars have written about eligibility for karma in a series of twenty Dharma Shastras (legal codes). Those who profess empiric philosophical views have treated eligibility for the path of knowledge in the body of those Shastras that are devoted to logical controversies. The Pauranikas and unalloyed Tantrikas have laid down the practice and teaching of principles regarding eligibility on the path of bhakti (transcendental service). All these three paths belong to the Vedic dispensation. Modern interpreters of these different groups of Shastras have misled many a person into wrong controversy and the slough of doubts by their exaggerated descriptions, in isolated passages, of the complete excellence of a particular path by carelessly overlooking the significance of the whole body of the Shastras. If we look into the Geeta embodying the unique reconciliation of all those Shastras, we can understand that the karma which does not point to jnana should be discarded as being atheistical and opposed to the Veda. Moreover if karma and jnana do not point to bhakti both of them, by their misapplication to the Absolute degenerate into atheism. Karma, jnana and bhakti in their respective right applications to the *summum bonum* are essentially one and the sane path. This is the reasoned conclusion of the Vaishnava thought declared by the Veda.

19. The jiva, infatuated by the deluding power, betakes himself to karma in the first

instance for supporting his mundane existence. Next comes karma-yoga when karma is performed with a view to transcendental realisation. Karma-yoga progresses into jnana-yoga, and last of all appears bhakti-yoga. The jiva, infatuated by the deluding power, has to progress through these successive stages in order to reach the temple of bhakti. He can never have any inclination for transcendental service except in terms of these successive stages. He cannot be made to understand by any other method the necessity of serving Godhead.

20. But what is exactly meant by the recourse of the jiva to karma ? Whatever activity is performed with the body and mind after being born in this world is karma. This karma is of two kinds—good and evil. By the performance of good karma the jiva reaps good consequences. By the performance of evil karma the jiva has to suffer bad consequences. Evil karma is also called ‘papa’ or ‘bikarma’. The non-performance of good karma is called ‘akarma’. Both of these are bad. Good karma alone is good for the soul. Good karma is again of three kinds viz. nitya, naimittika and kamyā. Kamyā karma or performance of work for the gratification of one’s senses is negligible, as it is extremely selfish. Nitya and naimittika karmas are recommended by the Shastras. As a matter of fact the Shastras designate only nitya, naimittika and kamyā karmas as karma, and refuse to recognise akarma and bikarma as karma. This preference of the Shastras is based upon the consideration of the wholesomeness or otherwise of the different types of karma. As kamyā karma has also been left out for the reason that it is not wholesome, nitya and naimittika karma may, therefore, be considered to be the only varieties of karma according to the Shastras. Nitya karma is karma that is productive of benefits to the body, mind, society and life after death. Nitya karma should be performed by all persons, as a matter of duty. Those karmas that are occasionally performed in respect of some special occurrence, but as a matter of duty on a par with nitya karma, are called naimittika karma. Evening worship, salutation to God, maintenance of society and one’s own body by pure means, truthful conduct and maintenance of one’s dependants—all these are nitya karma. The performance of one’s duty towards one’s deceased parents, etc., and the performance of penance on the commission of ‘papa’—these are naimittika.

21. Nitya and naimittika karmas should be performed in this world in the best possible manner. For making this obligatory on all persons the makers of the Shastras have prescribed a system of duties, which bears the name of varnashrama, after due consideration of the nature and diversities of the natural inclinations of man. The purport of the varnashrama system is as follows. Men who are eligible for the performance of karma, belong naturally to one of four distinct types. These types are designated by the terms Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The respective modes of life which they choose to lead in this world are also fourfold and are called ashrama or station. Grihastha (householder or family-man), Brahmachari (whole-time worshipper), Vanaprastha (elderly person leading unworldly life), and Sanyasi (a person who has

completely renounced the world), are the four stations. The varna or class of a person is ascertainable by the disposition, birth, activities and spiritual indications. In case the varna is ascertained only by the test of seminal birth, the only result is the loss of the real purpose of the institution. The stations have been instituted by reference to the states of married life, of celibacy and of repugnance towards the world consequent upon abandonment of sexual relationship. The station of the grihastha corresponds to that of the married life. The station of a person before marriage or of a celibate is that of the Brahmachari. The stations of Vanaprastha and Sanyas result from repugnance towards sexual connection. The station of Sanyas is the highest ashrama. The Brahmana is the highest varna.

22. The following true propositions have been established by Srimad Bhagavata, the crest-jewel of all the Shastras 11/17/15-21). The lower and higher natures of man result from the respective planes of the origin of the principles of his varna and ashrama. The regions of the leg and the loin in the body are the lower regions. The Shudra varna and the Grihastha ashrama have sprung from them. For this reason Shudras and persons inclined to domestic life possess the lower nature. Equanimity, self-control, asceticism, moral purity, inner satisfaction, forgiveness, straightforwardness, inclination to serve God, sympathy for the suffering of others, truthfulness—these are the nature of a Brahmana. Prowess, strength, coolness, heroism, patience, generosity, enthusiasm, steadfastness and fitness to rule— these are the nature of a Kshatriya. Belief in God, constant desire for making charitable gifts, absence of duplicity, service of Brahmans and great endeavour for increasing one's store of wealth—these are the nature of a Vaishya. Personal service rendered to God, the twice-born and cattle and contentment with the wealth procured by such submissive service of God, the twice-born and cattle—these are the nature of a Shudra. Impurity, falsehood, theft, disbelief in life after death, quarrelsomeness, lust, proneness to sudden anger, desire for the evil course—all this constitutes the nature of the Antyajas who have fallen away from the natural modes of life. Absence of malice, truthfulness, non commission of theft, immunity from lust, sudden anger and covetousness, and endeavour for pleasing and doing good to all jivas —these are the natural duties of all the varnas.

23. In the assembly of spiritually enlightened person every one is in a position to realise the meaning of the words of the Shastras. So it is not necessary for me to explain the meaning of the text of the Bhagavata. I would, however, like to add that the provision of varna and ashrama is the basis of the life for obeying the commands of God. Irreligion comes to prevail in a country in a proportion as it happens to be more or less without the varnashrama organisation.

24. Let us now consider the nature of the application of the terms, “nitya” and “namittika” to “karma”. If we look the underlying significance of the Shastras we cannot resist the conclusion that those terms in their application to “karma” are not used in their spiritual sense. They are used in reference to “karma” with a mundane or trans-

ferred connotation. The terms 'nitya dharma,' 'nitya karma,' 'nitya tattva,' 'nitya satya' etc., can be properly used in reference to no other position except the unalloyed spiritual condition of the soul. Therefore, when the term 'nitya' is used in reference to 'karma' as a means to an end, we must understand that 'karma' which is distantly indicative of the eternal truth in this world is called 'nitya' only by reason of such reference. 'Karma' is never 'nitya' or eternal. It is only when 'karma' by the method of 'karma-yoga' is engaged in the quest of 'jnana,' and 'jnana' points to 'bhakti,' that 'karma' and 'jnana' are termed 'nitya' in a transferred sense. When the evening worship performed by a Brahmana is called 'nitya karma' it means no more than this that the method that has been laid down in regard to the material activities of our physical body, in as much as, it has a distant bearing on bhakti, is nitya as a means towards the realisation of the eternal function, and not because it is itself 'nitya'. Such application is known as 'upachara'.

25. In truth Krishna-prema or love for Krishna is the only eternal function of the soul. Its ontological nature may be stated as the activity of the unalloyed cognitive principle. Those material activities that are resorted to for the realisation of the spiritual function are performed towards the same end. Therefore, there is no harm if they are prescribed as eternal in this sense. From the absolute point of view it is better to call them 'naimittika' instead of 'nitya'. The distinctions of 'nitya' and 'naimittika' as applied to different varieties of 'karma' itself are for convenience and have no eternal significance.

26. In a consideration of the actual entity of things the exercise of the unmixed cognitive principle is admissible as the only eternal natural function of the individual soul. Every other function is accidental. Varnashrama (the duties of the varnashrama organisation), astanga-yoga (the eight-fold yoga process), sankhya-jnana (the path of materialistic knowledge) and tapasya (asceticism), all these are accidental functions. There would have been no necessity for all those functions if the individual soul had not been in bondage to Maya. On account of his having been fettered by Maya, the resulting infatuated state is itself one of the accidental causes. All those functions as the products of that accident, have thus become duties for the jiva. From the absolute point of view all of them are accidental functions.

27. The superior status of a Brahmana, his fruitive activities like the ritualistic practices of daily worship and prayers and assumption of sanyas (life of an ascetic by renunciation of family and society)—all these are accidental natural functions. These duties are held in esteem by the Dharmashastras (codes of social duty) and are most wholesome at the appropriate stages of spiritual pupilage. Yet they have no claim to one's regard as being on a footing with the eternal spiritual function. A shloka of the Bhagabat (Bhag. 7/9/9) runs thus: "Even the Chandala, feeding on the carcass of dogs, is better than a Brahmana, possessed of all the twelve good qualities, who is averse to the service of the Lotus Feet of Krishna. This is so because I hold that a person, whose mind, speech, all endeavours and wealth are dedicated to Krishna, sanctifies his family as well

as his own life, whereas the Brahmana, although he is possessed of immense honour in society, cannot do so.”

28. A Brahmana is distinguished above the other orders by his possession of the following twelve good qualities viz., truthfulness, control over his senses, austerity, freedom from malice, forbearance, freedom from envy, offering of sacrifice, offering of charitable gifts, constancy, listening to the Vedas and performance of vowed pious works. A Brahmana, endowed with these twelve good qualities, certainly commands the reverence of all persons in this world. But notwithstanding the possession of all these good qualities if he happens to be without devotional aptitude for Krishna, the All-attractive Supreme Lord, then even a dog-eating Chandala, who is possessed of spontaneous inclination to serve Krishna, must be held to be superior to him in every way. The real meaning of the shloka is that a person who, although born in a Chandala family, may resort to the cultivation of his spiritual nature, which is the eternal function of all pure souls (jiva), by being purified by constant association with the sadhus, is superior even to a Brahmana who, born in a Brahmana family may be assiduous also in the practice of the enjoined accidental functions but does not actively practise the eternal function in the shape of culturing his unalloyed spiritual nature.

29. In this world there are to be found two types of persons viz., those whose sense of right and wrong has been roused to activity and those in whom it is dormant. The world may be said to be almost full of the latter type. Persons whose ethical sense is properly aroused are extremely rare. A Brahmana is the highest among those whose ethical judgment is dormant ; and, therefore, the daily worships and prayers, that are the appropriate duties of persons endowed with the disposition of Brahmanas, are also the highest among the functions that are performed by this type of people. Persons, whose moral sense has been properly aroused to the state of activity, are also known as Vaishnavas. The conduct of Vaishnavas must necessarily present points of difference from that of persons whose sense of right and wrong is dormant. But although the conduct of the Vaishnavas happens to be different it is not opposed to the spirit of the Smarta rules that have been made for the guidance of persons with dormant ethical sense. The spirit of the regulations of the Shastras is the same in every case. Persons, whose moral sense is dormant, have been under the necessity of remaining confined to a particular portion of the elementary provisions of the Shastras. Persons, possessed of active moral sense, extend their friendly welcome to the spirit of the Shastras. There is no difference in spirit despite any difference in acts. To ineligible persons the conduct of persons with an awakened conscience has an appearance of being opposed to that of people in general. But as a matter of fact the underlying significance of even such apparently different conduct is one and the same.

30. In the judgment of persons with properly awakened ethical faculties it should appear as quite proper to teach the accidental function to people in general. But the temporary function is nevertheless really imperfect, adulterated with unwholesome in-

redients and impermanence.

31. The accidental function does not attempt the direct culture of our spiritual nature. In it the culture of the material principle is accepted in the form that is not incompatible with spiritual culture. Such function thus becomes no more than a means for the attainment of spiritual culture proper as the end. The means ceases to be followed on the production of its end. For this reason the means is also never complete in itself. The means is only a dissociated section of the truth of the thing which is the end. Hence the accidental function can never be perfect. For example the duties of daily worship and prayers of a Brahmana are temporary and dependant upon the observance of the proper rules in exactly the same way as his other secular duties. Those activities do not proceed from his natural spiritual disposition. After one has been accustomed to a course of such regulated activities for a long time, and when he comes to feel a liking for direct spiritual culture in the form of the chant of the Name of Hari by dint of the purification of his mind through active association with pure devotees, the duties of daily worship and prayer in the form of secular occupations are no longer necessary. The performance of the chant of the Name of Hari is complete spiritual culture. The performance of the daily prescribed worship and prayers is only a means for the attainment of the said end. Such performance never attains the characteristic of the complete activity.

32. The accidental function is adulterated with undesirable factors, notwithstanding the fact that it deserves to be esteemed for aiming at the true end. The spiritual principle is alone wholesome. Matter and association with matter are alone unwholesome for the individual soul. The accidental function contains a great proportion of the material principle. Moreover the said function brings forth such a profusion of irrelevant results that the soul cannot but get entangled in them, For instance it is certainly a good thing for a Brahmana to worship God, but a false egotism, in the shape of such beliefs as that "I am a Brahmana other souls are inferior to myself",—is apt to render the worship of a Brahmana productive of undesirable consequences. Similarly an objectionable by-product of the eight-fold yogic function which goes by the name of "bibhuti" (magical power) is also extremely harmful to the individual soul. 'Bhukti' (mundane enjoyment) and 'mukti' (liberation) —these two are unavoidable companions of the accidental function. It is only if a person can save himself from the clutches of these fell enemies that he can have a chance of attaining the spiritual function proper which is the fundamental object of such activities. But we must bear it in mind that in the accidental function, for the purpose of the individual soul, the undesirable factor is preponderant.

33. The accidental function is impermanent. It does not hold at all times and in all conditions of the jiva. For instance the *Brahma* nature of a Brahmana, the *Kshatra* nature of the Kshatriya etc., are accidents ; they disappear as soon as the cause of them is exhausted. A person may be born a Chandala following his birth in a Brahmana family. In his second life the accidental function corresponding to his *varna* as a Brahmana is no longer his proper function or *svadharma*. The term 'svadharma' as used in reference

to the accidental function has also a transferred meaning. After every birth the proper specific function or *svadharma* of the jiva suffers a change. But the eternal function of the jiva is never changed in any birth. The eternal function alone is really the *svadharma* of the jiva. The accidental function is transitory.

34. If then you ask, “what is the Vaishnava religion or the function of a Vaishnava ?” The answer is that the function of a Vaishnava or Vaishnava religion is the eternal function of the jiva. The Vaishnava jiva in his state of freedom from the bondage of the material energy practises love of Krishna in his unalloyed spiritual form. The Vaishnava jiva in the conditioned state by being awakened to his proper function thankfully accepts every form of material entity and mundane relationship that is conducive to his spiritual culture and rejects all those that are detrimental to the same. He does not carry out mechanically the injunctions and taboos of the Shastras. He welcomes an injunction of the Shastra when it is conducive to the service of God and disregards it when it is opposed to the same. The attitude of a Vaishnava towards the prohibitions of the Shastras is also exactly the same. The Vaishnava is the only true entity and the essence of all goodness in this world. The Vaishnava is the only friend of this world. The Vaishnava is the only source of well-being of this world. I have submitted in all humility all that I have to say before the Vaishnavas who are assembled here today. I humbly pray for their kind forgiveness for all my offences”.

35. When at the conclusion of his speech Vaishnavadas, after making his obeisances to the assembly of the Vaishnavas, assumed his seat at the further end of the gathering, all those devotees were greatly moved and tears rolled down from their eyes. All of them thanked him with one accord. The groves of Sree Godruma also responded by the offering of their gratitude.

36. The Brahmana, who had put the question and who was an accomplished singer, could also perceive the most profound truth in many parts of the exposition, although he experienced also a certain degree of doubt in regard to some of the statements. However, the seed of firm conviction in the truth of the Vaishnava religion, which had been implanted in his heart, was quickened into vigorous life by what he had heard. He now said with folded hands, ‘Great devotees, I am not a Vaishnava, but I have been turned a Vaishnava by listening to the Name of Hari. If you be pleased to instruct me at your leisure out of mercy it may remove my doubts which are many.

37. Sree Premadasa Babaji Maharaj made the gracious answer, “May I request you to associate at your convenience with Srimad Vaishnavadasa. He is versed in all the Shastras. He was residing at Benares on his assumption of Sanyas after deeply studying the Vedanta Shastra. Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, the Darling Lord of our lives, by manifesting His boundless mercy, has drawn him here to Sree Nabadwip. He has now become fully conversant with the principles of the Vaishnava religion and has developed a deep love for Sree Hari-Name”.

38. The name of the enquirer was Sree Kalidasa Lahiri. On hearing these words of

Babaji Maharaj he mentally accepted Vaishnavadasa as his spiritual preceptor (Guru). He thought within himself, "He has been born in a Brahmana family and has accepted Sanyas. He is, therefore, fit to instruct a Brahmana. Moreover, I have found him to be possessed of very great knowledge of Vaishnava principles. I can confidently expect from him much light about Vaishnavism". With these thoughts in his mind Lahiri Mahashaya made his prostrated obeisances to the feet of Vaishnavadasa and said, "Revered sir, have mercy upon me". Vaishnavadasa, after prostrating himself to Lahiri Mahashaya in his turn, replied, "If you are pleased to be merciful to me, the wish of my heart may be fulfilled".

39. As the evening was drawing nigh all the assembled persons departed to their homes for that day.

40. The place where Lahiri Mahashaya lived was hidden away in a secluded part of the village. It was also a grove (kunj). The centre of the grove was occupied by an awning of Madhabi creepers and a platform to Sree Vrindadevi (tulasi). There were two rooms, one on each side. The yard was fenced round with the *chita* plant. A *bela* tree, a *neema* tree and several other fruit and flower trees added to the charm of the grove. Madhabadasa Babaji was the *Adhikari* (lit. vicar) of the grove (kunj). This Babaji had at first been a really good soul. But his Vaishnava nature had suffered a great deterioration by the evil effects of bad association. His devotional practices had been greatly curtailed by vices contracted by wrong association with women. Pecuniary want also stood in the way of meeting the expenses of his livelihood in tolerable comfort. He practised begging from many persons and had hired out one of his rooms to a tenant. Lahiri Mahashaya was living at this place as his tenant in the rented room.

41. It was now midnight when Lahiri Mahashaya's sleep was broken. He was pondering the substance of the speech of Vaishnavadasa Babaji. Just then a sound was heard in the yard of the grove. On coming out of his room Lahiri Mahashaya found Madhabadasa Babaji talking with a woman in the yard of the grove. The woman disappeared on catching sight of him. Madhabadasa remained silent. He evidently felt embarrassed in the presence of Lahiri Mahashaya.

42. Lahiri Mahashaya spoke first, "Babaji, what is the matter ?"

43. Madhabadasa replied with tearful eyes, "It is my evil fate. What more need I say ? Alas, what I had been in the past and what I am now ! With what affectionate confidence Paramahansa Babaji once looked upon me ! I am now ashamed even to approach his presence".

44. Lahiri Mahashaya said, "We can understand the position if the matter is definitely stated".

45. Madhabadasa said, "The woman whom you saw was my married wife in my former household life. A short time , after I accepted the life of renunciation she came to Sripat Shantipur, which is one of the sacred places of the Vaishnavas, and lived there in a cottage, which she made for the purpose, on the bank of the Ganges. Many days passed

away in this manner. I chanced to go to Sripat Shantipur and meeting her on the side of the Ganges asked her why she had renounced the household life. She let me understand that worldly life had ceased to have any attraction for her and that she was living by begging in the holy place after being deprived of the service of my feet. Without talking to her further on the subject I came back to Sree Godruma and put up in the house of a Sad-gopa. I met her everyday at some place or other. The more I tried to avoid her hold, the more did she press her intimacy on me. She has now an ashrama (a house for living in pious retirement) of her own at this place. She now makes every possible endeavour for accomplishing my ruin by visiting me in late hours during the night. My evil fame has been circulated everywhere. By association with her my own devotional practices has suffered very great curtailment. I have proved the renegade among the servants of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya. Since the junior Haridas was punished I am the only wretch who have turned out to be a fit object of punishment. The Babajis of Sree Godruma out of their meacy have not yet punished me. But they no longer have any trust in me.”

46. Lahiri Mahashaya on hearing his story said, “Madhabadasa Babaji, beware of the evil course”. Having said so he returned to his room. The Babaji also betook himself to his hermit’s seat (gadi).

47. Lahiri Mahashaya had no more sleep that night. He said within himself, “Madhabadasa Babaji has ruined himself by breaking his hermit’s vow of continence. It is not proper for me to stay here, because even if it does not lead to actual evil association it will give rise to grave evil reputation. The pure Vaishnavas will no longer teach me as one who is fit for their trust.”

48. Accordingly the very next morning he repaired to Pradyumna Kunja and after duly saluting Sree Vaishnavadasa he begged for a little room in the Kunja for his stay there. When Vaishnavadasa informed Paramahansa Babaji of his request, he commanded him to be assigned a cottage for his stay on one side of the Kunja. Since then Lahiri Mahashaya lived in that cottage and arranged for obtaining food that had been offered to Vishnu at the house of a Brahmana.

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Jaiva Dharma

CHAPTER IV

Vaishnava Religion another name for the Eternal Spiritual Function.

The cottage of Lahiri Mahashaya and Sree Vaishnavadasa stood side by side. There was a few mango and jack trees close by. A number of small flowering punnaga plants formed the beautiful surrounding. In the yard there was a spacious circular masonry terrace. This terrace had been in existence since the days when Sree Pradyumna Brahmachari lived in the grove. For a long time the Vaishnavas have been accustomed to gyrate the terrace which came to be designated as 'the terrace of Surabhi' (Surabhi is the name of the Divine cow) and to make their humble obeisances to it.

2. It was a short time after dusk. Sree Vaishnavadasa was chanting the Name of Hari, being seated in his hut on a mat of leaves. It was during the dark fortnight. The gloom of night was deepening apace. A dim light was burning in the cottage of Lahiri Mahashaya. The shape of a snake was noticed close to the door-step of Lahiri Mahashaya's hut. Lahiri Mahashaya at once took up a heavy stick and trimmed the light for killing the brute. But the snake had disappeared before he could come out of his room with the light. Lahiri Mahashaya then said to Sree Vaishnavadasa, "Be pleased to have some care for your safety. A snake has got into your hut". Vaishnavadasa replied, "Lahiri Mahashaya, why are you troubling about the snake ? Be pleased to step into my hut and be seated without fear". Lahiri Mahashaya at the bidding of Sree Vaishnavadasa entered the hut and took his seat there on a mat of leaves ; but his mind was agitated about the snake. He said to Sree Vaishnavadasa, "Revered sir, our place Shantipur is quite good in this respect. It is a town and there is no fear of snakes or any such thing. Here in Nadia there is always the danger of snake-bite. This is specially the case with places like Godrooma, which are overgrown with wild shrubs where is it very difficult for a gentleman to live".

3. Sree Vaishnavadasa Babaji said, "Lahiri Mahashaya, it is very bad to allow one's mind to be agitated by such matters. You must have heard of the account of Parikshit Maharaj in the Srimad Bhagawata who listened to the ambrosial account of Sree Hari with a steadfast mind from the lips of Srimad Shukadeva giving up all fear of imminent snake-bite and was able to attain the highest joy by such method. These serpents cannot hurt the spiritual body of man. That body can be bitten only by the serpent in the shape of the want of discourses about God. The material body is not permanent. There will certainly come a day when it will have to be given up. All bodily activities are properly enough performed for the sake of the material tabernacle. When the physical body will fall by the Will of Krishna, it will not be possible to save it by any kind of effort. Till the moment of the dissolution of the physical body arrives no serpent will do any harm even if one lies by its side. Therefore, a person may be counted as a Vaishnava after he gives up all fear from serpent and other similar causes. How can the mind apply itself to the Lotus Feet of Sree Hari if it is always agitated by such fears ? It is certainly one's duty to give up the fear of serpents and the attempt to kill them through such fear".

4. Lahiri Mahashaya experienced something like the firm trust in God that is natural to the pure soul. He said, “Revered sir, my mind has been freed from all fear by your true and pure words. I have understood that one can be fit for obtaining the highest good if the mind is elevated. Those great souls, who employ themselves in the service of God by retiring into the caves of mountains, are never afraid of wild animals. On the contrary they betake themselves to forest in order to live there in the midst of wild animals through fear of the danger of association with wicked persons.”

5. Babaji Mahashaya said, the mind is naturally improved when the Goddess of devotion manifest herself in one’s heart. Everybody loves such a person. All persons, good and bad alike, love the servant of God. It is, therefore, the duty of every person to be a Vaishnava.”

6. No sooner did Lahiri Mahashaya catch the last word than he said, “I admit that you have awakened in me firm faith in our eternal function. I am also convinced that there is some close connection between Vaishnava-dharma and our eternal function. But I have not yet been able to understand that the eternal function is identical with Vaishnava dharma. It is my prayer to you that you may kindly explain this matter fully to me”.

7. Vaishnavadasa Babaji proceeded with his discourse. He said, “Two dharmas which are quite different from one another have been current in the world under the common name of Vaishnava-dharma. One of them is pure Vaishnava-dharma and the other is contaminated by mundane reference. Pure Vaishnava-dharma as regards its fundamental principle is one religion. It is, however, also fourfold, according to differences of rasa. Vaishnava-dharma in its pure form can be the function¹ of a servant, or ² of a friend, or ³ of parents, or ⁴ of sweethearts. In its essence pure Vaishnava-dharma is one and not more than one. The eternal function (nitya dharma) and transcendental function (para dharma) are only other names of pure Vaishnava-dharma. The text of the ‘Sruti’ “that by knowing which everything becomes known” has also in view pure Vaishnava-dharma. You will gradually learn this truth in its elaborate form.

8. Contaminated Vaishnava-dharma is of two kinds. It may be contaminated with either karma and jnana. The practices of Vaishnava-dharma that are approved by *smarta* opinion are all contaminated with karma. Although there is provision in it of initiation by Vaishnava mantra, yet the all-pervading predominating person Vishnu is treated in this system as a subordinate constituent of fruitive activity. According to this view although Vishnu is the regulator of all other gods He Himself is a part of karma and subordinate to karma. Karma is not subordinate to the Will of Vishnu, but Vishnu is subordinate to the will of karma. According to the *smarta* view all worship, including the functions of the novice as well as of self-realised souls, is a constituent part of karma, there being no higher principle than karma. This form of contaminated Vaishnava-dharma, professed by materialistic Vimansakas (lit. those who profess to be able to solve all difficulties of interpretation of the texts of the Shastras), has been current for a very long time. In India most of those who belong to this school of thought claim to be Vaishnavas. They are not willing to admit the pure Vaishnavas to be Vaishnavas at all. It is, however, only their evil lot.

9. “Vaishnava-dharma contaminated with jnana also prevails extensively in India. According to this school the principle of the indiscrete and unknowable Brahman is the highest. It inculcates polytheism in the form of the worship of the sun god, Ganesha,

Shakti, Shiva and Vishnu as persons, for the realisation of the impersonal and indiscrete Brahman. On the realisation of the fullness of jnana the form of the Object of their worship is eliminated. In the final position one attains the state of the indiscrete Brahman. Many persons deprecate pure Vaishnavas by falling under the influence of this school of thought. The worship of Vishnu, that is practised by the pantheists (panchakupashakas), is not pure Vaishnava-dharma, although it includes initiation by Vishnu mantra and in the details of worship it accepts reference to Vishnu and sometimes to Radha-Krishna.

10. "The pure Vaishnava-dharma, that manifests itself to one's cognition on the elimination of these varieties of the contaminated Vaishnava-dharma, is the true Vaishnava Religion. Due to the wrong controversial temper of the age most persons, failing to understand the nature of the pure Vaishnava-dharma, mis-apply the designation to contaminated Vaishnava-dharma.

11. "Srimad Bhagabata lays down the principle that the spiritual tendency of man may have one of three directions. It may point to Brahman, or Paramatman, or Bhagawan as the Ultimate Reality. In pursuance of a tendency that points to the Brahman a person sometimes develops a taste for the indiscrete Brahman as the Ultimate Principle. The methods by which such persons seek to realise their indiscrete Brahman nature come to be recognised in due course as pantheism or the worship of five gods. Vaishnava-dharma contaminated with jnana makes its appearance inside this process.

12. The tendency that points to the Paramatman aims at the establishment of a contact between the worshipper and Paramatman on the astral plane. The methods, by which such persons hope to realise the exclusive state of identification with the Paramatman, form the systems that are known as the eightfold yoga consisting of a variety of activities, also called karma-yoga. According to this school of thought, initiation by Vishnu-mantra, worship of Vishnu, meditation etc., are all constituents of fruitive activity or karma. It is inside this process that Vaishnava dharma, contaminated with karma, makes its appearance."

13. It is by the operation of the theistic impulse, which is also innate in us, that all fortunate souls (jivas) realise a liking for the principle of bhakti that is at once pure, tangible and in consonance with Godhead's Own Entity. The functions of worship, etc., that are practised by such persons, are not any constituent limbs of either karma or jnana, but the body of pure bhakti itself. The Vaishnava religion, that follows this school of thought, is alone unmixed Vaishnava dharma. This is supported by the following clear text of Srimad Bhagabat (Bhag. 1/2/11): "That Who is 'Advaya-jnana' (Absolute Undivided Cognition) is called the Reality by all those who are conversant with the Ultimate Reality. He manifests Himself in the form of the words Brahma, Paramatma and Bhagawan in the Scriptures."

14. It should be noticed that the Entity of Bhagawan, also not different from that of Brahma and Paramatma, is ulterior to all entities. The Entity of Bhagawan is moreover the same as the Entity of Vishnu. Souls (jivas), that are subservients of that Entity are alone in the pure, natural state, The aptitude of such a person is bhakti. Bhakti to Hari is alone unadulterated Vaishnava dharma, nitya dharma (eternal function), jaiva-dharma (function of all souls), bhagabat dharma (theistic religion), paramartha dharma (conducive to the highest good), para dharma (transcendental function). All those religions, that have

been produced by the inclination towards the Brahma and Paramatma conceptions are naimittika (contingent). There is mundane purpose (nimitta) in the quest of the discrete Brahma. Therefore, the process is contingent and temporary, or, in other words, it is not eternal (nitya). The individual (jiva) in the conditioned state is anxious to get rid of the conditions of his unwholesome thwarted existence by reason of his actual experience of such unwholesomeness. Under this temporary urge he falls back upon the quest of the state that is devoid of the concrete quality of mundane existence. The function, that he thus proposes as the final goal, is the product of a temporary urge or mundane purpose (nimitta). It is, therefore, definitely established that the Brahma religion is not eternal (nitya). The jiva, who takes recourse to the Paramatma religion, tempted by the desire for pleasure that accrues from the state of exclusive concentration (samadhi), is led into that form of the contingent function for the purpose of the enjoyment of the subtle form of pleasures of the flesh. So the Paramatma religion is also not eternal (nitya). Unadulterated Bhagabat religion alone is nitya.”

15. Having listened with attention, Lahiri Mahasaya now gave vent to his thoughts. He said, “Revered sir, be pleased to discourse to me about the unadulterated Vaishnava religion. I am advanced in years. But I throw myself on the protection of your holy feet. May you be pleased to accept me, out of your mercy. I have heard that even if a person has been already initiated and taught the principles of religion by an unworthy teacher, he should submit to be initiated and taught afresh if he finds a worthy teacher. By listening to your holy instructions during these days I have come to experience firm faith in the Vaishnava religion. I now offer myself to you for instructing me in the principles of the Vaishnava religion and for subsequently initiating me in the same. May you be pleased to sanctify me by your mercy”.

16. Babaji Mahasaya showed a slight embarrassment as he said, “Respected brother, I will instruct you to the best of my power. I am not fit to be diksha-guru (preceptor who initiates into spiritual life). However that be, you should now apply yourself to learning the principles of the Vaishnava religion.”

17. “Sree Sree Krishna Chaitanya, the Original Spiritual Teacher of the world, has taught as follows. There are three fundamental principles in the Vaishnava religion. These are respectively : 1. the principle of relationship (sambandha-tattva), 2. the principle of natural function accruing from true relationship (abbidheya-tattva) and 3. the principle of the fruit of such function (prayojana-tattvah).

18. “Under the principle of relationship there are to be found separate instructions about three distinct subjects viz, 1. the material world, or the principle of Maya (lit. that by which we are enabled to measure or comprehend a thing by our limited faculties), 2. individual soul (jiva) or the entity of the subservient, 3. Bhagawan (Personality of Godhead) or the Entity of the Lord or Master. Bhagawan is One and without a second. He is the Possessor of all power. He attracts all entities. He is the Sole Emporium of all sovereignty and mellowness He is the Only Support (Ashraya) of Maya and the jiva potency. But despite the fact that He happens to be the Support of both Maya and jiva, He is at the same time and most appropriately also possessed of His Independent Specific Individuality. The Glow of the Beauty of His Divine Form being reflected to a great distance manifests itself as the discrete Brahma. His power as Master, Lord or Sovereign (Ishvara),

having created the mundane world, and entering the same by His Portion as Paramatma, is the Immanent Divine Lord of this mundane universe. As Manifestive Entity of the Plenitude of His Divine Lordly Majesty, He is Narayana in Parabyom (lit. transcendental world). As Manifestive Entity of the mellow quality, He is Sree Sree Krishna-chandra, the Beloved Consort of the gopees (spiritual milkmaids) in Goloka-Vrindavana. All His Manifestive and Dynamic Forms are Eternal (nitya) and Endless (ananta). There is no one or nothing that is equal to Him. There is, of course, nothing that is superior to Him. All His Manifestations and Activities are brought about by His transcendental power (Para Shakti). Of the various potencies of His transcendental power jiva is aware of only three. One of these is known as the enlightening potency (*chit vikram*). All the Pastimes (Leela) of Sree Krishna are occasioned by it. Another of the potencies is called jiva potency, by which the infinity of the individual souls have their manifestation and existence. The third of the potencies is called Maya. By Maya all the measurable entities, passing time and worldly activities have been created. The Principle of Relationship has reference to the relationship between jiva and Bhagawan the relationship between Bhagawan on the one hand and jiva and *jada* (inanimate) on the other, and the relationship of *jada* with Bhagawan and jiva. The knowledge of the Principle of Relationship is realised when the fact of these relations becomes fully known. Those who are devoid of the knowledge of the Principle of Relationship can never realise the unadulterated condition of their Vaishnava nature.

19. Lahiri Mahasaya said, "I have heard from the Vaishnavas that they surrender themselves wholly to their emotions, and that there is no necessity of any knowledge in their case. Why do they say so ? I myself have also up till now, in my chanting of the Name of Hari, cared only to secure an accession of emotion. I have never tried to acquire the knowledge of relationship."

20. Babaji Mahasaya replied, "The appearance of the emotion of love is certainly the ultimate result of the practice of devotion by the Vaishnavas. But the realised emotion must be unadulterated with mundane elements. Those, who apply themselves to the culture of emotions that are appropriate to the endeavours laid down in the system aiming at the realisation of merging one's entity in the discrete Brahma, miss the perfectly pure quality of emotion. Their emotions and practices are only a pretence of purity of emotional culture. The realisation of the least particle of the unadulterated emotional quality has power to fulfil all legitimate requirements of the true nature of all individual souls (jiva). But emotionalism adulterated with the imperfect knowledge of the discrete Brahma must be regarded as a source of tribulations for the soul. The emotional displays of a person, who cherishes in his heart the ambition of merging in the discrete Brahma, are only a make-believe for deceiving the people. For this reason it is imperatively necessary for all pure devotees to be well-versed in the knowledge of relationship."

21. Lahiri Mahasaya now asked with all due respect, "Is there any higher truth than Brahma ? If the entity of Brahma is derived from Bhagawan why do not the seekers of the knowledge of Brahma betake themselves to the worship of Bhagawan, by giving up the quest of discrete Brahma" ?

22. Babaji Mahasaya smiled gently as He said, “Brahma, the four Sanas, Shuka, Narada, Mahadev, god of the gods, have all sought ultimately the protection of the Feet of Bhagawan.”

23. Lahiri Mahasaya asked, “Bhagawan is an entity possessed of Form. How then can He, a limited entity, be the basic principle of unlimited Brahma ?”

24. Babaji mahasaya said, “The entity, which goes by the name of the sky in this mundane world, is also unlimited. This being so, where is the higher greatness of Brahma for being simply unlimited ? Bhagawan is unlimited by the Glow of the Beauty of His Form. But He is at one and the same time also possessed of His own Proper Form. Is there to be found another such entity ? For this unique and unparalleled innate characteristic Bhagawan is superior to the principle of Brahma. What a wonderful All-Beautiful Form He possesses, in which Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omnipresence, All-Kindness and All-Bliss exist in the fullest degree. Tell me, Lahiri Mahasaya, whether this Form is good or an unknowable, all-pervading, attributeless and powerless Impersonal Entity is good ? As a matter of fact, Brahma is the Impersonal manifestation of Bhagawan. Both Impersonality and Personality simultaneously and beautifully co-exist in Bhagawan. The formless, immutable, impersonal, unknowable and immeasurable, imperfect aspect of Bhagawan is liked by shortsighted persons. But those, who are all-seeing, do not relish anything short of the Fullest and Perfect Personality of Bhagawan. The Vaishnavas have but little faith in the Impersonal Form of Godhead, as it is in contradiction of the Eternal religion and Divine Love of Krishna. The Supreme Lord Sree Krishna is the Receptacle of both principles. He is the Ocean of Infinite Bliss and is All-Attractive.

25. Lahiri—“How can His Form be eternal when Krishna is subject to birth, death and mundane works ?”

26. Babaji—“The Form of Sree Krishna is *Sat* (Ever-existing), *Chit* (All-Intelligent) and *Ananda* (Ever Blissful), and is devoid of mundane birth, death and works, etc.”

27. Lahiri—“Why is He described to be such in the Mahabharata ?”

28. Babaji—“The Eternal principle is beyond human description. The liberated soul sees His Eternal Beautiful Form, Superhuman Qualities and Deeds, in his unalloyed existence, which when put in language, cannot but be described as worldly history. Those, who can appreciate the real worth of the Mahabharata, can understand and realise the Qualities and Activities of Sree Krishna in a manner that is quite different from the conclusions of those blunt-headed men who are prone to misunderstand the representations of the Mahabharata.”

29. Lahiri—“To meditate on the Form of Krishna, a conception confined within time and space naturally awakens in the mind. What other Divine Form can transcend this kind of meditation ?”

30. Babaji—“Meditation is a activity which cannot transcend matter (material conception) unless and until mind becomes purely transcendental. Mind, impregnated with devotional aptitude, gradually becomes spiritual. In the devotional mind meditation is also a purely spiritual process. When the worshipful devotees chant the Name of Krishna, they are beyond the gamut of the mundane world. They become purely spiritual. They are in a position to meditate on the daily Activities of Krishna manifesting themselves eter-

nally on the transcendental plane, and to enjoy the constant bliss of His confidential service

31. Lahiri—“Be pleased to vouchsafe the self-same spiritual bliss to myself.”

32. Babaji—“When you will constantly chant the Name of Krishna leaving aside all mundane doubts and arguments, you will realise ere long the true nature of the spiritual function. The more you indulge in polemic controversies, the more does your mind tend to be world-tight. The more you will strive for the manifestation of the spiritual relish of the chant of the Holy Name, the more will the world-tie be slackened and the spiritual realm and its activities manifest themselves in your purified heart.”

33. Lahiri—“I do most desire that your reverence be pleased to communicate to me, out of your mercy, the actual experience of the same”.

34. Babaji—“The mind, with all its thesaurus of words and expressions, receives a setback when it finds its access to the spiritual realm barred by these limitations. The spiritual realm is accessible only to the exclusive cultivation of the bliss of spiritual activity. Be persuaded to betake yourself to the practice of the chant of the Holy Name, for some appreciable time, by giving up your barren argumentative habit. You will be then relieved of all your doubts and you will no more have to ask any person for the answer of your questions on any matter.”

35. Lahiri—“I now learn that all spiritual bliss is attainable by relishingly chanting the Holy Name and drinking the nectar accruing therefrom with a firm faith in Sree Krishna. I shall throw myself on the absolute guidance of the Holy Name after receiving the knowledge of relationship in an adequate manner.”

36. Babaji—“It is the best course. You should first of all strive for the realisation of the knowledge of relationship in the proper form.”

37. Lahiri—“I have now been able to grasp the Nature of the Personality of Bhagawan. Bhagawan is the only Supreme Principle (of Reality), Brahma and Paramatma being subordinate to Him. Though All-pervading, He is Ever-present in His Own unprecedented Beautiful Form (Sree Vighraha) in the spiritual world. He is the Supreme Personality focusing all existence, all intelligence and all bliss. He is Omnipotent. Though He is the Lord of all the potencies, He is nevertheless always in the state of Divine rapture in blissful union with His exhilarating energy (Hladini). May you be pleased to explain to me the principle of the individual soul (jiva) ?”

38. Babaji—“There is a marginal (*tatastha*) potency among the infinite powers of Sree Krishna. From that potency springs forth a principle which is in the intermediate position between the *chit* and *achit* worlds and susceptible to association with either. This principle is known as the jiva. By his individual constitution the jiva is an unalloyed spiritual atom. By reason of his infinitesimality he is susceptible to entanglement in the material world. But on account of his unalloyed spiritual composition he can become the eternal inhabitant of the spiritual world and live in supreme bliss, if he receives the slightest spiritual impetus. The jiva falls into two distinct categories. He may be either *mukta* (free) or resident in the spiritual world, or *baddha* (in the state of bondage) or resident in the material world. Jivas in the state of bondage are again of two kinds, *viz.*, those whose sense of right and wrong has been thoroughly aroused and those in whom it is more or less dormant. Those human beings, who display no spiritual activity as well as birds and

beasts, are examples of jivas whose conscience is dormant. Those human beings, who walk in the path of a Vaishnava, are possessed of awakened conscience. This happens to be so for the reason that none except a Vaishnava have any active interest in the *summum bonum*. Hence the cultivation of the service and society of the Vaishnavas is the foremost of all duties enjoined by the Shastras (spiritual Scriptures of India). Association with a Vaishnava is easily consecrated in the devotional aptitude as enacted by the Shastras with which a jiva of awakened conscience is endowed by which he is led to adopt the spiritual culture of chanting the Holy Name of Krishna,—a fact which is always ignored by persons with a dormant conscience, who prefer to follow the conventional method of the ritualistic worship of the symbolic form of Krishna, and wherefore the consecration of honouring the holy temple in the form of a Vaishnava does not take hold of their hearts.

39. Lahiri—“I have now an idea of the Entity of Krishna and of jivas. May you be pleased to explain to me the principle of Maya ?”

40. Babaji—“Maya is the unspiritual factor. Maya, is also of course, a potency of Krishna. It is designated as the non-Absolute potency (*a-para*) or power appertaining to the external form (*bahiranga*) of Krishna. Just as the shadow of light always keeps away from light, so also Maya keeps away from the neighbourhood of Krishna and His devotees. The fourteen grades of the mundane world, the elements of solid, liquid, energy, gas, space, the mind, intelligence and egoism centering in the gross material body, all these are made manifest by the agency of Maya. The subtle as well as the gross material body of the conditioned soul are of the essence of Maya. The spiritual body of the soul is cleansed of these impurities on the attainment of liberation. The bondage of a soul in matter is proportionate to his backwardness or aversion to the service of Krishna, and his liberation or freedom from bondage is similarly proportional to his proneness to serve Krishna by coming in close touch with Him. The *mayik* world has sprung up by the will of Krishna to serve as the sphere of material enjoyment of conditioned souls. This *mayik* world is not the eternal abode of jivas. It is only a prison-house for them.”

41. Lahiri—“My Master, may you be pleased to tell me about the eternal relationship between jivas, Krishna and Maya.”

42. Babaji—“The jiva is a spiritual atom, and hence he is the eternal servant of Krishna. This *mayik* world is the house of captivity of the jiva. By resorting to the spiritual culture of the Holy Name of Krishna in the society of His pure devotees, a jiva, even during his temporary sojourn in this world, enjoys, by the Grace of Krishna, the spiritual bliss of His confidential service in the spiritual realm in his unalloyed perfect body. This is the most hidden reciprocal relationship of the three entities. How can the service of Krishna be possible till the knowledge of this is realised ?”

43. Lahiri—“Is it expedient to acquire scholarship in the empiric knowledge of the Scriptural lore, before one becomes a Vaishnava ?”

44. Babaji—“It is not necessary to study any of the branches of human knowledge, nor any particular language, to become a Vaishnava. It is only necessary for the jiva to submit unreservedly to the guidance of the real spiritual master, who helps in attaining the knowledge of relationship by speech and his culture of devotion. This goes by the name of initiation and teaching.

45. Lahiri—“What has a pupil to do after having gone through these processes of diksha and shiksha ?”

46. Babaji—“One has to practise the service of Krishna, while leading a moral life. This is the practice of the proper function of the soul and is called the principle of *abhidheya* (natural means). The Supreme Lord (Sree Krishna Chaitanya) has declared it to be the only principle of *abhidheya* in as much as it happens to be the message that has been strongly emphasised in the Veda and all the spiritual scriptures.”

47. Lahiri (with eyes suffused with tears)—“My Divine Master (Guru), with unreserved submission I throw myself on the mercy of your spiritual guidance (I take refuge in the Holy Feet of Your Divine Grace). Your ambrosial words have awakened the consciousness of my true relationship with things, and simultaneously I am at a loss to understand why, by your grace, all my former impressions of disposition, learning and culture are dissipated. May you be graciously pleased to teach me now the principle of the unction of spiritual endeavour (*abhidheya*).

48. Babaji—“There is no more any cause for anxiety. The rare quality of humility has manifested itself in you. This shows unmistakably that Sree Krishna Chaitanya has been merciful to you. Association with pure devotees (*sadhus*) is the only means of spiritual endeavour open to soul in the state of bondage. The pure devotee in the role of the spiritual preceptor (Guru) instructs one in the confidential service of Godhead, out of his causeless mercy. By the strength of such endeavour the desired end is gradually attained. The due performance of the intimate service of Hari is the only means.”

49. Lahiri—“Be pleased to teach me how it is possible to serve Hari“.

50. Babaji—“The practice of *bhakti* is itself the only service of Hari. There are three stages in *bhakti*—*sadhan* (endeavour), *bhava* (substantive liking) and *prema* (love). When *bhava* is perfected it is called *prema*.”

51. Lahiri—“Teach me the different varieties of *sadhan* and the modes of their performance.“

52. Babaji—“Sree Rupa Goswami Prabhu has elaborated all these subjects in his work “Sree Haribhaktibilas”. I am telling them briefly. *Sadhan* is ninefold. They are hearing, chanting and recollecting Vishnu, tending His Feet, worshipping His Emblematic Figure (Archa), hymning Him, serving Him as a servant, behaving to Him as to a friend, offering oneself for His exclusive service (Bhagabat VII-5-23). The revered Goswami Sree Rupa has described sixtyfour modes of devotion by adding to these nine their adjuncts and derivatives. There is another point to which it is necessary to give our special attention. *Sadhan bhakti* is twofold according as it happens to be either *vaidhi* (reverential) or *raganuga* (following the impulse of love). Of these *vaidhi sadhan* is ninefold, as detailed above. *Raganuga sadhan bhakti* consists in serving Krishna mentally after the manner of the servitors of Braja by surrendering oneself completely to their guidance. One should practise that mode of *sadhan* for which he is eligible.”

53. Lahiri—“What is the criterion of eligibility for *sadhan bhakti* ?”

54. Babaji—“One, who is loyally inclined to place himself under the scriptural regulations, is eligible to be taught by Sree Gurudeva *vaidhi sadhan bhakti* as a preliminary. One, who is eligible for *raganuga bhakti* is instructed in the unconventional service that belongs to the sphere of love”.

55. Lahiri—"How will a person know his own eligibility ?"

56. Babaji—"One, who has not yet experienced in his soul the principle of spiritual love and is inclined to perform worship in accordance with the injunctions of the shastras, is eligible for *vaidhi bhakti*. One, who is not inclined to submit to the regulations of the shastras in his worship of Hari, but in whose soul the natural love for the service of Hari has manifested itself, is eligible for the practice of *raganuga bhakti*."

57. "My Divine Master, may you be pleased to declare my eligibility, so that I may be able to understand the principle of eligibility as it really is. I am unable to follow your exposition of *bhakti* and *raganuga bhakti*."

58. Babaji—"If you carefully scrutinise your inmost mind (chitta), you will be able to understand your own eligibility. Do you detect any such conviction in your mind as that the service of Hari is not practicable except by submitting to the regulations of the shastras ?"

59. Lahiri—"I think that great good accrues from the performance of *bhajan* and *sadhan* by the methods laid down in the shastras. But I am also beginning to feel now-a-days that there is an immense ocean of rasa (perfect mellowing tastiness) in the intimate service of Hari (bhajan) which is capable of being gradually realised by dint of the assiduous culture of *bhakti*."

60. Babaji—"You can now see that the regulations of the shastras possess complete sway over your mind. You should, therefore, follow *vaidhi bhakti*. By degrees the principle of *raga* (spiritual love) will manifest itself in your heart." On hearing these words Lahiri Mahasaya, with tearful eyes, touching the feet of Babaji Mahasaya, said, "May you be pleased mercifully to bestow upon me eligibility for the method for which I happen to be fit. I realise my unfitness for discussing a subject that is at present above my comprehension." Babaji Maharaj thereupon embraced him with great affection and made him resume his seat.

61. Lahiri—"Be pleased to command the mode of service that I am to practise now."

62. Babaji—"I advise you to receive the name of Hari. The service of the Name is the most efficacious of all the enjoined modes of service. There is no distinction between the Name Himself. The realisation of the transcendental service of Hari is attainable very soon by practising the chant of the Name without offence I advise you to practise the chant of the Name with firm faith. All the nine modes of *bhajan* are automatically performed by the due practice of the chant of the Name. Both hearing (shrabana) and chanting (kirttan) are performed by the utterance of the Name. The recollection of Hari and the mental worship of His Feet and His Emblematic Form, recital of hymns in His praise, mentally doing His Bidding as His servant, behaving towards Him as one's friend and making the complete surrender of oneself, are practised simultaneously with the chanting of the Name."

63. Lahiri—"My mind is experiencing a most acute state of suspense. My Divine Master, may you be pleased not to withhold your mercy from me any longer."

64. Babaji—"Sir you may say constantly the following words by keeping clear of all offence ?"

"HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA,
KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE,

HARE RAMA HARE RAMA,
RAMA RAMA HARE HARE”

As he recited the Name, Babaji Maharaj placed a rosary of basil-beads into the hands of Lahiri Mahasaya. Lahiri Mahasaya shed tears as he began to tell the Name on the rosary. He said, “My Divine Master. I cannot express the joy that I experience this day.” And, as he said so, Lahiri Mahasaya fell down senseless at the feet of Babaji. Babaji Maharaj with great care kept his hold on the senseless man. After a long interval, Lahiri Mahasaya spoke again, “I feel myself blessed today. I have never experienced such happiness.”

65. Babaji—“Sir, you are most fortunate, indeed, as you have received with firm faith the Name of Hari. You have also made me blessed.”

66. From that day Lahiri Mahasaya began to tell the Name of Hari on the rosary in his hut without fear. Some days passed in this manner. Lahiri Mahasaya now painted the twelve tilaka marks on the twelve parts of his body. He took no other food except what had been duly offered to the Deity. He recited daily two lakhs of times the Name of Hari. He made prostrated obeisances as soon as he met a pure devotee. Every day he prostrated him self in submission to Paramahansa Babaji before attending to any other duties. He employed all his time in the service of his Gurudeva. He no longer felt any inclination for idle gossip or the songs of musical experts. Lahiri Mahasaya was no more his old self. He now became the transcendental devotee of Vishnu.

67. One day, after making his prostrated obeisance to Vaishnavadas Babaji Mahasaya, he submitted to him this question, “My Divine Master, may I be permitted to ask what is the ontological nature of the *summum bonum* ?

68. Babaji—Love of Krishna is the only desideratum of a jiva. By the constant practice of *sadhan bhakti* one attains in due course to the state of *bhava bhakti* (real loving inclination). On the attainment of nature development *bhava bhakti* is designated *prema* or love. It is the only eternal natural function of the jiva soul, the only eternal treasure and the final goal. Want of this love is the only misery, the wordly bond and addiction to the enjoyable things of this world. There is nothing higher, or better than love. Krishna submits to be served only by love. This love is of the essence of unclouded cognitional activity. The principle of spiritual bliss turns into love by concentration.”

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