

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 harbour 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 lowliness 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 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 Madhabigrove 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 eternals, the Fountain Sentient of all sentients’.

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 *mayai*k 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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