

ŚRĪ CAITANYA BHĀGAVATA

Ādi-khaṇḍa

Chapter One

*ājānulambita-bhujau kanakāvadātau
saṅkīrtanaika-pitarau kamalāyatākṣau
viśvambharau dvijavarau yuga-dharma-pālau
vande jagat priyakarau karuṇāvatārau*

I worship their Lordships Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, whose long arms extend down to Their knees, whose beautiful complexions are the radiant yellow of molten gold, and whose elongated eyes are like red lotuses. They are the topmost of the *brāhmaṇas*, the guardians of religious principles for this age, the munificent benefactors of all living entities, and the most compassionate incarnations of Godhead. They inaugurated the congregational chanting of the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

*namas trikāla satyāya
jagannātha sutāya ca
sa-bhṛtyāya sa-putrāya
sa-kalatrāya te namaḥ*

O Lord! You are the eternal truth—past, present, and future—and You have appeared as the son of Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra. I offer my repeated obeisances unto You along with Your inseparable servitors, Your unalloyed devotees, Your sons (Sons may refer to either the Gosvāmīs in the renounced order of life, or the congregational chanting of the holy name which the Lord fathered.), and Your consorts. (Śrī Viṣṇupriyā is the embodiment of the Bhu potency, Śrī Lakṣmīpriyā is the embodiment of the Śrī potency, and Navadvīpa-dhāma is the embodiment of the Līlā, Nīlā, or Durgā potencies. According to devotional tastes there are the two Gadādhara, Dāmodara, Narahari, Rāmānanda, Jagadānanda etc. One is Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita - the expansion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Śrī Gadādhara Bhaṭṭa from South India who is Rangadevī.)

I worship the two brothers, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who are the embodiments of magnanimity. They are transcendently situated, and They possess inconceivable spiritual potency. These two supreme controllers have now descended to the material world.

All glories to Śrī Gaurasundara, the supremely powerful Lord of pure transcendence! His bodily luster is like molten gold, His eyes are like lotus petals, and His six long graceful arms extend to His knees. When He sings the glories of the Lord He dances in various pleasing postures and His heart is inundated by the ecstatic emotions of devotional mellows.

All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanyacandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is fully independent and the abode of loving pastimes! All glories to His eternally pure fame! All glories to the devotees of Śrī Gaurasundara, who has a spiritual body and who is the Lord of all demigods and universes! All glories to the ecstatic dancing of the Lord's beloved associates!

In the beginning I offer unlimited obeisances to the feet of the loving, confidential devotees of Lord Śrī Caitanya. I then offer my obeisances to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. He incarnated in Navadvīpa, and He is known as Viśvambhara.

That same Supreme Personality of Godhead has declared in the *Vedas* and *Bhāgavatam*, “Worship of My devotees is superior to worship of Me.”

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.19.21) Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava, “O Uddhava, serving My devotees is many times better than worshipping Me.”

Therefore, I offer my worshipful prayers unto the devotees of the Lord before I begin to write this book. By this act may my present endeavor be successful.

I offer my respectful obeisances to my worshipable Lord and spiritual master, Śrī Nityānanda Rāya, by whose mercy the

transcendental pastimes of Lord Śrī Caitanya become spontaneously manifest. With a thousand tongues we should incessantly glorify the Supreme Lord Balarāma, because as Ananta Śeṣa He constantly glorifies Lord Kṛṣṇa with His thousand mouths. Just as priceless gems are kept in secure custody, so also the invaluable jewel of knowledge about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is kept safely in the mouths of Anantadeva. Therefore the tongue which initially glorifies Balarāma will automatically be qualified to vibrate the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Caitanya.

Lord Haladhara, as Ananta, has the form of a gigantic snake with a thousand hoods. His activities are all performed with complete free will. Although He is nondifferent from the Supreme Lord, as Lord Nityānanda He becomes intoxicated by serving Lord Caitanya.

There is no one more dear to Lord Caitanya than Lord Nityānanda. Lord Caitanya always enjoys pastimes in the body of Lord Nityānanda. Therefore whoever sings or hears about Nityānanda's supramundane character is offered Lord Caitanya's supreme shelter.

Maheśa and his consort, Pārvatidevī, take great pleasure in eulogizing the object of their love—Sankarṣaṇa, Nityānanda Prabhu. In the midst of millions of fresh young maidens, the pure devotee, Lord Śiva, and his consort offer worship to Lord Sankarṣaṇa.

All this is revealed in the Fifth Canto of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Balarāma is worshiped by all Vaiṣṇavas with songs of praise. Balarāma danced with His *gopīs* in Vṛndāvana, and their *rāsa* dance is the pinnacle of sublimity. The *Purāṇas* describe that Balarāma performed His *rāsa* dance during the two months of spring, Mādhava and Madhu. Hear now the narration of this pastime spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī to Mahārāja Parīkṣit in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*:

“Lord Balarāma, the Personality of Godhead, resided there for the two months of Madhu and Mādhava, and during the nights He gave His cowherd girlfriends conjugal pleasure. In the company of numerous women, Lord Balarāma enjoyed in a garden by the Yamunā River. This garden was bathed in the rays of the full moon and caressed by breezes bearing the fragrance of night-blooming lotuses.” (*Bhāg.* 10.65.17-18)

“As the Gandharvas sang His glories, Lord Balarāma enjoyed within the brilliant circle of young women. He appeared just like Indra's elephant, the lordly Airāvata, enjoying in the company of she-elephants. At that time kettledrums resounded in the sky, the Gandharvas joyfully rained down flowers, and the great sages praised Lord Balarāma's heroic deeds.” (*Bhāg.* 10.65.21-22)

The sages unequivocally denounce association with women, yet they sing hymns in praise of Balarāma's *rāsa* dance with His cowherd damsels. The demigods attended Balarāma's *rāsa* dance to shower flower petals. They knew that there was no difference between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma, Haladhara. The transcendental qualities of Balarāma are obscure in the four *Vedas*, but the *Purāṇas* describe them boldly. What power do I have to describe them? Out of ignorance, some people disregard the *Purāṇas* and reject Balarāma's *rāsa* dance as unauthentic.

The two brothers, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, performed the *rāsa* dance with the *gopīs* in the same place in Vṛndāvana.

“Once Lord Govinda and Lord Rāma, the performers of wonderful feats, were playing in the forest at night with the young girls of Vraja. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wore flower garlands and spotless garments, and Their limbs were beautifully decorated and anointed. The women sang Their glories in a charming way, bound to Them by affection. The two Lords praised the nightfall, signaled by the rising of the moon and the appearance of stars, a lotus-scented breeze and bees intoxicated by the fragrance of jasmine flowers. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma sang, producing the entire range of musical sounds simultaneously. Their singing brought happiness to the ears and minds of all living beings.” (*Bhāg.* 10.34.20-23)

After reading *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, if a person is not affectionately inclined towards Lord Balarāma, then he is rejected by the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu and His devotees. In the words of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, a nonbeliever is a *yavana*, and he is destined to punishment from Yamarāja in hell, birth after birth. There are others who dance in the dress of eunuchs and challenge, “Which scripture describes the *rāsa* dance of Balarāma?”

Who is so sinful that even after reading the scriptures, he can not accept the truth, but misinterprets the real meaning and gives his own distorted understanding?

Lord Balarāma is the abode of Lord Caitanya's deep affection. Offense at Balarāma's lotus feet destroys all possibilities for salvation. In His plenary portion as Lakṣmaṇa, Balarāma served as the younger brother of Lord Rāmacandra. (As the younger brother, Lakṣmaṇa had to tolerate the sufferings of Lord Rāmacandra.) When Kṛṣṇa appeared Balarāma serves Him in every respect—as a friend, as a brother, by fanning Him, putting Him to sleep, glorifying Him with Vedic invocations, and expanding Himself as His house, umbrella, attire, jewelry, and seat. (Thus Balarāma as the elder brother made Kṛṣṇa enjoy all sorts of happiness.)

“O Lord! Your direct, partial expansion, Ananta Śeṣa, is the source of all the various ingredients for Your service in the transcendental realm of Vaikuṇṭha. Ananta Śeṣa is famous because He is manifest as Your residence, bed, throne, shoes,

clothes, pillow, and umbrella. When shall I see You with Lakṣmīdevī seated on the throne of Ananta Śeṣa?”

Ananta Śeṣa's partial expansion is the mighty Śrī Garuḍa whose satisfaction is derived from acting as the Lord's carrier in every pastime.

Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, the four Kumāras [Sanaka, Sanātana, Sanandana, and Sanat-kumāra], Vyāsadeva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Nārada are all pure devotees, eternal servants of the Lord. Lord Sri Ananta is worshiped by all these uncontaminated devotees. He has thousands of hoods and is the reservoir of all devotional service.

Lord Ananta is the original person and the great mystic controller. At the same time, He is a servant of God, a Vaiṣṇava. Since there is no end to His glories, no one can understand Him fully.

I have already spoken to you of His service to the Lord. Now hear how the self-sufficient Anantadeva exists in the lower planetary system of Pātāla.

Bearing his stringed instrument, the *tumburu*, on his shoulders, the great sage Nārada Muni, the son of Lord Brahmā, always glorifies Lord Ananta in his father's assembly. Nārada Muni has composed many transcendental verses in praise of the Lord.

“By His glance, the Supreme Personality of Godhead enables the modes of material nature to act as the causes of this world's creation, maintenance, and annihilation. The Supreme Soul is unlimited and beginningless, and although He is one, He has manifested Himself in many forms. How can human society understand the ways of the Supreme?

“This manifestation of subtle and gross matter exists within the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Out of causeless mercy toward His devotees, He exhibits various forms, which are all transcendental. The Supreme Lord is most liberal, and He possesses all mystic power. To conquer the minds of His devotees and give pleasure to their hearts, He appears in different incarnations and manifests many pastimes.

“Even if he be distressed or degraded, any person who chants the holy name of the Lord, having heard it from a bona fide spiritual master, is immediately purified. Even if he chants the Lord's name jokingly or by chance, he and anyone who hears him are freed from all sins. Therefore how can anyone seeking disentanglement from the material clutches avoid chanting the name of Lord Śeṣa? Of whom else should one take shelter?

“Because the Lord is unlimited, no one can estimate His power. This entire universe, filled with its many great mountains, rivers, oceans, trees, and living entities, is resting just like an atom on one of His many thousands of hoods. Is there anyone, even with thousands of tongues, who can describe His glories?

“There is no end to the great and glorious qualities of that powerful Lord Anantadeva. Indeed, His prowess is unlimited. Though self-sufficient, He Himself is the support of everything. He resides beneath the lower planetary systems and easily sustains the entire universe.” (*Bhāg.* 5.25.9-13)

Simply due to the glance of Lord Ananta, the three material modes of nature interact and produce creation, maintenance and annihilation. These modes of nature appear again and again.

The Lord is glorified as one without a second and as the Supreme Truth who has no beginning. Therefore He is called Anantadeva [unlimited]. Who can understand Him?

His form is completely spiritual, and He manifests it only by His mercy. All the activities in this material world are conducted only in His form. He is very powerful and always prepared to please His personal associates and devotees.

If we simply try to engage in the congregational chanting of the glories of Lord Anantadeva the dirty things in our hearts accumulated during many births will immediately be washed away. Therefore a Vaiṣṇava never loses an opportunity to glorify Anantadeva. Lord Anantadeva is known as Śeṣa [the unlimited end] because He ends our passage through this material world. Simply by chanting His glories, everyone can be liberated.

On His head, Anantadeva sustains the entire universe, with its millions of planets containing enormous oceans and mountains. He is so large and powerful that this universe rests on one of His hoods just like a drop of water. He does not know where it is.

While bearing the universe on one of His hoods, Anantadeva chants the glories of Kṛṣṇa with each of His thousands of mouths. Although He has been chanting the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa since time immemorial, He has still not come to their end. To this very day Lord Ananta continues to chant the glories of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and still He finds no end to them.

How wonderfully Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma compete with each other! Brahmā, Śiva, other demigods, and the

perfected sages look on feeling great exhilaration. Although Anantadeva tries to reach the shore of Lord Kṛṣṇa's ocean of qualities, the shore of that ever-expanding ocean remains tantalizingly beyond reach.

This is confirmed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (2.7.40) as follows, “O Nārada, neither I [Brahmā] nor your saintly elder brothers know fully the omnipotent Supreme Lord. So what can others, who were born after us, know about Him? Even Anantadeva, the first incarnation of the Lord, has not been able to reach the limits of such knowledge, although He is describing the qualities of the Supreme Lord with His thousand mouths.”

Anantadeva is Himself the master of unlimited attributes, and He resides in Rasātala simply to support the vast material creation. In the court of Brahmā, Nārada Muni plays His vina and sings about these very same transcendental qualities of the Supreme Lord. Brahmā and others are stunned in ecstasy upon hearing about the supramundane qualities of the Supreme Lord, and Nārada Muni is worshiped by all because he sings about those qualities.

I have also been moved to write a few phrases in praise of the unlimited potencies of Lord Nityānanda, Anantadeva. So I humbly request all of you to develop a loving devotional mood toward the Lord. Those who desire to cross over the dangerous ocean of material existence, and drown in the ocean of devotional ecstasy, may take shelter of Lord Nityānanda.

I pray to the merciful devotees of the Lord to fulfill my hearts yearning, that I may serve my Lord Balarāma birth after birth. Just as *dvija*, *vipra*, and *brāhmaṇa* are different names for the same person, similarly Nityānanda, Ananta, and Baladeva are different names for the same Supreme Personality. My Lord Nityānanda Prabhu appeared within my heart and instructed me to narrate the transcendental qualities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in this book.

The pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are revealed by Nityānanda's mercy only, because His personal expansion, Ananta Śeṣa, is the storehouse of information about Lord Caitanya and Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Although Śrī Ananta Śeṣa is the embodiment of *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, I have been able to offer only a humble prayers in His honor.

Hearing Lord Caitanya's qualities and pastimes can clean away all material contaminations. Know for certain that such pastimes are revealed only through a pure devotee's grace. For who can know the nature and pastimes of Lord Caitanya? It is a mystery hidden even in the *Vedas*. Therefore, I have compiled only first-hand accounts taken directly from the lips of the associates of the Lord.

I see no beginning or end to Lord Caitanya's pastimes. They are eternal and unlimited, and only the Lord's grace gives me the potency to compose them. I am simply Lord Caitanya's mouthpiece, repeating as He desires, just like a doll moved by some unseen hand. I throw myself at the feet of all pure devotees so they may cleanse me of all offenses.

O my brothers! Please listen very attentively to the transcendental pastimes Lord Caitanya performed with His devotee associates. The ecstatic pastimes of Lord Caitanya have been divided into three periods—early, intermediate, and later (*Ādi*, *Madhya*, and *Antya*). The early period includes a description of the Lord's education, and the intermediate portion reveals Mahāprabhu's pastimes of congregational chanting. The concluding portion describes the Lord's pastimes as *asannyāsī* in Nīlācala, Orissa. He had allocated to Nityānanda the mission of preaching in Bengal.

The pious Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra, Lord Caitanya's father, lived in Navadvīpa. Like Vasudeva, he conscientiously performed his spiritual duties. His devout and faithful wife, Śrīmatī Śācīdevī, was a second Devakī—the beloved mother of everyone. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Nārāyaṇa appeared in the womb of Śrīmatī Śācīdevī, and as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, He became the most precious possession of everyone's heart.

The *Ādi-khaṇḍa* begins by describing the appearance of Lord Caitanya on an auspicious full moon evening in the month of Phalguna during a lunar eclipse. The tumultuous chanting of Lord Hari's holy name filled all directions, inspiring everyone to sing together. The Supreme Lord Caitanya was born amidst the chanting.

The *Ādi-khaṇḍa* also describes the Lord's numerous childhood pastimes. Lord Caitanya revealed to His parents His otherwise unmanifest place of residence, the holy *dhāma*. Also in the *Ādi-khaṇḍa* the impression of the flag, flagpole, thunderbolt, and goad were seen in the impressions of the Lord's footprints.

This portion of the book describes how thieves one day kidnapped baby Nīmāi from His house, but He tricked them into bringing Him back home. Another story narrated is how the Lord ate all the food offered to Viṣṇu in the house of Jagadīśa and Hiranya on the Ekādaśī day. Yet another story describes how the Lord once sat on a pile of contaminated cooking pots and used the situation to instruct His mother in philosophy. He also acted like a crying baby, using His tears as a ploy to make everyone chant the holy names of God.

The *Ādi-khaṇḍa* discusses the Lord as a child playing with His friends as if He were Kṛṣṇa in Gokula. It describes how He began His education and with little effort mastered all the scriptures. It narrates Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra's disappearance and Viśvarūpa's acceptance of *sannyāsa* and how these two disasters afflicted mother Śācī. Then it describes the Lord's wonderful pastimes as a student. He was pride personified before the other student scholars. Lord Caitanya's travels through eastern Bengal are also described here, elaborating on how the land became a place of pilgrimage by the touch of

His lotus feet. Caitanya was the master of all different scriptures. There was no one in the three worlds to challenge His erudition.

The *Ādi-khaṇḍa* describes the Lord sporting with His fellow students and their water pastimes in the waves of the Ganges. Then came the Lord's first marriage and the glorious disappearance of His first wife. He duly accepted a second wife, the daughter of a royal scholar. Once He pretended to be sick from a wind disorder. He took that opportunity to reveal symptoms of love of Godhead. While the Lord roamed about as a great scholar, He empowered all the devotees who surrendered to Him.

In the *Ādi-khaṇḍa* the narration of the early life of Śrī Caitanya includes a description of the immense joy mother Śacī experienced as she looked at the Lord's moonlike, blissful face and graceful clothes. Then there is the story of how Nīmāi Paṇḍita defeated the scholar known as Digvijayī, the world conqueror. Ultimately the Lord severed the scholar's material bonds. The Lord put everyone, even His devotees, into illusion about His real identity, and He roamed the streets of Navadvīpa deceiving all. There is also a description of the Lord's pilgrimage to Gayā and how He showered causeless mercy on Īśvara Purī by accepting him as His spiritual master.

The *Ādi-khaṇḍa* is a reservoir of the Lord's never-ending pleasurable pastimes. In the future Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the greatest of sages, will describe other pastimes. But herein I reveal the early pastimes of the Lord up to the time He returns from His visit to Gayā.

In *Madhya-khaṇḍa* the Lord's omnipotence becomes known, and gradually His devotees are identified as they collect around His lotus feet like bees. Lord Caitanya reveals His identity the Supreme Lord by sitting on the altar of Viṣṇu in the houses of Śrī Advaita and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. Śrī Caitanya meets Nityānanda Prabhu and together the brothers perform wonderful *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*. Then Nityānanda's vision of the transcendental six-armed form of Caitanya Mahāprabhu is described. Later the Lord exhibited His universal form to Advaita Ācārya Prabhu.

Nityānanda's Vyāsa-pūjā has been described in *Madhya-khaṇḍa* along with a story of how He was slandered by some faithless atheists. Thereafter when Lord Caitanya appears as Balarāma, Nityānanda gives Him a plough and club. The wonderful redemption of the two sinners Jagāi and Mādhāi—who became famous as a result—is told in detail. Mother Śacī's vision of Śrī Caitanya in a blackish complexion and Śrī Nityānanda in a whitish complexion is also discussed.

Lord Caitanya once showed His unlimitedly opulent *mahāprakāśa* form for twenty-one hours, and that story is told in *Madhya-khaṇḍa*. On that occasion He revealed the transcendental truth about Himself and the real identity of all His devotees. Thereafter comes a description of the occasion when Lord Caitanya, who is Nārāyaṇa the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha and the Supreme Absolute Truth, danced and chanted as He narrated the truth about Himself.

In *Madhya-khaṇḍa* the Lord breaks Chand Kazi's pride and manifests His spiritual potency as He engaged in continuous congregational chanting. Chand Kazi accepted devotional service by the Lord's grace. Immersed in ecstatic bliss, Śrī Caitanya thereafter moved from village to village performing *kīrtana*. He declared the truth about Himself as He exhibited His Varāharūpa—a four-armed form—while riding around the courtyard on the back of His devotee, Murāri Gupta. The Lord also ate some rice which Śuklāmbara had collected by begging and performed many wonderful pastimes in His manifestation of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

In *Madhya-khaṇḍa* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu dances before the devotees in the guise of Mahālakṣmī, or Rukmiṇīdevī, the universal mother, and breast-fed all the devotees who were Her dependent sons. The Lord once chastised Mukunda for keeping bad company and later, when He was satisfied with Mukunda's obedience, He favored him with grace. Then there is a narration of the ecstatic all-night *kīrtanas* in Navadvīpa which were held regularly for a full year.

Madhya-khaṇḍa describes the verbal mock fights between Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Ācārya. Only a foolish person thinks that these were actual disagreements. Then the Lord instructed His mother and simultaneously warned the whole world about the grievous consequences of offending a Vaiṣṇava. Satisfied by the prayers of His devotees, the Lord gave individual benedictions to each of them. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura received Mahāprabhu's mercy, and the Lord showed compassion on Śrīdhara by drinking water from his pot.

Śrī Caitanya blissfully performed daily pastimes in the waters of the Ganges with all His devotees. Once Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu visited the house of Advaita Ācārya for a specific reason. It is described that the Lord severely chastised Advaita Ācārya, but at last He showed immeasurable grace on Him. Then the *Madhya-khaṇḍa* describes how the extremely fortunate Śrī Murāri Gupta became enlightened about the true identity of Lord Caitanya as Kṛṣṇa and Nityānanda as Balarāma. Those two Supreme Personalities danced together in ecstasy in the house of Śrīvāsa.

In *Madhya-khaṇḍa* the Lord makes Śrīvāsa's expired son speak the philosophical truth about human life to alleviate everyone's suffering. Everyone learned how the Lord's grace relieved Śrīvāsa of the lamentation due to his son's death. In another story narrated in *Madhya-khaṇḍa* the Lord threw Himself into the Ganges, and Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura lifted Him out. Then Śrīmatī Nārāyaṇī received a treasure desired even by the demigods headed by Brahmā—the Lord's remnants. The final story in the *Madhya-khaṇḍa* is the pastime of the Lord leaving home and

accepting the renounced order of life for the salvation of every living entity. There are innumerable pastimes of the Lord in the *Madhya-khaṇḍa*; whatever remains untouched will be described later by Śrīla Vyāsadeva.

As the *Antya-khaṇḍa* opens, Viśvambhara is in the *saṁnyāsa* order of life, and He has accepted the name Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. He has shaven His head clean, thereby plunging Advaita Ācārya Prabhu into deep despondency. Mother Śacī's suffering is unbearable, yet she is sustained by the Lord's mercy. Nityānanda, the manifestation of Balarāma, smashed Lord Caitanya's *saṁnyāsa-daṇḍa*, and thereafter the Lord concealed His real identity and went to Nīlācala Purī.

Śrī Caitanya playfully taunted Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya when they first meet, but later He exhibited His six-handed form to him. The Lord mercifully graced King Pratapārudra with devotional service and lived thereafter in the house of Kāśī Miśra. The *Antya-khaṇḍa* narrates how during the Lord's stay in Purī, both Svarūpa Dāmodara and Paramānanda Purī became eligible to serve the Lord in confidential relationships.

The *Antya-khaṇḍa* also describes Lord Caitanya's trip through Bengal on His way to Mathurā and Vṛndāvana. He stayed in Vidyāvācaspati's residence before moving on to the village of Kuliā in Bengal. Millions of people gathered to see the Lord on His return to Bengal, and all who saw Him were liberated. Lord Caitanya attempted to continue on His trip to Mathurā, but after a short distance He turned back to Bengal.

When the Lord returned to Nīlācala, He engaged in continuous *kīrtana* with His associates. He sent Nityānanda to preach in Bengal, while He Himself remained in Nīlācala with a handful of devotees. The Lord and all His devotees danced ecstatically before Lord Jagannātha's chariot.

Lord Caitanya's travels to Rameśvaram in South India and His journey to Mathurā through the Jharikhanda forest are described in *Antya-khaṇḍa*. There are also narrations of how the Lord showers His mercy on Rāya Rāmānanda and performs many pastimes in Mathurā. The magnanimous Caitanya Mahāprabhu also graced Dabira Khāsa by revealing His identity to him. He liberated Dabira Khāsa and his brother and gave them the names Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī.

In *Antya-khaṇḍa* the Lord's travels to Vārāṇasī are described. The *saṁnyāsīs* of Vārāṇasī could not recognize the Supreme Lord because they were too critical of the Vaiṣṇavas. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu thereafter returned to Nīlācala and became engrossed in performing *saṅkīrtana* throughout the day and night.

Lord Nityānanda traveled throughout India as a wandering mendicant. His pilgrimage is described in *Antya-khaṇḍa*. Who can understand Nityānanda's unfathomable transcendental character? He roamed about Mathurā with ankle bells on His feet. On Śrī Caitanya's request He went to Pāṇihāṭī and distributed devotional service—love of God—to everyone. Through the supreme mercy of Nityānanda, the commander-in-chief of the *kīrtana* party, the merchant class was delivered.

In the *Antya-khaṇḍa* the Supreme Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's remaining eighteen years in Nīlācala are described. Although numerous pastimes are related about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Vedavyāsa will later tell them all in detail. Nityānanda Prabhu finds endless joy in glorifying Lord Caitanya, and He is an unmatched expert in that art.

O Lord Caitanya, please bless me so that I may receive the transcendental service of Nityānanda's lotus feet. He is the Lord of the entire universe.

I have narrated in brief the contents of this book at the very outset. All of you please hear with undivided attention the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, offer my humble song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 2

All glories to Śrī Gaurasundara, the son of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and Supreme Lord of all! All glories to Lord Gaurāṅga, the life and soul of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita! All glories to the shelter of the devotees headed by Śrī Advaita Ācārya! All glories to Lord Śrī Gaurāṅga and His associates! One receives loving devotion to the Supreme simply by hearing transcendental topics about Lord Caitanya. Again I offer my obeisances at the Lord's lotus feet and at the lotus feet of all His associates so that the pastimes of the Lord may appear on my tongue. All glories to Lord Caitanya, the ocean of compassion! And all glories to Lord Nityānanda, the embodiment of loving devotional service!

The spiritual identities of the two brothers, Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, and that of the servitors of the Supreme Lord are unknown, yet by their causeless mercy they reveal their real identities. Lord Brahmā was enlightened about the Absolute Truth by Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. This is the verdict of all Vedic scriptures. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (2.4.22) says,

“May the Lord, who in the beginning of creation amplified the potent knowledge of Brahmā from within his heart and inspired him with full knowledge of creation and of his own self, and who appeared to be generated from the mouth of

Brahmā, be pleased with me.”

In the beginning Lord Brahmā did not have the power to see anything although he had been born on a lotus from the Lord's navel. But when he completely surrendered himself to the Supreme Lord, the Lord by His causeless mercy appeared before him. That same mercy enlightened Lord Brahmā with absolute knowledge of the Supreme Lord, the origin of all incarnations. Thereafter, spontaneous, pure glorification of the Lord sprang from Brahmā's mouth.

Without Lord Kṛṣṇa's causeless mercy, it is impossible to know the truth about His incarnation. His transcendental pastimes are inconceivable and inaccessible. Lord Brahmā described them in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.14.21) as follows: “O Lord of the universe, O Supreme Person, O Supersoul, master of all mystic power! Your pastimes are taking place continuously in these three worlds, but who can estimate where, how, and when You expand your internal spiritual potency *yoga-māyā* and perform Your transcendental pastimes? No one can understand the mystery of how Your spiritual energy acts.”

Who can understand the reasons for Lord Kṛṣṇa's advent in this world? Therefore, I can only submit the conclusions of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* as reasons for His appearance.

“Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendent of Bhārata, and a predominant rise of irreligion, at that time I descend myself. In order to deliver the pious and annihilate the miscreants, as well as to re-establish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium.” (Bg. 4.7-8)

Whenever religious practice becomes weak, irreligion gradually increases. Therefore, Lord Brahmā and others humbly requested the Lord to appear and protect the pious and destroy the demons. In order to re-establish the religious process of the age, the Supreme Lord descends on the earth with His eternal associates. The religion for Kali-yuga is congregational chanting of the Lord's holy name and in order to propagate this religious process Lord Caitanya appeared as the son of mother Śacī. It is confirmed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* that the Supreme Absolute Truth, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, incarnated solely to propagate the congregational chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy name.

“O King Nimi, devotees always offer prayers to the Supreme Lord Hari, but now I will explain how the devotees in the Kali-yuga offer the choicest prayers accompanied by various rituals and regulations for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. In this age of Kali, people who are endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the Lord, who is accompanied by His associates, by performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña*.” (Bhāg. 12.5.31/2)

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Caitanya, propagated the essence of all religion for the age of Kali—congregational chanting of Lord Hari's holy name. Accompanied by His associates, He appeared in Kali-yuga simply to establish the religious practice of congregational chanting.

According to His desire, His eternal associates appeared before Him, taking birth as humans. Ananta Śeṣa, Śiva, Brahmā, the sages, and other associates of the Lord all took birth as highly elevated, pure Vaiṣṇavas. Lord Caitanya, Kṛṣṇa, knew everyone's position and identity. Most of them took birth in Navadvīpa, yet some were born in Caṭṭagrāma, some in Rāḍhadeśa, some in Śrīhaṭṭa, some in Orissa, and others in the west. All these associates appeared in different places, but everyone met in Navadvīpa.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Śrī Rāma Paṇḍita, and Śrī Candraśekhara are personalities worshiped in the three worlds. Śrī Murāri Gupta can cure the disease of material entanglement. These Vaiṣṇavas appeared in Śrīhaṭṭa.

Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi, the foremost Vaiṣṇava, and Vāsudeva Datta, who was very dear to Lord Caitanya, both appeared in Caṭṭagrāma. Haridāsa Ṭhākura appeared in Buḍhana.

The village Ekacakrā is in the Rāḍhadeśa district of Bengal. The Supreme Lord Nityānanda made His appearance there. Lord Nityānanda is factually the Supreme Father of all living entities, but to show mercy on Hāḍai Paṇḍita, *abrāhmaṇa* and pure devotee, He took birth as his son. Lord Nityānanda is an ocean of mercy, the shelter of all Vaiṣṇavas and the giver of devotion. He appeared in the district of Rāḍhadeśa. Expressing their happiness at the appearance of Lord Nityānanda, the demigods made joyous sounds and showered flowers. All this was performed, unseen by ordinary mundane eyes. From the time of Nityānanda's appearance, Rāḍhadeśa district grew more and more prosperous each day.

Śrī Paramānanda Purī, who was Lord Caitanya's close associate in Nilācala, appeared in Trihuta (present day Muzaffarpur in Bihar).

When the land on the banks of mother Ganges are places of pilgrimage, why did the Vaiṣṇava appear in impious lands? Caitanya Himself descended on the banks of mother Ganges, so why did His eternal associates appear in far away places? In their travels the Pāṇḍavas avoided countries devoid of the sound of the holy name of the Lord and the waters of mother Ganges.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, being compassionate on the unfortunate souls born in those lands, ordered the great devotees to

appear there. His own appearance was required simply to redeem the material world. In order to accomplish this, He arranged for His pure devotees to take birth in pious lands and pious families. Wherever and in whichever family the pure Vaiṣṇava appears, he purifies everyone in the vicinity by his pure spiritual potency. The birthplace of a pure Vaiṣṇava becomes a place of pilgrimage. Therefore the Supreme Lord Caitanya arranged that His associates take birth in many different places. And although they were all born in different places, they met, as if by accident, in Navadvīpa.

Lord Caitanya's birthplace was Navadvīpa, hence Navadvīpa was the meeting place of all the devotees. The glories of Navadvīpa can not be compared to any other place in the world. Knowing about Lord Caitanya's descent in Navadvīpa, Providence made it a prosperous and flourishing town to receive the Lord. Who is capable of describing Navadvīpa's opulence? A hundred thousand people could bathe there at one *ghāṭa* on the bank of the Ganges.

By goddess Sarasvatī's grace, residents of Navadvīpa of all different ages were learned exponents of the scriptures. The people were proud of their material knowledge; even young boys argued logic with senior scholars. Students came from different parts of the country to study in Navadvīpa, because there they could get a taste for scholastics. The number of students in Navadvīpa was incalculable, and the exact count of professors was also undetermined.

The residents were happy due to being favored by the merciful glances of Rāmā, the goddess of fortune. But they wasted their time spending money for sense pleasures and other worldly affairs. As they grew prouder and more materialistic, people's tastes for devotional service to the Supreme Lord decreased alarmingly, and in the beginning of Kali-yuga they exhibited the qualities of the future.

Their religion consisted of fruitive activities and chanting invocations to Maṅgalacandī, Durgādevī, throughout the night. Some arrogantly worshiped Manasā, the goddess of snakes, and others wasted huge amounts of wealth worshiping idols. They squandered large sums on the marriages of their sons and daughters, and in this way they wasted their human life.

Even the so-called learned high priests—Bhāṭṭācāryas, Cakravartīs, and Mīśras—did not know the purpose of the scriptures. Though they taught the scriptures, their activities were contrary to scriptural injunction, so along with their students they drowned in the deluge of iniquity.

Nobody was engaged in explaining the imports of congregational chanting of Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name—the religion of Kali-yuga—they spent their time simply finding faults in others. As for the superstitious so-called renunciates and hermits, not a single name of God ever escaped their mouths. Those considered most pious in society were heard repeating the Lord's name Govinda or Puṇḍarikākṣa only once at the time of daily ablution. Devotional perspectives were invariably absent in explaining transcendental literatures like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

The devotees of the Lord became distressed seeing the mass of people engrossed in material existence under the external energy of the Lord. How can all these living entities be liberated? They are completely mesmerized by the myth of sense pleasures. Although people were requested to chant God's holy name, they refused and instead they foolishly busied themselves acquiring fruitless material knowledge.

The elevated Vaiṣṇavas continued their devotional activities by worshiping Kṛṣṇa, taking bath in the Ganges and discussing Kṛṣṇa conscious topics. They became moved to benedict humanity and prayed that Lord Kṛṣṇa would quickly shower His mercy upon them.

Foremost of the great Vaiṣṇavas in Navadvīpa was Advaita Ācārya, who is glorified throughout the world. He was a pre-eminent spiritual preceptor and exponent on knowledge of the absolute science of devotion and renunciation. His delineation of Kṛṣṇa conscious topics equaled Lord Śiva's. On all existing scriptures His explanations arrived at the same conclusion—the essence of everything is devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Advaita Ācārya constantly worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa with great devotion, offering *Himtulāsī* blossoms and Ganges water. His intense attachment for Lord Kṛṣṇa made him resound in loud exaltation, and the sound penetrated the coverings of the material world, past the abode of Lord Brahmā into Vaikuṇṭha. Captured by the booming, ecstatic sound of Advaita Ācārya's love, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared before His devotee. Advaita Ācārya Prabhu was the leader of Vaiṣṇavas; His devotional service was the most glorious within the planetary system created by Lord Brahmā.

In that manner Advaita Ācārya spent His days in Navadvīpa, where He suffered acute pain at the sight of persons bereft of devotional service. The people were all mad after mundane sense pleasures—no one was keen to worship or serve Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Some worshiped Vāsulī (another form of Durgā) with many gifts, while others worshiped the Yakṣas with flesh and wine. They drowned in the endless tumult of singing, dancing, and music. Their ears were deaf to the nectarean chanting of Lord Kṛṣṇa's auspicious names.

The demigods were not satisfied with the worship, which was not meant for Lord Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. Advaita Ācārya in particular was extremely unhappy about such worship. Advaita Ācārya Prabhu had a very compassionate nature, He was

always thinking of how to liberate the conditioned souls.

“If My Lord descends, He can liberate everyone. I can boast of being an incarnation of Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu only if I can convince the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Kṛṣṇa, to appear in this world. And when that Lord of Vaikuṇṭha descends in person, I shall sing and dance in joy and liberate all the conditional souls.”

Considering matters in this way, He constantly worshiped the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa with undeviating resolve. Lord Caitanya made His appearance because of Advaita Ācārya Prabhu's sincere plea. The Lord Himself often repeated this fact.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and his three brothers—Śrīrāma, Śrīpati, and Śrīnidhi—were residents of Navadvīpa. They always chanted Lord Kṛṣṇa's name, bathed in the Ganges, and worshiped Kṛṣṇa thrice a day. Later Lord Caitanya performed many pastimes in Śrīvāsa's house.

On the instruction of Lord Caitanya, many of His eternal associates like Śrī Candrasekhara Ācārya, Śrī Jagadīśa Paṇḍita, Śrī Gopīnātha Ācārya, Śrīmān Paṇḍita, Śrī Murāri Gupta, Śrī Garuḍa Paṇḍita, and Śrī Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita appeared before the Lord.

In connection with these various incidents I mention only those personalities known personally to me. Otherwise, to mention every individual would make this book bulky.

Each one of the magnanimous devotees executed his spiritual duties and knew nothing besides devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. They were unaware of their own spiritual identities (*svarūpa*), yet they mixed intimately as confidential friends.

Wherever they looked they saw a world devoid of devotion, and their hearts were burning with sorrow. They found no one with any taste for the nectar of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, so they simply glorified the Lord amongst themselves. The devotees would gather together for several hours in Śrī Advaita Ācārya's residence discussing topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and in this manner they dispelled their grief. The devotees saw the world burning in the flames of material existence, and there was no place to discuss topics of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This caused them great sorrow.

Śrī Advaita Ācārya and the other Vaiṣṇavas tried to make the people God conscious, but not a soul appreciated them. Stricken with grief due to people's suffering, Śrī Advaita Ācārya began fasting, and the Vaiṣṇavas sighed deeply at the situation.

“Why sing and dance for Kṛṣṇa? What is the meaning of congregational chanting of the Lord's holy name? Who are the Vaiṣṇavas?” Gross materialistic people running after wealth and family do not comprehend any of these things. Indeed such atheists only taunt and laugh at the Vaiṣṇavas.

As evening descended, Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura and His three brothers would loudly sing the Lord's name in their house. The atheistic neighbors vilified Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura, pronouncing him mad. They declared that the entire village would be destroyed because of him.

The tyrannical Muslim rulers would tear the village apart if they heard people loudly chanting God's name. Some envious neighbors said they would break down Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's house and float it down the river in order to get rid of him. Someone said, “Only when Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura leaves will the village be peaceful again. Otherwise the Muslim rulers will torture us.”

When the saintly Vaiṣṇavas heard such threats from the atheists they simply wept and revealed their sorrow to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Advaita Ācārya burned with rage on hearing this news, and, unconcerned with His undressed state, He addressed the Vaiṣṇavas in these words, “Listen Śrīvāsa, Gaṅgādāsa, and Śuklāmbara. I shall make Lord Kṛṣṇa appear before everyone's eyes. Lord Kṛṣṇa will come personally and liberate everyone. He will take you with Him, and we will all teach the atheists love of Godhead. And if I fail to keep My promise, I shall manifest My four-handed form and take up the disc. I shall sever the heads of all the atheists. Then will it be accepted that Lord Kṛṣṇa is My Lord and master and I am His proper servitor.”

Śrī Advaita Ācārya continually spoke in this way, and He worshiped the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa with a solemn vow. All the devotees also worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet with great attention and continuous tears.

As the devotees went about their duties in Navadvīpa town, they could not find any discussion on devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. This caused the devotees grief, and some contemplated leaving their bodies, while others chanted Kṛṣṇa's name while letting out deep long sighs. So severe was their pain at the sight of the futile endeavors of a godless society that they lost all appetite. At last they renounced all material comfort as the Supreme Lord prepared to descend to the material world.

By the Supreme Lord's order, Lord Nityānanda, whose part of a plenary part is Lord Ananta Śeṣa, descended before Him in the land called Rāḍhadeśa. Lord Nityānanda made His appearance in the womb of Śrīmatī Padmāvatidevī on the auspicious

thirteenth day of the waxing moon in the month of Māgha in a village called Ekacakrā. Although He is the original supreme father of everyone, Nityānanda allowed the pure and elevated *brāhmaṇa* Śrī Hāḍāi Paṇḍita to play the role of His father.

The Supreme Lord Śrī Balarāma is an ocean of mercy and is the giver of pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. He has again appeared with the name Nityānanda. The denizens of heavenly planets secretly celebrated the occasion, showering flowers with tumultuous sounds of joy and praise. Lord Nityānanda's appearance in the land of Rāḍhadeśa gradually increased that district's good fortune in every respect.

The Supreme Personality, who appeared to liberate the fallen souls, took the dress of an *avadhūta*, or renounced mendicant, and traveled everywhere. In this manner Lord Ananta made His advent. Now hear descriptions of Lord Kṛṣṇa's advent.

Śrī Jagannātha Miśra, the transcendental personality, resided in Navadvīpa, and like Vasudeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's father, He was always engaged in spiritual activities. He was magnanimous and possessed the best of all brahminical qualities. Indeed, his qualities had no comparison in this world. Śrī Jagannātha Miśra was of the same spiritual category as Kaśyapa, Daśaratha, Vasudeva, or Nanda.

His dedicated wife, Śrīmatī Śacidevī, was the embodiment of devotion to the Supreme Lord. She was the universal mother. All her eight daughters passed away, and she was left with one greatly fortunate son, Viśvarūpa.

Śrī Viśvarūpa was as beautiful and charming as Cupid and the source of joy for His parents. From birth Śrī Viśvarūpa was renounced, and in His childhood He mastered the different scriptures.

The whole society was bereft of devotional service. Although it was the beginning of Kali-yuga, people's behavior was indicative of the future.

The Supreme Lord descends when religious principles decline and He sees His devotees suffering. Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, entered into the bodies of Śrīmatī Śacidevī and Śrī Jagannātha Miśra.

Lord Ananta chanted "Jaya! Jaya!" with His thousands of mouths, and Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and Śacidevī heard Him as if they were dreaming. Both husband and wife shone bright with a spiritual radiance that ordinary eyes could not see.

Understanding that the Supreme Lord was going to appear, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and other demigods came and offered prayers. There is no doubt at all that these topics are most secret even to the Vedic scriptures. The prayers of the demigods headed by Lord Brahmā are confidential, and hearing them will result in deep attachment for Kṛṣṇa.

They prayed as follows, "All glories to the Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the maintainer of all! You have appeared to inaugurate the congregational chanting of the holy name. All glories to the protector of Vedic religion, the saintly devotees, and the pious *brāhmaṇas*! In the form of eternal time, You are the destroyer of nondevotees.

"All glories to You whose transcendental form is absolute, eternal, and full of bliss! You are the Supreme Lord of lords, whose desires cannot be obstructed. You are unmanifest in millions and millions of universes, yet you manifest Yourself in the womb of Śrīmatī Śacidevī. Who can understand the activities of Your sweet will? Creation, maintenance, and annihilation of the universes are just aspects of Your wonderful pastimes.

"Your might—ignited only by Your desire—can destroy the entire cosmic manifestation. Is it not possible then for You to kill demons like Rāvaṇa and Kāṁsa with mere words? In spite of Your ability, You appeared in the houses of King Daśaratha and Śrī Vasudeva to kill these demons.

"Who can unravel the mystery behind Your activities? Only You know Your own sweet will. Simply by Your desire any one of Your servitors can liberate innumerable universes. In spite of this, You descend Yourself to teach religious principles to the people of the world and thus benedict them.

"In Satya-yuga You appeared with a whitish complexion to teach the path of austerity and meditation by performing austerity Yourself. To establish religious principles You took the role of a celibate *brāhmaṇa* with matted hair, carrying an antelope skin, mendicant staff, and waterpot.

"In Tretā-yuga You appeared in a beautiful reddish complexion as the Lord of sacrifices to teach the religious practice of sacrifice. With *śrak* and *sruvā* in hand, You Yourself conducted the sacrificial rituals.

"In Dvāpara-yuga You came with the transcendently beautiful dark complexion of a monsoon cloud and established deity worship in every house. Wearing yellow cloth and decorated with the mark of Śrīvatsa, which is exclusively Yours, You performed opulent deity-worship.

“In Kali-yuga You appeared as a learned *brāhmaṇa* with a golden yellow complexion to disseminate the most confidential religious practice of congregational chanting of the Lord's holy name.

The demigods continued to pray, “You accept unlimited incarnations. Who has the power to count them? In Your incarnation as the transcendental fish, Matsya, You came with the waters of annihilation. And as Kūrma, the tortoise, You were the support of all living beings (by holding Mandara mountain).

“As Hayagrīva, You preserved the *Vedas* and killed the two demons Madhu and Kaitabha. As Varāha, the boar incarnation, You rescued the earth. As Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, You pierced and killed the demon Hiranyakasipu.

“As the dwarf incarnation, Lord Vāmana, You outwitted the demon King Bali. As Paraśurāma, You rid the world of *kṣatriyas*. As Lord Rāmacandra, You destroyed the demon Rāvaṇa. And as Lord Balarāma, who holds the plough, You enjoyed unlimitedly.

“As Lord Buddha, You preached the religion of compassion and nonviolence; and as Lord Kalki, You destroyed the degraded *mlecchas* (those who do not follow the Vedic injunctions).

“As Lord Dhanvantari, You distributed the nectar of immortality, *amṛta*. As Lord Hamsa, the swan incarnation, You spoke the knowledge of the Absolute to Lord Brahmā and others. As Nārada Muni, You held the vina and sang sweetly. And as Śrīla Vyāsadeva, You explained the truth about Yourself.

“In the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, You enjoy in Gokula charming, clever pastimes which include those of all Your incarnations.

“In this present incarnation You will appear as a pure unalloyed devotee. You will disseminate the knowledge of devotional service and chant the holy name. The nectar of congregational chanting of the holy name will drown the entire universe in waves of bliss and every house will know the process of love of Godhead. How can we describe the ecstasy aroused in this world when You will dance with all Your devotees and servitors?

“Just by constant remembrance of Your lotus feet, Your pure devotees deliver this world from all ills and inauspiciousness. The touch of their feet dispells the dark omens of the world, and a mere glance from them purifies all directions. O Lord Caitanya! Such are Your glories, such is the dancing, and such are Your servitors, that when they chant and dance wonderfully with their arms raised they remove all disturbances in the heavenly planets.

In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is stated: “O King, when Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotees dance (while chanting the Lord's name) the touch of their feet on the earth purifies the whole world, their glance purifies all directions, and their upraised arms purify the higher planetary systems.”

“O Lord Caitanya, You are that self-same Supreme Personality, incarnated in person to perform congregational chanting and distribute love of Godhead with Your devotees.

“O Lord! Who possesses the words to describe Your wonderful potency to freely bestow the most confidential and hidden knowledge of the *Vedas*? O Lord, we ardently desire and pray for that sublime love of Godhead which You keep as a great mystery, offering spiritual aspirants liberation instead.

“You are the spiritual master of the entire creation, and You distribute priceless wealth because of Your magnanimity. The chanting of Your holy name is the fulfillment of all religious rituals and sacrifices, yet You have personally appeared in Navadvīpa. O Lord, be kind upon us, so that we may be fortunate enough to see Your wonderful activities in Navadvīpa.

“O Lord, You have fulfilled the innermost desire of Gaṅgādevī by sporting in her waters. Your exquisite transcendental form, which mystics and yogis envision in their meditations, has become manifest in Navadvīpa. I therefore offer obeisances to the holy Navadvīpa-dhāma and the house of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and Śrīmatī Śācīdevī where You made Your divine appearance.”

In this manner Lord Brahmā and other demigods remained unseen while daily offering choice prayers to the Supreme Lord.

The supreme proprietor of the entire creation remained in the womb of Śrīmatī Śācīdevī, and on the full moon night in the month of Phalguṇa, He advented. That full moon night was the summum bonum of all the auspicious occasions of the cosmic manifestation combined. The Supreme Personality descended, accompanied by the congregational chanting of the holy name. He propagated this process by practicing it Himself. Who is able to know the wonderful pastimes of the Supreme Lord? He arranged a lunar eclipse at the time of His birth.

Upon seeing the lunar eclipse, the residents of Navadvīpa began to loudly chant the auspicious holy name of the Lord. Unlimited millions of people went to the Ganges for holy ablutions and rent the air with the loud chanting of “Hari bol! Hari bol!”

The vibration of the Lord's name filled Nadia and expanded throughout the universe without end. Hearing this wonderful chanting, all the devotees prayed, "Let there be a perpetual eclipse! All the devotees exclaimed, "Such great joy! Maybe the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa is making His appearance."

The devotees went to the Ganges for their ablutions followed by the roar of chanting from all directions. Women, children, aged, pious, and impious—everyone loudly chanted Lord Hari's holy name during the lunar eclipse. The only sound within the universe was the all-prevailing chanting of "Hari! Hari!"

The demigods showered flowers everywhere and proclaimed victory as they beat clamorously on their *dundubhi* drums. Amidst the resounding adulations, the Lord and very soul of the universe appeared as the son of Śrīmatī Śacīdevī.

The moon was eclipsed by Rahu as the ocean of the holy name inundated Navadvīpa, drowning and subduing the darkness of Kali-yuga. The Supreme Lord was manifest! All the fourteen worlds resounded with the profound news. The moonlike Lord Gaurāṅga has appeared, and the residents of Nadia were freed from all sorrows just seeing Him. Their happiness and prosperity increased day by day.

The roll of the *dundubhi* drums, the trumpeting of a thousand conch shells, the shrill of flutes and horns, accompanied Vṛndāvana Dāsa's songs of praise to their Lordships Śrī Caitanya and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

His beautifully brilliant lustre overshadowed the sun's shining rays and dazzled my eyes. His drawn out, slightly drooping eyes defied description.

The air was surcharged with joy; Lord Caitanya had descended to the material world! One roaring sound of Lord Hari's name reverberated throughout the universe, beyond Brahmaloḥa carrying the tidings of Lord Caitanya's birth.

His exquisite complexion was the color of sandalwood paste. His expansive breast was decorated with a gently swaying wild-flower garland and His iridescent, moonlike face is pleasing, cooling and comforting. His elongated arms reached down to His knees.

Sounds of victory and praise permeated all directions and the earth felt especially blessed at the advent of Lord Caitanya. Some sang in great joy while others danced in ecstasy. But for Kali it was a calamity in the midst of spiritual revelry.

The crown jewels of all Vedic conclusions are the Supreme Lords, Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu. Their causeless mercy made no discrimination between the ignorant or the derelict. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, offer this song to Them.

The golden moon, Lord Caitanya, had arisen as sounds of great joy filled the air. His beauty humbled a million Cupids, and He smiled at His own dancing and singing.

His lovely face and charming eyes added to the list of other marks of divinity on His transcendental person; His feet were marked with the signs of flag, lightning etc. His entire exquisite form was decorated to enchant the minds of everyone.

All fear and despondency was dissipated and the world was showered with immense fortunes. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, offer this song to my very life and soul, Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda.

The demigods became overjoyed and sang in praise of Lord Caitanya's appearance. A mere glance at the Lord's beautiful, moonlike face was enough to extirpate all miseries. This was a glorious and happy occasion.

Lord Ananta Śeṣa, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and other demigods all took up their new forms and, using the lunar eclipse as an excuse, continuously sang Lord Hari's name. I cannot fully describe their exultation.

Milling crowds poured into Nadia with shouts of "Hari! Hari!" Navadvīpa was in the grips of unbounded bliss. The Supreme Lord, the demigods and the human beings had all come together to frolic with one another.

The demigods came to the Śrīmatī Śacīdevī's house in the darkness of the eclipse and, unseen by humans, fell to the ground and offered obeisances to Lord Caitanya. Who can describe these abstruse pastimes of the Lord.

Some broke out in types of glorification, some held the umbrella, some fanned the Lord with *acāmara*, others showered flowers in ecstasy, and still others sang and danced exuberantly.

Lord Caitanya appeared with all His pure devotees and the atheist will never understand it. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa sing the nectarean glories of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda.

The rumble of *dundubhi* drums, hymns, prayers, and sweet music mingled and resounded in the air. Today, without delay, we can meet that Supreme Personality who is a mystery even in the *Vedas*.

The demigods in Indrapura were tumultuously happy; busily decorating themselves, they felt extremely fortunate that they could receive Lord Caitanya's blessed association in Navadvīpa.

They embraced and kissed each other without shame in exultation that the Lord of Navadvīpa, Lord Caitanya, had taken His birth. There was no distinction of friend or foe.

In great curiosity the demigods came to Navadvīpa amidst loud chanting of God's name. Infected by the transcendental mellow of Lord Caitanya they became almost unconscious in ecstasy and joined in singing the glories of Lord Caitanya.

They saw the beautiful form of Lord Caitanya. He was more exquisite than a thousand rising full moons. He accepted the human form and made everyone loudly chant the Lord's holy name, using the eclipse as an excuse.

The Lord descended with all His energies and expansions; this is incomprehensible to the atheists. Let me, Vṇḍāvana dāsa, sing in adulation about my life and soul, Lord Śrī Caitanya and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

Chapter 3

Just see Lord Gaurāṅga's market place, which has rows filled with jewels of *prema*!

Even before He took His birth, the Lord propagated the chanting of His holy name. Streams of people went for their bath in the Ganges at the time of the eclipse, and they all chanted the Lord's name along the way. People who from their birth had never once uttered the Lord's name now also chanted the name on their way to the Ganges.

The sound of chanting emanated from every direction, and the Supreme Lord, the best of the *brāhmaṇas*, smiled to Himself as He made His appearance. Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and Śrīmatī Śacīdevī glanced at their child's beautiful face and were so overcome with unbounded joy that they were confused what to do next. The ladies present were also excited and they chanted "Jaya! Jaya!" Relatives and friends hurried to see the newborn child, and Śrī Jagannātha Miśra's house became a scene of great exultation.

Śrīmatī Śacīdevī's father, Śrī Nīlāmbara Cakravartī, found wonderful symptoms in every house of the child's astrological chart. Śrī Cakravartī was astounded by the baby's beauty and saw all divine symbols on His person. There was a prophesy in Bengal that someday a king would be born in Bengal as a *brāhmaṇa*'s son. Śrī Cakravartī said, "Only the future will prove whether this is that child."

In the presence of all, Śrī Nīlāmbara Cakravartī, an expert astrologer, began explaining the meanings of the different astrological signs in the Lord's chart. He said, "The glories that are seen in this birth chart should not be limited by saying the child will merely be a king. This child will conquer Bṛhaspati in learning. He will soon be the abode of all divine qualities."

Present in that gathering was a great personality in the guise of a *brāhmaṇa* who made predictions on the Lord's future. The *brāhmaṇa* said, "This child is the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself. He will establish the essence of all religion. He will initiate a wonderful preaching movement and deliver the whole world. He will give everyone that which is forever desired even by Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Upon seeing Him people will feel compassion for all living entities and become callous toward material pains and joys. This will be a great benediction for the whole world. Not to mention ordinary men, even hard-core atheists will worship this child's lotus feet. He will be glorified throughout the entire creation, and people from all orders of life will come to worship Him.

"He is the personification of pure *Bhāgavata-dharma* (the scientific religious principles given by the Supreme Lord), the benefactor of *brāhmaṇas*, cows, and devotees, and the affectionate, devoted son of His parents. This child has come to accomplish great works, just as the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa incarnated to re-establish religious principles. Who can explain the imports of this child's exalted astrological and esoteric symptoms? How fortunate you are, Śrī Jagannātha Miśra, a leader amongst men. I offer my obeisances to you, the illustrious father of this child. I feel greatly fortunate that I could calculate His astrological chart. His name accordingly will be Śrī Viśvambhara. He will be known to all as Navadvīpa-candra. He is spiritual bliss personified."

The *brāhmaṇa* did not speak about Lord Caitanya's pastime of accepting the renounced order of *sannyāsa* since that would disturb His parents' loving sentiments. Śrī Jagannātha Miśra was enthralled with ecstasy over the predictions for his son's future. He immediately wanted to offer gifts to the *brāhmaṇa*. He was a poor man with few possessions, yet feeling great jubilation, Śrī Miśra fell at the *brāhmaṇa*'s feet and cried. The *brāhmaṇa* also caught Śrī Miśra's feet, and everyone present shouted, "Hari, Hari!" in great joy. The relatives and friends were all praise for the child, and they blessed Him as they heard the supernatural predictions about His future.

Soon the musicians arrived playing *mṛdaṅgas*, flutes, and *sānāi* (a reed instrument) which filled the air with wonderful music. Ladies from the higher planets mingled freely yet unnoticed with the ladies from earth in this wonderful

gathering.

Aditi, the mother of the demigods, smiled and blessed the newborn child by placing with her right hand auspicious grass and paddy on His head and saying, "Live forever." She prayed for the Lord to remain eternally in this material world manifesting His pastimes. Therefore she said, "Live forever."

Śrīmatī Śacīdevī and the others noticed the extraordinary beauty of these ladies, but they hesitated to inquire about their identity. The wives of the demigods respectfully took the dust from the feet of Śacīdevī, who lost her speech in extreme exultation.

Neither the *Vedas* nor Lord Ananta Śeṣa could describe the waves of jubilation that drowned Śrī Jagannātha Miśra's household. All of Nadia seemed to be present at Śacīdevī's house to experience that undescrivable joy. In their houses, on the banks of the Ganges, and on the streets—everywhere people loudly chanted the Lord's name. In this way everyone jubilantly celebrated the Lord's birth, while thinking the festivity was actually for the lunar eclipse.

Lord Caitanya appeared on the full moon night of the month of Phalguna. This day is most worshipable by Lord Brahmā and other great personalities. The day of Lord Caitanya's appearance is the holiest of all occasions, indeed, it is devotion personified. Lord Caitanya appeared on the full moon night of Phalguna and Lord Nityānanda appeared on the thirteenth night of the waxing moon of Magha. Both these days are all-auspicious and transcendental occasions. If one properly observes these two holy occasions he develops love of Godhead and cuts asunder the knots of material illusion. The appearance days of pure devotees, like the appearance day of the Supreme Lord, are also all-auspicious and transcendental.

Whoever hears the narrations of Lord Caitanya's birth is freed from all miseries in life and death. One who hears Lord Caitanya's pastimes attains devotional service of the Lord, and he may accompany Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu whenever He advents in this material world.

This *Ādi-khaṇḍa* is wonderful to hear because it contains descriptions of Lord Caitanya's appearance. The Vedic literature describes these pastimes of the Lord as eternal, although He sometimes appears and sometimes disappears. Topics of Lord Caitanya's pastimes have no beginning and no end. I write them down only by the mercy of the Lord.

I offer my humble obeisances at the Lord's feet and at the feet of all His devotees. I pray that I may be excused from all offenses. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, offer this song to the lotus feet of my life and soul, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

Chapter 4

All glories to the lotus-eyed, Lord Gauracandra! All glories to all Your loving devotees! O Lord, look upon me mercifully so that my illusion is dispelled, and I may be able to serve and worship You day and night.

The wonderful appearance of the Lord increased the happiness of everyone in Śrīmatī Śacīdevī's house. Both Śrī Jagannātha Miśra's and Śrīmatī Śacīdevī's hearts were inundated with an ocean of joy while looking at the Lord's beautiful face. Śrī Viśvarūpa would pick up His brother in His arms and smile gleefully at the Supreme Lord, the abode of all transcendental joys.

Day and night friends and relatives affectionately surrounded the Lord. Someone chanted the *viṣṇu-rakṣā-mantra* (invoking Lord Viṣṇu's protection), someone chanted the *devī-rakṣā-mantra* (invoking Durgādevī's protection), while some chanted mantras while circumambulating the Lord's house.

When the Lord would shed tears from His lotus eyes only the sound of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa would pacify Him. Finally everyone understood the secret message and whenever the Lord cried, they immediately chanted Lord Hari's name.

The demigods were in a jovial mood and decided to play some practical jokes on the people who always surrounded Nimāi. A demigod in a subtle body stole quietly about the house, unseen by human eyes. When the people saw the shadowy form sneak past they exclaimed, "There goes a thief!"

Terror-stricken, some of them loudly chanted "Nṛsimha! Nṛsimha!" while others murmured the *Aparājita-stotra* (*Aparājita* is another name of Pārvatīdevī, wife of Lord Śiva) for protection. While many persons were going around the house chanting different mantras and prayers, a great commotion was heard from inside Śrīmatī Śacīdevī's house.

The demigods had assembled to see the Lord, but the people outside thought that thieves were entering. Some shouted, "There goes the thief! Catch him! Catch him!" while others continuously chanted, "Nṛsimha! Nṛsimha!"

A *brāhmaṇa* priest endowed with powers of exorcising ghosts threatened the invisible demigods, "You're lucky you got away today, but you do not know the tremendous power of Lord Nṛsimhadeva." Unseen by anyone, the demigods

laughed to themselves. In this way a month passed.

Completing her one month isolation, the period after child birth, Śrīmatī Śacīdevī went for a bath in the Ganges with the other ladies. Amongst singing and joyous clamor, Śacīdevī bathed in the Ganges. She worshiped Gaṅgādevī, and thereafter she worshiped a village goddess called Śaṣṭhī (for the long life of the child).

After worshipping different demigods in accordance with proper rites, Śacīdevī returned with the satisfied ladies. According to the social custom, Śacīdevī respectfully offered all the ladies roasted paddy, bananas, oil, vermilion powder, betel nuts, and betel leaf. The ladies in turn blessed the child and offered respects to Śacīdevī before they returned to their respective homes. In this way the Supreme Lord Caitanya performed His childhood pastimes. Without the Lord's mercy these pastimes are incomprehensible.

As a child, the Lord cried frequently. His real intention in crying was to induce everyone to chant the Lord's holy name. The ladies tried one way or another to pacify Him, but He cried all the more. But as soon as they chanted "Hari! Hari!" a beaming smile spread across the Lord's exquisite moonlike face.

Discovering that this pleased the Lord, everyone got together and incessantly chanted Lord Hari's name while clapping their hands. In this way everyone happily engaged in congregational chanting, and Śacīdevī's house resounded with the Lord's name.

In this way the Lord stayed in Śrī Jagannātha Miśra's house while secretly enjoying pastimes similar to Gopāla Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes. When no one was present in a room, He would intentionally scatter things around and pour milk, butter, or oil on the floor.

Understanding that mother Śacīdevī was approaching, He would quickly lay down and start crying. Mother Śacīdevī would pacify Him by repeating Lord Hari's name until she noticed the different substances spread all over the floor. "Who has scattered the rice, wheat, and dahl? Why are these broken pots of curd and milk on the floor?"

No one could understand who had done this. There was only the four-month-old baby in the house. Curiosity drew everyone to that room, but they could not find any trace of the culprit. Some conjectured, "A demon or ghost must have come, but due to the effect of the mantras it could not harm the baby. Angry that it could do nothing to the child, it threw everything around and escaped."

This incident left Śrī Jagannātha Miśra quite perplexed, but considering it an act of Providence, he did not comment. In spite of the extensive damage, both Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and Śacīdevī felt their sorrows soothed just by looking at the child's face.

Days passed wrapped in mystery until the day of the name giving ceremony arrived. Śrī Nīlāmbara Cakravartī and other learned scholars and friends assembled there. Respectable chaste ladies, who looked as fresh and glowing as Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune, attended the ceremony in beautiful saris.

Everyone discussed which name the child should have. Some ladies made one suggestion, while other ladies made another. "This child will have no younger brother or sisters, so being the last child of the family, he should be named Nimāi," said one lady.

After considering all points, the scholars said there was one name appropriate for the child. As soon as He was born, famine ended in the land and farmers were blessed with long-awaited rain. Happy and healthy conditions returned to the land from the time of His birth. It was similar to the ancient story of Lord Nārāyaṇa protecting and upholding the universe during devastation. Hence, His name should be Śrī Viśvambhara (lit. sustainer of the world). This is confirmed in His horoscope, for He is the brightest torch-bearer of His family. The name Nimāi that the respected ladies gave will be His second name.

The name was given at a auspicious moment amidst readings of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and the *Vedas* by the *brāhmaṇas*. The demigods and humans assembled together on this occasion and offered benedictions. They chanted Lord Hari's all-auspicious holy names while blowing conch shells and ringing bells.

Rice, paddy, books, roasted paddy, coins, gold, silver and other items were placed before the child to test the child's tendency. Śrī Jagannātha encouraged his son, "My dear Viśvambhara, take whatever Your heart desires."

Śacīdevī's son, the Supreme Lord, ignored all other items, picked up the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and embraced it. The ladies loudly glorified the Lord. Everyone was impressed and said, "He will be a great scholar." Some commented that the child would turn out to be an elevated Vaiṣṇava with the extraordinary capacity to easily grasp the imports of the scriptures.

Whoever saw Lord Viśvambhara's enchanting smile became drenched in showers of bliss. Once the ladies had the child on their laps, they would not put Him down. This child, the Supreme Lord, is almost unapproachable even by the

demigods. And whenever the Lord started crying the ladies clapped their hands and chanted Lord Hari's name.

Hearing the chanting, the Lord swayed blissfully as though He were dancing on their laps. This excited the ladies, who in turn increased their chanting. The Supreme Lord, by His desire, had everyone constantly chanting the Lord's name, on any available pretext.

The *Vedas*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and other scriptures conclude that no undertaking achieves success without the Supreme Lord's desire. In this way the Supreme Lord, the son of Śacī, grew up, while motivating everyone to chant His holy name.

When the Lord began to crawl on His knees He looked most charming. The small ankle bells on His feet were pleasing to hear. The Lord fearlessly moved around everywhere, catching fire, snakes, or anything else He saw.

One day a snake slithered through the courtyard and the Lord caught hold of it simply to enact another pastime. The Lord lay down on the coils of the snake. When the residents of the house saw the snake they screamed in alarm, but the Lord calmly smiled and remained in that relaxed position.

The people shouted, "Garuḍa! Garuḍa!" while Nimāi's parents waited in anxiety. The snake, who was really Lord Ananta Śeṣa, started to slither away when it heard all the crying and commotion, but little Nimāi tried to stop it.

The ladies rushed over and grabbed up the Lord in their arms, each one blessing Him that He might have a long life. Some relatives tied a talisman on Nimāi for His protection, while some chanted benediction hymns and others poured Ganges water on different parts of His body. Some of them thought that the child had got a new life, while others realized that the snake was Ananta Śeṣa.

The Supreme Lord Caitanya who was radiant like the moon, tried repeatedly to go back to the snake, but everyone stopped Him. These pastimes are not revealed even in the *Vedas*, but just by hearing them one is free from the serpent bite of material illusion.

Lord Caitanya, the pleasure of Śacīdevī, soon toddled about the house. Lord Caitanya's extraordinary beauty eclipsed the beauty of millions of Cupids. Even the radiant moon longed to behold the Lord's beauty. Curly locks decorated His exquisitely formed head, and with His lotus-shaped eyes He looked like Gopāla Kṛṣṇa. His long arms stretched to His knees. He had an expansive chest and reddish lips. All His limbs were beautifully formed. His brilliant sun-red complexion was always attractive and His fingers, hands, and feet were like blooming lotuses. As the Lord ran about like a child, Śacīmātā became fearful thinking that His reddish hands and feet were bleeding.

Śacīdevī and Śrī Jagannātha Miśra were always struck with great wonder at the Lord's beauty. Although they were needy, their son was the source of unending joy. In seclusion they whispered to each other, "I wonder what great personality has come as our son. Such a distinguished personality has taken birth in our house, perhaps our material miseries will be finished. I have never heard of any other child as wonderful as ours. He smiles and dances without stopping when He hears the chanting of Lord Hari's name. When He cries no amount of consoling will calm Him, but when He hears loud chanting of Lord Hari's name He stops crying and listens."

From early morning the ladies surrounded the Lord and loudly sing Lord Hari's name. They would clap their hands in rhythm and the Lord would dance gleefully.

The Lord playfully rolled in the dust, then He laughed as He jumped into His mother's lap. As Gauracandra danced, He moved His body in such an amusing manner that everyone felt incomparable bliss. Still, no one could understand how the Lord through His childish pranks was motivating everyone to chant the holy name.

The Lord was so restless, fleeting in and out of the house, that no one could catch Him. Venturing out on His own, Nimāi wanted to taste whatever He saw—roasted rice, banana, *sandeśa*. The Lord was so extremely attractive that strangers gave Him whatever He requested. Strangers gave Him *sandeśa* or banana, and pleased with His gifts the Lord returned home. He then distributed the food to those ladies who sang Lord Hari's name. Everyone merrily applauded the child's ingenuity and continuously sang Lord Hari's name.

The Lord wandered freely in and out of the house, whether morning, noon, evening, or night. Daily He went to a friendly neighbor's house and mysteriously stole from him. In some houses He drank all the milk, and in others He ate all the rice. Whenever He found nothing to eat, He was satisfied to break all the earthen pots.

If He found a small child in any house He would tease him to tears, but when He was observed He fled. But if by chance someone caught Him, Nimāi would catch the person's feet and plead. "Please let Me go this one time. I shall never come back again. I will never steal anymore. Please be merciful."

Astounded by the boy's sharp intelligence, no one could remain angry with Him. Ultimately everyone was affectionate towards Him. People were naturally captivated just by seeing Him, and parents loved Him more than they loved their own

children. In this way the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha passed His childhood wandering around, never staying in one place.

One day two thieves saw the Lord roaming about the streets alone. Seeing His fine ornaments, they conspired to steal them. One of the thieves picked Him up saying "O dear! O dear!" while the other joined him saying, "Where have You been for so long?"

"Come quickly home, dear," the thieves said. The Lord smiled and replied, "Yes, let us go home." Quickly the two thieves left with the Lord in their arms, while the onlookers ignorantly thought that the rightful guardians had taken their child. Thousands of people were on the streets, but they were all strangers to each other. The thieves were happy with themselves and with the ornaments on the child.

Overtaken by greed, the thieves were dreaming of their new found riches, thinking they would surely steal the golden bangles. They carried Him on their shoulders toward their hideout while the Lord rode along chuckling to Himself. One thief passed a *sandēśa* into the Lord's hand, while the other said comfortingly, "We have almost reached home."

The thieves had kidnapped the Lord and run far away when the Lord's relatives began to search for Him. "Viśvambhara! Come home, Nimāi!" they shouted. Everyone grew frantic and restless like fish out of water. In distress they remembered Lord Govinda, while far away the thieves carried Nimāi toward their house.

Deluded by the Supreme Lord's illusory potency, *māyā*, the thieves mistook the way to their hideout and arrived instead at the residence of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra. The bewildered thieves thought they were in their own house, so they busied themselves trying to remove the Lord's ornaments.

"Get down now. We are home." said the thieves, and the Lord replied, "Yes, put Me down." Inside Śrī Jagannātha Miśra's house everyone sat around with their heads in their hands in utter despair.

The beguiled thieves took the Lord down from their shoulders, thinking the house to be their own. As soon as Nimāi was on the ground He ran straight to His father. A joyous uproar shook the house as the relatives loudly chanted, "Hari, Hari." An understandable transformation overwhelmed the people as if life had returned to their bodies.

The thieves realized that the house was not their own, but they could not recognize where they were. Taking advantage of the commotion, the fearful thieves stealthily left the place without being noticed by anyone. Reflecting on the strange and wonderful incident, the thieves thought, "Who is playing tricks with us?"

"Caṇḍidevī (goddess Durgā) certainly saved us today," they said after regaining their composure. Then they embraced each other. The thieves actually gained immeasurable piety and good fortune because they carried the Supreme Personality of Godhead on their shoulders.

In Śrī Jagannātha Miśra's house the happy relatives asked, "Who brought the child back? We should offer him nice gifts and tie a turban on his head."

Someone said, "I saw two persons come with the child, put him down, and leave, but I do not know which direction they went after that."

Everyone was surprised that whoever brought the child back did not stay to be acknowledged. They turned to Nimāi and asked, "Our dear child, tell us who brought You back. We are puzzled."

The Lord replied, "I went to the banks of the Ganges, but I lost my way home and was roaming about in the town. Two persons took Me in their arms and brought Me home."

"The words of the scriptures are never wrong, The unseen hand of God always protects children, old persons, and the helpless," they all said. Being bewildered by the Lord's illusory energy, *māyā*, the relatives conjectured in many ways.

In this way Lord of Vaikuṇṭha performed His wonderful pastimes. Who can understand them without the Lord's mercy? Although these narrations are a mystery even to the *Vedas*, simply by hearing them one can easily achieve undeviating devotion to Lord Caitanya's lotus feet.

I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, offer my humble song at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who are my life and soul.

Chapter 5

All glories to the Supreme Personality, Śrī Viśvambhara, the Lord of the devotees! He is the Supreme Lord of lords, and His feet are decorated by the marks of a flag, thunderbolt, and goad.

In this way the Supreme Lord performed various transcendental pastimes while residing in Jagannātha Miśra's house. One day Śrī Jagannātha Miśra called his dear son Viśvambhara and told Him, "Bring my book."

As Nīmāi ran into the room to get the book, the tinkling of ankle bells was heard. Śrī Jagannātha Miśra inquired, "Where is the sound of ankle bells coming from?" Both he and his wife Śrīmatī Śacīdevī searched all around.

"My son does not wear ankle bells on His feet. Where does this sweet sound of ankle bells come from? "How extraordinary!" The father and mother considered the incident but remained speechless with surprise.

After bringing the book, the Lord ran off to play. The parents saw another wonder when they entered their house. All over the house they saw wonderful footprints with different symbols like the flag, thunderbolt, goad, and flagpole. Both were thrilled with great delight, and their eyes brimmed with tears as they examined the footprints.

They offered obeisances to the lotus footprints and said, "We will be liberated from repeated birth."

Śrī Jagannātha Miśra requested his wife, "Please listen, O mother of Viśvarūpa (Lord Caitanya's elder brother), cook a nice sweet rice preparation with ghee. In the morning I shall bathe our house deity, Śrī Dāmodara-śīla, with *pañca-gavya* (the five substances— cow-milk, yogurt, ghee, cow urine, and cow-dung.) I believe that the sound of ankle bells actually came from the feet of the Deity as He secretly moved around the house.

Jagannātha Miśra and Śacīmātā felt great happiness as they worshiped the *śālagrāma-śīla*, and Lord Caitanya smiled within His mind.

Now hear another wonderful pastime enjoyed by Lord Caitanya, the son of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra.

A very pious *brāhmaṇa* was visiting different places of pilgrimages to satisfy the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. He worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa by chanting the *gopāla-mantra* consisting of six syllables, and he did not eat anything other than the remnants of food offered to Lord Gopāla. After visiting many pilgrimage sites the fortunate *brāhmaṇa* at last came to the house of Lord Caitanya.

As a person of incomparable purity, he was enveloped in a great spiritual effulgence. He carried Lord Gopāla and *śālagrāma-śīla* around his neck as his most wonderful decorations. With half-closed eyes the *brāhmaṇa* constantly chanted "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa," and deep in his heart he tasted the nectar of love of God.

Seeing this shining personality, Jagannātha Miśra stood up out of respect and then offered his obeisances. The most respectable Śrī Jagannātha Miśra did everything to properly look after his esteemed guest. He personally washed the guest's feet and offered him a fine elevated seat.

Once the *brāhmaṇa* was seated comfortably, Śrī Jagannātha Miśra inquired, "Where is your place of residence?"

The *brāhmaṇa* replied, "I am disinterested in worldly affairs so I travel throughout different countries. It is only because of my restless mind that I roam."

Śrī Jagannātha Miśra said respectfully, "It is the good fortune of the world that you travel everywhere. I especially feel most fortunate today, so please permit me to cook for you."

The *brāhmaṇa* replied, "Dear Miśra, do as you please." Happily Śrī Miśra made extraordinary and wonderful arrangements. Śrī Miśra had the kitchen thoroughly cleaned and then arranged for all the ingredients for cooking to be brought.

The *brāhmaṇa* himself cooked to his full satisfaction and sat down to offer all the foodstuff to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Śacīnandana, the Supersoul within everyone's heart, then decided to show Himself to the *brāhmaṇa*.

The *brāhmaṇa* had just begun his meditation when the Supreme Lord, Śrī Gaurasundara, appeared in his presence. He stood there naked, His entire form covered with dust. He was the color of the sun with beautiful hands and feet. Smiling, He took a handful of food from the *brāhmaṇa*'s offering and ate it while the *brāhmaṇa* looked on. Although favored by good fortune, the *brāhmaṇa* called out, "Alas! Alas! This restless boy has stolen the food meant for offering."

When Śrī Jagannātha Miśra came he saw that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Gaurasundara was happily smiling and eating the rice. Intending to beat the Lord, an angry Miśra chased after Him, but the *brāhmaṇa* stood up fearfully and caught hold of Miśra's hand. The *brāhmaṇa* said, "My dear Miśra, you are a respectable and knowledgeable person, but what knowledge does this little boy have? What will beating Him accomplish? It is worthwhile to beat a person who can reason right from wrong, but I forbid you to beat this boy."

Feeling miserable, Śrī Miśra sat down holding his head. He did not speak a word, nor did he lift his head. "Do not feel sad,

dear Mīśra," said the *brāhmaṇa*. "The Supreme Lord certainly knows everything that happens at all times. Please bring whatever fruits or vegetables you have in the house. I shall simply eat that today."

Śrī Mīśra said, "If you kindly consider me your servant, then let me arrange for you to cook again. I shall only be satisfied when you cook once again. I have all the necessary ingredients for cooking in the house." The other friends and relatives in the house also implored him to cook again.

"Since you all desire it," agreed the *brāhmaṇa*, "I shall cook every preparation again."

Everyone was satisfied that he had agreed, and they cleaned the cooking place for him. They quickly gathered the cooking ingredients, and the *brāhmaṇa* began to cook.

Some people warned the *brāhmaṇa* that the restless child might spoil the offering again. "Take the child to another house and keep Him there until the *brāhmaṇa* has completed his cooking and eating," they told Śācīmātā.

Mother Śācī carried her child to a neighbor's house. The young ladies all teased "Hey Nimāi! Is this the way You should act, stealing the *brāhmaṇa*'s food?"

With a smile on His exquisite moonlike face, Lord Caitanya replied, "What is My fault? The *brāhmaṇa* called Me."

But they objected. "O Nimāi, will You do more mischief now that You have lost Your caste? Who knows this *brāhmaṇa*, where he comes from, or who his family is? How can You maintain Your caste after having eaten food cooked by him?"

Smiling, Lord Caitanya replied, "I am a cowherd boy! I accept food prepared by *abrāhmaṇa* all the time. Does a cowherd boy lose his caste by eating a *brāhmaṇa*'s food?" Saying this the Lord looked at everyone with a smile. The Supreme Lord, Śrī Caitanya, used this trick to explain to them the truth about Himself, but His illusory potency is so perfect that no one could understand Him.

As they carried Him around, the various residents of the neighboring houses enjoyed the child's arguments. The Lord went joyfully from arms to arms, and whoever held Him floated in an ocean of bliss.

In the meantime, the *brāhmaṇa* cooked once more and sat down to make an offering to Lord Bāla-gopāla. In meditation the *brāhmaṇa* invited Lord Bāla-gopāla to eat, therefore Lord Gauracandra, the Lord of everyone's heart, came to know this.

Lord Caitanya charmed everyone and then left their presence completely unnoticed. Smiling all the while, He went to the spot where the *brāhmaṇa* was offering his food. Stealthily, Lord Caitanya put a handful of rice into His mouth and left. The *brāhmaṇa*, caught by surprise, looked on in disbelief.

The *brāhmaṇa* raised a loud alarm, "Alas! Alas!" The child ate His rice and sprinted off. Śrī Mīśra angrily grabbed a stick and chased after young Nimāi.

Lord Nimāi fled in terror and hid Himself in a room, but Śrī Mīśra came after Him, roaring in fury. Śrī Mīśra said, "You shall see today! Act in this mischievous manner will You? Although I am cultured and knowledgeable, You think I am a great fool."

Śrī Mīśra continued, "In whose house can You find as big a thief as this?" With rising indignation, he chased after Nimāi. The people in the house caught hold of Śrī Mīśra to dissuade him, but the angry father insisted, "Leave me! Today I shall beat Him."

They tried to reason with him, "Dear Mīśra, you are known to be liberal. What superior intelligence will you display by beating Him? His sense of discrimination between good and bad is still undeveloped due to His tender age. Only a foolish person would beat such a small child. By nature children are restless, it is not true that one can teach them by beating them."

The pilgrim hurriedly rushed to the scene and caught hold of Śrī Mīśra's hand. "Respected Sir, please hear me. The young boy is not at fault. Whatever is destined to occur on a certain day must happen. I am not destined to have Lord Kṛṣṇa's rice offerings today. What I am saying is the confidential truth in this matter."

Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra hung his head in dejection. Being perturbed, he could not look at anyone. At that moment, Viśvarūpa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the abode of spiritual effulgence, arrived on the scene. His entire form was so charming that no beauty within the fourteen worlds could match it. He stood there, an embodiment of all spiritual potencies, with a *brāhmaṇa*'s thread across His shoulders. He appeared as the identical expansion of Lord Nityānanda Himself. Viśvarūpa was always engaged in explaining the prime essence of all scriptures, devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Enchanted by His exquisite form, the pilgrim *brāhmaṇa* stared at Him with a gaping mouth. "Who is the father of this extraordinary personality?" asked the *brāhmaṇa*. "He is the son of Śrī Mīśra," came the reply.

The *brāhmaṇa* embraced Viśvarūpa in extreme joy saying, "Virtuous are the parents of such a son."

Śrī Viśvarūpa sat down after offering obeisances to the *brāhmaṇa*, and began speaking nectarean words which flowed like a stream. "The day turned auspicious and the house was blessed with great fortune when you came as a guest," said Viśvarūpa. "You are constant and happy within yourself. You travel everywhere simply to sanctify the earth. It is My immense fortune that I have a guest like your good self, but at the same time I feel very unfortunate that you have to go without eating.

"If a guest in a house must fast, then that house will inevitably fall victim to aspirations and inauspiciousness. I received immense pleasure on seeing you, but it pained Me greatly to hear about all that occurred here."

The *brāhmaṇa* said, "Please do not feel sorry. I shall eat some fruits and vegetables. I am a forest dweller. I cannot get rice or cooked food in the forest, so I live mostly on fruits, roots, and vegetables. I seldom eat rice—only if it comes my way without my endeavoring for it. I feel I have eaten a million times over simply from the pleasure of seeing You. Please go and bring whatever you have in the house—fruits, vegetables or offerings—and I will eat them now."

An extremely depressed Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra sat holding his head between his hands, not replying to anyone.

Śrī Viśvarūpa said, "Sir you are a magnanimous ocean of mercy, yet I feel hesitant to ask you something. Saintly persons by nature feel distressed at others suffering and are always ready to expand other's feelings of joy. With a little endeavor you can cook a nice offering for Lord Kṛṣṇa. This will dispel all the miseries of My family today, and I will feel maximum pleasure and happiness."

The *brāhmaṇa* said, "I already cooked twice, yet Lord Kṛṣṇa did not allow me to eat. So I can understand I am destined not to eat today. This is Lord Kṛṣṇa's desire, so why should I make such an endeavor? One may have unlimited foodstuff in the house but he can eat only if Lord Kṛṣṇa allows. One may endlessly try for something, but if Lord Kṛṣṇa does not desire it, he will be unsuccessful.

"It is now past one-thirty in the night. Is it appropriate to start cooking this late? Therefore please do not make any arrangements for cooking. I will simply eat some fruits and vegetables."

Śrī Viśvarūpa replied, "There is nothing wrong with the time. Everyone will be pleased if you cook."

Śrī Viśvarūpa then caught hold of the *brāhmaṇa*'s feet and everyone in the house entreated him to cook again. The *brāhmaṇa* was charmed by Śrī Viśvarūpa, and he agreed to cook.

Everyone uttered Śrī Hari's name in joy and cleaned the place for cooking. They cleaned quickly and meanwhile the necessary ingredients for cooking were brought.

The respected *brāhmaṇa* then proceeded to cook, and everyone kept the child at a secure distance. Śrī Mīśra posted himself at the doorway of Nimāi's room.

"Tie the doors to the room from the outside so that He cannot escape," suggested someone.

"Good, good," agreed Śrī Mīśra. "That is a good plan. Tie the doors from the outside and we will remain out here."

The ladies inside Nimāi's room said, "Don't worry, Nimāi is fast asleep, there is nothing more He can do."

The child was kept away in this manner, and in a short time the *brāhmaṇa* finished cooking. That pious *brāhmaṇa* then prepared an offering plate filled with the things he cooked he sat down to offer everything to Lord Kṛṣṇa through his meditation.

Nimāi, the son of mother Śacī, knew everything because he is the Supersoul in everyone's heart. He desired to appear before the *brāhmaṇa* and reveal Himself. By the Supreme Lord's will, Nimāi enchanted everyone and they slept effortlessly.

Śrī Śacīnandana appeared in the place where the *brāhmaṇa* was offering his rice to the Lord. When the *brāhmaṇa* saw the young boy Nimāi he raised an alarm, but no one heard him because they were all in deep sleep.

Nimāi, the Supreme Lord said, "O *brāhmaṇa*, you are known to be a magnanimous soul. You called for Me, so I came. Why should I be blamed for it? You chanted mantras to invoke Me; you beckoned Me. So I came to you. How could I

resist? You incessantly meditate on Me, so I decided to appear before you.”

At that moment the *brāhmaṇa* saw a wonderful sight. The Supreme Lord stood before him in His eight-handed form holding in four of His hands the four symbols - conch shell, disc, mace, and lotus. With two other hands He held butter and ate it and with the last two hands He played the flute.

He saw the Lord's entire form decorated with gem-studded ornaments; His breast was marked with Lakṣmidevī's sign of Śrīvatsa, and the priceless Kaustubha jewel hung brilliantly with other precious gems in a necklace.

His head was decorated with fresh forest flowers that circled His peacock feather. His rubicund lips, like the rising sun, set off His softly glowing moon-like face. His pink lotus petal pair of eyes smiled sweetly as His knee-length Vaijayanti flower garland and His exquisite shark-shaped earrings swayed delicately. His feet were like blossoming lotus flowers, decorated with gently tinkling gem-studded ankle bells. The lustre from His delicate pearl-like nails dissipated the darkness.

The *brāhmaṇa* saw the place transformed immediately into Vṛndāvana-dhāma. The wonderful *kadamba* trees became clamorous with the chirping of birds. Cowherd boys and girls roamed about on their own and everything was exactly as he had seen it in his meditation.

Overcome with ecstasy at seeing such extraordinary display of opulence, the pious *brāhmaṇa* fell unconscious.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Gaurasundara, who is an ocean of mercy, placed His transcendental hand on the *brāhmaṇa*'s body.

He regained consciousness by the Lord's touch, but the *brāhmaṇa* was still speechless and inert with overwhelming joy. Again and again he fell swooning to the ground. Sometimes getting up and sometimes falling, he moved by great upsurges of spiritual emotion. Overcome by shivering, perspiration and horripilation, he was unable to remain still. Tears flowed as freely as mother Ganges.

The *brāhmaṇa* caught hold of the Lord's lotus feet and cried loudly for some time.

Acknowledging the *brāhmaṇa*'s eagerness, the Supreme Lord Śrī Gaurasundara spoke a few words while smiling enchantedly. The Supreme Lord said, “O learned *brāhmaṇa*, please listen. In many past lives you were my servitor. You have always meditated on Me, therefore I came to show Myself to you. In My previous incarnation I appeared to you in the house of Mahārāja Nanda in this self-same form, but you have forgotten.

“In My previous incarnation (as Kṛṣṇa) I appeared in Gokula-dhāma, and in that lifetime you were making pilgrimages to holy sites with sincere spiritual fervor. By divine arrangement you came as a guest to Nanda Mahārāja's house and offered Me your foodstuff. In that encounter we also exchanged affections just as we are now. I ate your offering then as I have done tonight.

“You are My servant birth after birth, therefore I have appeared before you. No one other than My servants can see Me as I am. I am entrusting these confidential topics to you; do not reveal them to anybody. As long as My present incarnation remains on this earth, if you reveal My identity, I shall destroy you.

“I made my appearance where the congregational chanting of Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name has already begun, and I will initiate the propagation of that chanting throughout the world. I will freely distribute to every house the process of loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord which is so fervently desired even by Lord Brahmā and other elevated personalities.

“Remain with us for sometime to come and you will see many things. But you are strictly forbidden to describe them to anyone.”

The Supreme Lord Gaurasundara went back to His room after He showered His mercy on the *brāhmaṇa* by giving him all assurance. No one was aware of anything because of the deep slumber caused by the Lord's mystic potency.

The pious *brāhmaṇa* was filled with great exhilaration after seeing the extraordinary pastimes of the Lord. He smeared that transcendental rice over his entire body and then ate it while crying incessantly in ecstasy. He danced, sang, laughed and made loud roaring sounds while continuously shouting, “All glories to Lord Bāla-gopāla!”

The *brāhmaṇa*'s loud roaring awakened the residents of the house, so he quickly restrained himself from further outbursts of spiritual emotions and cleaned his body. The *brāhmaṇa* ate without worry and everyone was immensely pleased by this. The *brāhmaṇa* considered telling everyone what he knew. “Let them know that the Supreme Lord is amongst them; that way they can all be liberated,” he thought.

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead - who is desired by and offered prayers by Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā - has now

appeared in the family of a *brāhmaṇa*.” But the *brāhmaṇa* remembered the Lord’s instruction not to reveal anything to anybody. Afraid to disobey Him, he did not speak to anyone.

The *brāhmaṇa* knew the Lord’s real identity but others were unaware that the *brāhmaṇa* had this extraordinary knowledge. Happily the *brāhmaṇa* remained near the Lord. He begged alms from many different places but each day he returned to see the Supreme Lord.

Such wonderful pastimes of the Lord are revealed in the Vedic literatures; if one hears these topics he receives the complete shelter of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The *Ādi-khaṇḍa* is full of nectarean topics. It describes how the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, performed playful pastimes acting as though He were a mere child.

The Supreme Lord Gaurasundara is the crest jewel of the fourteen worlds and the Supreme Lord of the Vaikuṇṭha planets that lie beyond this material world. He is Lord Nārāyaṇa, the husband of Lakṣmīdevī. He is also Lord Rāmacandra, the husband of Sītādevī.

In Tretā-yuga Gaurasundara appeared as Lord Rāma with His younger brother Śrī Lakṣmaṇa (Lord Nityānanda). He performed various extraordinary pastimes and killed the great demon King Rāvaṇa.

In Dvāpara-yuga He appeared as Lord Kṛṣṇa with Saṅkarṣaṇa, Balarāma. Performing many wonderful pastimes, They alleviated the weight of sin in the world.

I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, offer this humble song at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Śrī Nityānandacandra Prabhu, who are my life and soul. The *Vedas* always glorify two Supreme Personalities Lord Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa) and Lord Ananta Śeṣa (Balarāma). Know for certain that these two Supreme Personalities have now appeared as Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda.

Chapter 6

Lord Gaurāṅga, like the child Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, performed His playful pastimes in various ways. Then the time for His formal education approached. Fixing an auspicious day and an auspicious moment, Śrī Mīśra, the most elevated *brāhmaṇa*, formally placed the writing chalk in the hand of his son.

After a few days the Śrī Cūḍākaraṇa ceremony (when young *brāhmaṇa* boys shave their heads leaving only a *śikhā*) was performed amidst all of Nimāi’s friends. The Karnabedha ceremony which marked the beginning of Nimāi’s Vedic studies was also observed.

Everyone was amazed that Nimāi could write down all the alphabet letters immediately on seeing them. Within two or three days Nimāi had learned all the conjunct letters and spent His time writing many different names of Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, like Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Murāri, Vanamālī, etc. He studied eagerly and wrote day and night.

Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of the Vaikuṇṭha planets, took the guise of the child Nimāi and studied with the other children in Nadia. Only the most fortunate souls could see His wonderful pastimes.

The living entities became enraptured just hearing Nimāi’s sweet recitation of the Bengali alphabet. Whenever or wherever Lord Gaurasundara performed His extraordinary pastimes, they remained incomprehensible.

If Nimāi could not catch the bird He saw flying in the sky, then He wept bitterly and rolled in the dust. Sometimes He cried for the moon and stars in the heaven and thrashed His arms and legs violently if He could not have them.

At such times everyone tried to pacify the child. Taking Him in their laps, Viśvambhara would refuse to be pacified and cried, “Give! Give!” The only remedy for Nimāi’s crying was chanting of the names of Lord Hari. Everyone would clap their hands and chant, “Hari, Hari”; only then would Nimāi forget His distress and become calm.

The frequent chanting of Lord Hari’s names for the pleasure of Nimāi turned Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra’s house into the transcendental abode of Vaikuṇṭha. One day, however, the Lord continued to cry in spite of the loud chanting of Hari’s name. Someone said, “My dear Nimāi, come and dance nicely. We are singing Lord Hari’s name.”

But Nimāi continued to cry, not listening to anyone. “Speak, dear child. Why are You crying so much?” they asked Him. “Dear child, tell us what You want. We will bring You whatever You like, simply stop Your crying.”

The Lord replied, “If you want to save My life, then quickly go to the house of the two *brāhmaṇas* Jagadīśa Paṇḍita and Hiraṇya Paṇḍita. I am very attracted to the home of these two pure devotees, and if I could eat their offerings I would

become healthy and calm and I could behave normally.”

Nimāi's request was impossible. What He wanted was neither practiced among men nor sanctioned in the scriptures. Mother Śacī felt distressed. Everyone smiled at His childish words and promised, “We will give You whatever You want child, but now stop crying.”

Jagadīśa Paṇḍita and Hiranya Paṇḍita were topmost Vaiṣṇavas and inseparable friends of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra. When they heard Nimāi's request they were filled with joy.

The two *brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇavas said, “This is a very extraordinary story. We have never seen such an intelligent child. How could He know that today was Ekādaśī and that a large variety of food had been offered to the Lord?

“Now we understand the child's exquisite beauty; Lord Gopāla Kṛṣṇa must be residing in Him. The Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa acts through this boy. Sitting in His heart, the Lord prompts Nimāi to speak in amazing ways.”

The two Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas* decided to give all the offerings to Nimāi, and they took everything to His house with great delight. “Eat these offerings we made to the Lord,” they told Nimāi. “Our desire to satisfy Lord Kṛṣṇa will thus be fulfilled.”

Only by Kṛṣṇa's mercy can one develop the spiritual intelligence to perform devotional service; other than the Lord's servant, no one possesses such intelligence. Only through devotional service can the Supreme Lord, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, be known as He is. The entire cosmic manifestation has emanated from the pores of the hair of His body.

The Lord's eternal servants, Jagadīśa and Hiranya Paṇḍita, saw to their full satisfaction how the Supreme Lord as a *brāhmaṇa* child performed His transcendently playful pastimes.

The Lord happily received all the offerings from His devotees and tasted a little of each preparation. Smiling with pleasure Lord Nimāi ate Kṛṣṇa's offering and all of His unusual whims were appeased. Everyone in the house sang, “Hari, Hari!” and the Lord ate and danced to the chanting of His own name.

Nimāi dropped some of the food on the ground and some got smeared on the other family members. In this way the Lord of the universe, the controller of the threefold miseries, performed His transcendental pastimes. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is described in all the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*, played like a child in mother Śacīdevī's courtyard.

As He grew, Nimāi became totally absorbed in the restless mood of a young boy with the other restless young sons of the Navadvīpa *brāhmaṇas*. No one could restrain Him and He wandered freely with His friends.

Upon meeting another young boy, Nimāi would poke fun at him and the boy would return the taunts until a quarrel broke out. Nimāi and His friends always won such quarrels because Nimāi was more powerful; the opponents inevitably went away defeated.

How enchanting Nimāi looked with His body covered in grayish dust and speckled with drops of black writing ink. After finishing their studies each day at noon, Nimāi and His friends went to bathe in the Ganges, amusing themselves all the while. Diving in the waters of the Ganges, Nimāi and His friends challenged one another by splashing.

Who can describe Nadia's opulence in those days? Hundreds of people gathered in one bathing place on the river. It was impossible to keep track of the number of different people who came to the bathing place. Renunciates in saffron robes, householders, peaceful gentlemen, children, etc., came there to bathe.

The Lord performed wonderful water sports with His friends, sometimes floating with the currents of the Ganges. Using the excuse of water sports, Nimāi splashed water from His divine lotus feet on whoever was near Him, thus showering His grace upon them.

People warned Nimāi not to be so mischievous, but He paid no heed. Nor could anyone catch Him as He was the swiftest swimmer. Nimāi forced everyone to bathe several times by contaminating them by touching them after their bath or sometimes by spitting on them.

Unable to catch Nimāi to rebuke Him, the enraged *brāhmaṇas* stormed off to His father. “Dear Miśra, my good friend,” one gentleman said. “Please listen well. I have come to complain about your son's misconduct. He does not allow us to perform our daily ablutions in the Ganges properly.” Another man complained, “He splashes water on us and disturbs our meditation.”

“Furthermore, Nimāi says, ‘Who are you meditating on? Just look at Me. In this Kali-yuga I am directly Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself.’”

They all came with different complaints. One man said, “He stole my *śiva-līṅga*.” Another said, “He ran away with my outer clothes.” Still another reported, “I prepared for Lord Viṣṇu’s worship and collected together different ingredients like flowers, *durvā* grass, sandalwood, and a seat for Lord Viṣṇu. When I went for my bath, Nimāi sat on Lord Viṣṇu’s seat, ate the offering, and threw the other ingredients away.

“Then Nimāi said, ‘Why do you feel so sad? The Lord of your worship has Himself eaten your offering.’”

The people continued to complain. One *brāhmaṇa* said, “I stepped into the water to recite my Gayatri mantra, and from nowhere Nimāi came under the water and pulled me away by my feet.” Another said, “My clothes and flowers are invariably taken away.” Yet another said, “He stole my *Bhagavad-gītā*.” Another exasperated voice added, “My son is very young. Nimāi puts water in his ears and makes him weep miserably.” Someone else complained, “He sneaks around to my back and climbs onto my shoulders shouting, ‘I am Maheśa!’ and then jumps down.” Another complained, “He sits on my seat of worship and eats all my offerings; then He performs worship of Lord Viṣṇu. He throws sand at anyone who has finished bathing and all the other restless, mischievous boys join Him. One of His worst tricks is that while the women and men are bathing He mixes up their clothes and when they want to dress they become quite disturbed.”

“Dear Jagannātha Mīśra, you are a generous and friendly gentleman, but I tell you your son Nimāi does this sort of mischief every single day. He remains in the water well past two in the afternoon teasing everyone that comes for their bath. How do you expect Him to maintain His health.

In the meantime many angry young girls from the neighborhood approached Śacīdevī. They arrested Śacīdevī with serious complaints, “Please hear from us, respected mother, about your son’s misdeeds. He steals our clothes and uses awfully abusive language with us. When we try to correct His speech, He splashes water on us and starts quarrelling. We bring fruits and flowers to the Ganges to follow our religious observances, but He scatters and spoils everything. He waits for us to finish our ablution and then throws sand on us. Your son Nimāi stealthily comes from behind us and suddenly shouts loudly into our ears, mortifying us.” Nimāi spat a mouthful of water right into my face, and threw these okada seeds in my hair. They do not come off so easily.” Yet another voice complained, “Nimāi says He wants to marry me.”

“Everyday He behaves in this manner; do you think your son is a prince?” they inquired. “Everything your son Nimāi does is exactly what Nanda Mahārāja’s son Gopāla Kṛṣṇa did a long time ago. We have heard stories of Kṛṣṇa. If we report all these complaints to our parents they will surely quarrel with you. You should immediately correct your young son; His conduct is certainly not well received in a town like Nadia.”

With a smiling face, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mother embraced each girl and spoke comforting words to them all. “When Nimāi returns home today I will beat Him and bind Him up so that He can never again go out and tyrannize anyone.” All of them respectfully took the dust from Śacīdevī’s feet on their heads and proceeded to the Ganges to take their baths again.

Regardless of how everyone suffered due to Nimāi’s mischief, each person felt great satisfaction in His presence. The supreme controller of everyone and everything, Śrī Gaurāṅga, knew that Śrī Mīśra was looking for Him in a state of rage.

Lord Śrī Gaurasundara continued to perform His wonderful water sports. Amongst all the boys, He was the most charming. The young maidens took pity on Nimāi and said, “Listen Viśvambhara, your angry father is coming in this direction. Right now escape.”

Śrī Mīśra searched for Nimāi playing amongst His friends while all the *brāhmaṇa* maidens ran away in fear.

Nimāi had already instructed His friends that when His father inquired about His whereabouts they should say, “Your son did not come for His bath with us. He went back home after class. In fact, we ourselves are waiting for Him.”

Nimāi returned to his house by another road, and Śrī Mīśra arrived at that bathing place on the Ganges.

Śrī Mīśra looked everywhere but could not find Nimāi amongst the group of boys.

“Where did Viśvambhara go?” inquired Jagannātha Mīśra angrily. The young boys replied, “Today He never came for His bath. He returned home on His usual road after class. We are all waiting for Him.

Śrī Mīśra continued to search for Nimāi, but unable to find Him, he stood fuming with rage.

Those *brāhmaṇas* who had earlier made complaints against Nimāi just for some fun, now came to Śrī Mīśra and said, “Viśvambhara ran home out of fear. We will accompany you home, lest you do anything to Him that will later be regretted.

“If Nimāi does this sort of mischief again then we ourselves will catch Him and bring Him to you.

“All those complaints we made about Nimāi at your residence were simply out of fun. Actually your good fortune is unmatched in all the three worlds.

“Nimāi is such a pleasing son that the members of His family are never touched by hunger, thirst, sorrow or other material sufferings.

“Your son is the supreme eternal Lord; you are truly very fortunate to be able to serve His lotus feet.

“We will always keep Viśvambhara’s memory in our hearts, even if He commits countless offenses.”

The personalities of Nadia were eternal devotees and associates of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. For this reason they were endowed with the superior intelligence required to render transcendental devotional service to the Lord.

The Supreme Lord performed various transcendental pastimes with His intimate servitors; a mundane person cannot understand such activities of the Lord.

Śrī Mīśra said, “Nimāi is a son to all of you. If you should take difference to his offense, then I am bound to you by oath. I beg your forgiveness.”

Śrī Mīśra warmly embraced everyone and returned home feeling greatly satisfied.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Viśvambhara had gone home by another road. Shining brightly like the moon, he carried beautiful books in His hands.

Blotches of writing ink on different parts of Nimāi’s body appeared like decorations on His golden complexion. It looked as though a sweet smelling golden *campaka* flower had attracted a swarm of black bumblebees.

Lord Nimāi called out, “Mother, give Me oil, I want to go for My bath.”

Mother Śacī’s heart gladdened. She could not detect any sign that Nimāi had taken a bath.

Giving Nimāi the oil, Śacīdevī thought, “What did the *brāhmaṇas* and the young maidens say about Nimāi?

“His whole body is spotted with ink blotches. He has the same clothes on that He wore to school.”

Jagannātha Mīśra arrived home at that moment and Viśvambhara climbed on his lap.

Śrī Mīśra lost all external, mundane perceptions in the Lord’s loving embrace; he bubbled over with happiness at the sight of his son.

Śrī Mīśra saw that Nimāi was covered with dust and there were no signs of His having taken a bath. Śrī Mīśra was truly amazed.

Śrī Mīśra said, “Viśvambhara, what sort of intelligent boy are you that you do not allow people to take their baths in peace?

“Why do you steal and disturb the arrangements people make for worshipping Lord Viṣṇu? You know who Lord Viṣṇu is, so why do you act like this without any fear?”

“But today I have not yet gone for my bath; all My friends have gone ahead of Me,” replied Nimāi.

“All these people are behaving improperly towards Me. Although I have not been near them, they falsely accuse Me of being at fault.

“If they continue to find fault and falsely accuse Me, then I will actually misbehave and create trouble for them.”

The Lord smiled and left for the Ganges where He met again with all His friends.

Nimāi’s friends embraced Him and laughed merrily when they heard His witty story. They all praised Him saying, “You were very clever, Nimāi. You nicely saved yourself from a good beating today.”

Nimāi was once again engrossed in water sports with His friends while back in the house mother Śacīdevī and Śrī Mīśra seriously considered certain points.

All the complaints brought against Nimāi were certainly not lies, yet there was no indication that Nimāi had taken a bath.

Everything was just as it should be. His body was covered with dust, He was dressed in the same clothes and they were dry. His hair was also dry and he had His books.

"I think our Viśvambhara is not an ordinary person," said Śrī Miśra. "Perhaps the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, by His internal potency, has appeared in our house as our son.

"Or perhaps Nimāi is some great saintly personality. I am at a loss to know." Śrī Miśra, the jewel-like *brāhmaṇa*, pondered the matter seriously.

Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and mother Śacīdevī felt so happy to see their son that all their deliberations vanished. Their hearts filled with tender affection for Nimāi and nothing else mattered to them.

Both of them felt their son's absence intensely. Nimāi's two hours of study seemed like two yugas to His parents.

If the *Vedas* were to describe the great fortunes of mother Śacīdevī and Śrī Miśra in countless variety of ways and with innumerable mouths, that fortune would still remain inconceivable.

I offer countless obeisances at the lotus feet of mother Śacīdevī and Śrī Miśra who received the Supreme Lord and controller of the limitless cosmic manifestation as their son.

The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Lord Viśvambhara, performed wonderful pastimes in a pleasing manner. No one could perceive these transcendental activities because of the influence of the Supreme Lord's spiritual energy.

I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, offer this humble song at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Śrī Nityānanda Candra Prabhu, who are my life and soul.

Chapter 7

All glories to Lord Gauracandra who is the Supreme Lord of lords! All glories to Śrī Viśvambhara and His dearest devotees! All glories to the illustrious son of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and mother Śacīdevī! He is the life and soul of all surrendered devotees. O Lord Viśvambhara, please glance mercifully upon us and deliver us all.

Using the pretext of mirthful childish pastimes, Lord Gaurasundara expanded His unlimited spiritual forms and His transcendental devotional service in Navadvīpa-dhāma.

The restless Nimāi, tirelessly created mischief with everyone. Though His mother tried to correct Him with sweet advice, He paid not the slightest attention.

In the presence of good instruction He created twice as much mischief. Whatever He could reach in the house, He would gleefully smash.

Out of apprehension, the parents at last refrained from giving any further instructions. The unrestrained Nimāi played at will, displaying His wonderful pastimes.

The descriptions of Nimāi in *Ādi-khaṇḍa* are like nectar to the ears. The wonderful childhood pastimes of the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa are described there.

The Lord feared no one - not His father nor mother. But in the presence of His elder brother Viśvarūpa, He became soft and humble.

Śrī Viśvarūpa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was the treasure house of all divine qualities and a renunciate from His very birth.

Viśvarūpa explained that the essence of all scriptures was the path of devotional service to the Supreme Lord. No one has ever had the power to refute His explanations.

He was totally absorbed in Lord Kṛṣṇa and by engaging His hearing, speech, mind and all other senses in the service of the Lord, He grew disinterested in anything else.

While contemplating Nimāi's unusual behavior, Viśvarūpa was filled with wonder.

"This young boy is not an ordinary mundane personality. His beautiful form and extraordinary behavior makes me think He is Lord Bāla-gopāla.

"I have seen Him perform continuous superhuman activities, but I personally believe it is actually the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa who enacts these pastimes in the body of this child."

The magnanimous Viśvarūpa pondered this matter for some time but did not reveal His realization to anyone, preferring to remain engrossed in His own service.

Viśvarūpa was always found in the association of pure devotees discussing topics about Kṛṣṇa, engaging in Kṛṣṇa's service or worshipping the Lord in devotion.

People of the world have always been mad after mundane life, wealth, children, education, etc. When the materialistic people of Nadia would see the Vaiṣṇava—who are naturally disgusted with material life—they would taunt them.

The materialists composed verses and recited them whenever they saw a Vaiṣṇava. "The renounced *sannyāsīs*, the chaste ladies and the yogis performing austerity will all have to die. Then why their futile endeavor?"

"By our standard a fortunate person has the means to ride on a horse or be carried on a palanquin with ten to twenty persons running in front and behind him.

"You drench yourselves with tears of spiritual emotions while singing to your Lord, yet we do not see any sign of your poverty and misery being alleviated.

"Your Lord will surely become angry if you continue to call out "Hari! Hari!" so loudly and so often!"

The Lord's pure devotees felt sorry for the atheistic people who were devoid of devotion and therefore spoke in an offensive manner.

In every direction the devotees saw people burning in the fire of material existence. No where could they hear the *kīrtana* of Lord Hari's names.

Śrī Viśvarūpa in particular felt great anguish over the absence of *kīrtana* of the name of His beloved Kṛṣṇacandra.

If ever *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* discourses were held, the speaker could never explain the privileges of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa which was the real essence of those scriptures.

The teachers destroyed themselves by perverting the meaning of the scriptures and speculating on the conclusion. Devotional service is unknown to such a materialistic society.

Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu and the other Vaiṣṇavas were overcome with pity and sorrow for the unfortunate living entities who were afflicted by perverted conceptions of life.

Śrī Viśvarūpa was depressed by the environment and said to Himself, "I do not like to see the sinful faces of the people of this materialistic society. I will go live in the forest."

Each day at dawn, after a bath in the Ganges, Śrī Viśvarūpa would visit the house of Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu.

Śrī Ācārya Prabhu used to roar in delight when He heard Śrī Viśvarūpa explain that the essence of all scriptures was the process of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

He would leave aside His regular worship just to hear Śrī Viśvarūpa's discourses, and the assembled Vaiṣṇavas would exclaim, "Hari! Hari!" in appreciation of the discussion.

The devotees roared like lions in the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and felt the heavy burden of gloom lift from their hearts.

On such days no one wanted to leave Viśvarūpa's association, nor could He separate Himself from the devotees.

One day when mother Śacī had completed her cooking she told Śrī Viśvambhara to bring His elder brother home to eat.

Bearing that instruction Lord Viśvambhara ran to Śrī Advaita Ācārya's residence to retrieve His brother.

At the Ācārya's house He saw the assembly of Vaiṣṇavas discussing the most auspicious topics of Kṛṣṇa līlā.

Śrī Gaurasundara, who is Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, felt satisfied to hear the devotees glorify Him, and He captivated them with His glances.

Every line of the Lord's transcendental form seemed to defy the extremities of delicate beauty; the radiance of millions upon millions of moons lost their lustre when compared to the effulgence of even one of the Lord's finger nails.

Bare-chested and covered with dust, Viśvambhara smiled and addressed His elder brother, "Brother, come to eat, mother is calling you." He caught hold of Viśvarūpa's dhoti and together they walked home.

Śrī Viśvambhara's enchanting beauty held the devotees in a trance. They stared at Him in wonder, unable to move. The devotees entered into meditation, experiencing the ecstasy of love of Godhead. Even the discussions on Kṛṣṇa could not be continued.

The materialistic person is unable to comprehend the Lord's transcendental activities of attracting and alluring the hearts of His devotees.

This mystery was revealed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* where the matchless message of Śukadeva Gosvāmī was given to Mahārāja Parīkṣit.

In a previous millennium, this Śrī Gaurasundara appeared in Gokula as Kṛṣṇa. He roamed about in different houses enacting His childhood pastimes in the company of other children.

The cowherd ladies of Gokula were more fond of baby Kṛṣṇa than of their own sons.

Although the *gopīs* did not understand that Lord Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Lord, they naturally felt more affection for Him than for their own sons.

King Parīkṣit was amazed by Śukadeva Gosvāmī's unequivocal answers to his questions and he listened in rapt ecstasy.

"O Śukadeva Gosvāmī, what you have revealed to me has never before been heard in the entire universe. It is certainly the most extraordinary topic. Just see how they loved Kṛṣṇa, the child of another woman, more than their own sons."

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī replied, "O King Parīkṣit, the Supreme Personality is perceived as the Supersoul existing in the hearts of every living entity. He is the most beloved Lord of the heart. When the soul leaves the body of the son, wife, friend or relative, the family members have the body taken away from the house in a matter of moments.

"Therefore, it is the Supersoul which is the life of every living entity. That Supersoul is none other than Śrī Nanda-nandana, Kṛṣṇa. Because of the inherent characteristics of the Supersoul, Lord Kṛṣṇa is able to attract the affection of the *gopīs*. This fact is applicable only to the devotees, for a nondevotee can never feel affection for the Lord.

"Lord Kṛṣṇa resided within the heart of Kāṁsa and other demons, so why were they envious and inimical towards Him? The reason was that these demons had committed grievous offenses in their previous lives.

"Everyone agrees that the sweetness of sugar is easily discernible; only a diseased person will find its taste bitter. The tongue is diseased; it is not the fault of the sugar. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Caitanya is the sweetest of all."

Everyone saw the Lord in Navadvīpa, yet no one besides the devotees recognized Him. Wherever He wandered in Navadvīpa, Nīmāi captivated the hearts of the devotees while performing His wonderful pastimes.

On the day that Viśvambhara came to call His brother home, He enchanted the hearts of the Vaiṣṇava's. The magnanimous Advaita Mahāśaya thought, "This young boy is certainly not an ordinary mundane personality. I cannot determine what substance this boy is made of," said Advaita to the assembled devotees. The devotees simultaneously glorified His extraordinary beauty.

Śrī Viśvarūpa returned home briefly and then went straight back to Śrī Advaita Ācārya's house. Enjoyments of material life had no attraction for Śrī Viśvarūpa. He experienced joy only in singing the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In His own house, Śrī Viśvarūpa spent all His time in the *viṣṇu-grha*, a room set aside for *śālagrāma-śila*. He was unfamiliar with the ways of familial dealing.

His parents were eager to have Him married, but when He heard their plans He grew morose. He was consumed by only one thought, "I will leave My family and go to the forest."

The Supreme Lord alone is able to know His own inner inclinations, thus Śrī Viśvarūpa, the Supreme Lord, took the renounced order of *sannyāsa* within a few days of that time.

With the name Śrī Śaṅkarāṇya which would become famous throughout the universe, that foremost Vaiṣṇava set out

on the eternal path.

Śrī Viśvarūpa's disappearance left the hearts of mother Śacī and Śrī Miśra in intense grief. With the other family members and friends, the parents wailed in lamentation. Śrī Viśvambhara was unable to bear the separation of His brother and He fell unconscious. I am unable to depict the scene of intense grief and lamentation which struck the house of Śrī Miśra.

Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu and all the other devotees shed profuse tears in the unbearable separation from Śrī Viśvarūpa. People from all classes of Nadia society were moved with grief when they heard the news of the boy's *sannyāsa*.

Their hearts broken with sorrow, mother Śacī and Śrī Miśra continuously called out, "Viśvarūpa, Viśvarūpa."

Śrī Jagannātha was overwhelmed with the throbbing pains of separation from his son, and his friends and relatives tried to console him, "Dear Miśra, please compose yourself. Do not feel sad; this magnanimous personality has delivered your entire family.

"If any member in the family takes the *sannyāsa* order of life, then innumerable generations become eligible to live in the transcendental abode of Vaikuṇṭha. The course of action your son adopted is certainly the perfection of all education. We should express our great happiness for you," they said as they held the feet and hands of the afflicted parents.

"Think about Viśvambhara. He is the glory of your family. This son of yours will be the scion of the entire family line. He will eliminate all your sufferings. What is the need to have countless millions of sons when you have a son like this one?"

Friends and relatives tried to make Śrī Miśra understand his fortunate position. They offered good counsel but failed to mitigate his misery.

Miśra Mahāśaya tried to control his emotion, but as soon as he remembered the wonderful qualities of Śrī Viśvarūpa, he again lost himself in bereavement. "I could never know for certain whether this son would stay with me or not," said Śrī Miśra. "The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa gave me the child and He Himself took Him back. Whatever Lord Kṛṣṇa desires must certainly occur.

"The infinitesimal living entities possess but insignificant power over life's phenomena. I therefore surrender my body, senses and everything to you Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme omnipotent Lord. You are my shelter."

Exerting true wisdom and established in knowledge of the absolute, Miśra Mahāśaya gradually composed his disturbed mind.

In this way Śrī Viśvarūpa enacted the pastime of leaving His house and accepting *sannyāsa*. He is the nondifferent, direct expansion of Lord Nityānanda, the original Saṅkarṣaṇa.

Whoever hears the pastime of Śrī Viśvarūpa accepting the *sannyāsa* order of life is freed from the noose of karma and attains devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The devotees experienced mixed feelings over Śrī Viśvarūpa's *sannyāsa*. They were caught between elation and depression.

"Lord Kṛṣṇa has taken from us the only saintly Vaiṣṇava association we had. With Śrī Viśvarūpa we discussed topics of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but now He is gone.

"We should also leave everything and go to the forest where we no longer have to see the faces of this sinful society. The entire population is engrossed in reprobate activities. How long is one supposed to tolerate insults inflicted by the vile words of atheists?"

"Nowhere is the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa uttered. The entire world is inviting its doom, drowning itself in illusory, sense gratifying activities. And when the unequivocal process of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is explained to the atheists, they reject it and ridicule us.

"What happiness have you gained by worshiping Kṛṣṇa?" they demand. 'You live in an improvised condition, you beg even for your food, and your misery continuously increases'."

The devotees uttered long sighs and agreed that they were no longer capable of living in that degraded society. They wanted to go off to the forest.

Advaita Mahāśaya consoled each devotee saying, "You will certainly meet with the highest bliss. I feel a great exhilaration in My heart as though Lord Kṛṣṇacandra has made His divine appearance. Go and happily sing Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name. In a few days you will see our beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa right here.

“Lord Kṛṣṇa will perform many pleasurable pastimes assisted by all of you. Only then will I, Advaita, become an unalloyed servitor of Lord Kṛṣṇa. That rare mercy which is seldom experienced by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī or Prahlaḍa Mahārāja will be received by all of you.”

Inspired by the nectarean words of Śrīla Advaita Ācārya Prabhu the devotees sang the name of Hari jubilantly. As the devotees roared with the repetition of Lord Hari's name, their hearts became filled with happiness.

Lord Gaurasundara was busy playing with His friends when the sound of Lord Hari's name reached His house. When he arrived in the midst of the devotees, they inquired, “What brings you here dear child?” And Nimāi replied, “Why did you call for Me?”

With His troupe of young friends Nimāi then took off at a run. No one could grasp Lord Viśvambhara's real identity due to the influence of His transcendental illusory potency.

From the day Śrī Viśvarūpa left the house to become a *sannyāsī*, Lord Viśvambhara minimized His restless and mischievous behavior. Nimāi stayed by the side of His mother and father to mitigate their grief in separation from Viśvarūpa.

He restrained Himself from playing and while studying He would not leave His books for a moment.

After studying any aphorism once, Nimāi mastered it so well that when questioned on it, He bettered everyone else.

Because of Nimāi's extraordinary intelligence, people praised His parents saying, “Śrī Miśra and Śacīmātā are truly blessed.”

And to Jagannātha Miśra they said, “Dear Miśra, you are truly successful to have such an illustrious son. There is not another child in all the three worlds to match Nimāi's superior wisdom. He will excel even Śrī Bṛhaspati in erudition. He can present His own spontaneous explanations on any point, but no one is able to defeat His deceptive arguments.”

Mother Śacī was happy to hear about her son's wonderful attributes, but Śrī Miśra felt morose once again. “This son of ours will never remain involved in household life,” Śrī Miśra told Śacīmātā.

“Viśvarūpa studied the scriptures just as Nimāi is doing now. He understood that there isn't a shred of reality in material existence. Knowing the essence of all scriptures, our wise Viśvarūpa rejected transient material life and went away. If Nimāi also learns all the scriptures He will certainly follow the same path.

“Nimāi is all that is left to us; He is our very life. If we lose Him we will certainly leave our bodies. Therefore He should no longer study. He can be an illiterate child and remain in the house.”

Mother Śacī argued, “How will He maintain His life if He remains illiterate? Moreover no one will give their daughter in marriage to an illiterate person.”

But Śrī Miśra replied, “Surely you must be the naive daughter of *abrāhmaṇa*; you should know that Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is everyone's protector, has created everything. He will give and take whatever is required.

“The entire material creation is maintained by the Lord of the universe, Kṛṣṇa. Who has misinformed you that mere materialistic knowledge can help maintain anything? Lord Kṛṣṇa is in complete control of everything; He even designs the results of the matching of brides and grooms. Both the learned groom as well as the illiterate groom are given brides.

“Lord Kṛṣṇa is omnipotent and He maintains everyone. Whatever you see as lineage or formal education, etc., are simply semblances of reality. Why don't you take me as an example standing right here in front of you? I possess sufficient learning, yet there is insufficient food in my house?

“There are persons who cannot even pronounce the alphabets properly, yet see for yourself the thousands of scholars who crowd their doorsteps. Hence, it is not formal education or other material qualifications that maintain us, rather it is Lord Kṛṣṇa who keeps and maintains everyone.

anāyāsena maraṇam vinā dainyaṇa jīvanam
anārādhita govinda-caraṇasya katham bhavet

“When one has never worshiped the lotus feet of Lord Govinda, how is it possible for Him to live free of distress and die in peace?”

“By rendering devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa we live free of poverty, and we embrace death in a happy state. Without Kṛṣṇa's mercy one cannot be free of distress either by high education, good birth, or unlimited wealth.

“A person may possess sufficient learning, high birth and enormous wealth but without the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa he can

never be delivered from the misery of material life. A person may live amidst fine sense enjoyment and opulence, but Lord Kṛṣṇa may also allot him some incurable disease, causing him much misery. Such a person cannot really revel in sense pleasure. He burns with frustration, and I would say he is more miserable than a penniless derelict.

“Take note from this: All is but naught. In spite of his having great material wealth, one’s future is determined entirely by Lord Kṛṣṇa’s desire. Do not bother yourself thinking about your son’s maintenance. I can assure you that Lord Kṛṣṇa will look after Him. As long as there remains life in my body, Nimāi will not feel even the slightest sign of suffering. We all have Lord Kṛṣṇa as our only shelter. Why should you worry when you are a good mother and a chaste and dedicated wife? I impress upon you that there is no need for Nimāi’s studies. Let my son remain in the house as an illiterate.”

Having made his decision, Śrī Mīśra called his son and announced, “Nimāi, I promise You that from today You are relieved of all studies. You may do as you like. Whatever You desire, my son, I am ready to provide. Just stay in the house and be fully satisfied.”

Śrī Mīśra left to attend to other business and the Supreme Lord Viśvambhara could understand that His studies had been discontinued. As the spring of eternal religious principles, Śrī Gaurāṅga was obedient to His father’s instruction and did not attend school.

But the Lord was disappointed and once again took to His restless, impetuous ways with other young boys His age. Both in His own house and in the neighbor’s houses Nimāi smashed or squandered away whatever he found within reach. Even after dark Nimāi remained away from home. The whole evening He performed various pastimes with the other young boys.

Covering themselves with a blanket so they looked like a bull, Nimāi and another friend moved around in a most amusing manner. During the day they had seen a small backyard banana plantation, and at night dressed in their bull costume, they plundered the banana trees. The owner of the house raised a loud alarm when he saw the bull in his garden, but by the time a crowd was awake to remedy the situation, Nimāi and His friends had already escaped.

Sometimes they tied the neighbor’s doors from the outside so that they could not leave the house to use the outdoor lavatory. When the people inside the house made a commotion, Nimāi would run off.

Day and night the Lord of Vaiṣṇava and His friends performed endless pranks. There was no limit to Lord Viśvambhara’s mischievous deed, yet Śrī Mīśra never corrected Him.

One day Śrī Mīśra was called away on some duty, and Nimāi felt angry because He was not allowed to study. The pots used for cooking Lord Viṣṇu’s offerings were kept outside in a pile for cleaning. Nimāi decided to sit on top of those contaminated pots.

Kindly listen with undivided attention to this confidential incident. Devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is perfected by sincerely hearing this story.

Sitting on the pile of contaminated pots as if it was a royal throne, Śrī Gaurasundara glanced around with a smile playing on His lips. His golden complexion was spotted by the black soot from the contaminated pots. He looked like a golden doll smeared by dark sweet-smelling sandalwood and *aguru* paste.

Several friends went to mother Śacī and informed her, “Nimāi is sitting on top of the contaminated pots.”

Mother Śacī was shocked when she saw Him. “My dear child, this is not a proper place to sit,” she scolded. “Can You not judge between clean and unclean things after all these years? Don’t You know that one must bathe after touching unclean pots?”

Lord Nimāi retorted, “You do not allow Me to study, how do you expect Me to know the differences between clean and unclean? I am just an illiterate *brāhmaṇa*.

“I am an uneducated fool with no idea of what is clean or unclean. I see oneness in everything; my vision is nondual.”

After His speech Nimāi smiled from atop His seat of unclean pots. At that moment He manifested the mood of Lord Dattatreya, Kṛṣṇa’s incarnation as the son of Atri.

His mother replied, “Now that You have sat in a dirty place, how are You going to clean Yourself?”

But Lord Viśvambhara replied, “Mother, you have an extremely childlike mentality. I am never situated in a contaminated place. Wherever I am, that place becomes most sanctified. Gaṅgādevī and all other places of pilgrimage naturally reside there. Clean and unclean are imaginary. It is a conditioned way of thinking. What can be the fault of the creator or His creation?

“Let us assume something is contaminated according to social etiquettes and Vedic ritualistic opinions. If I, the Supreme Absolute purity, touch it, then what contamination can remain? In reality, these pots are not in the least contaminated because you have cooked for Lord Viṣṇu in them. Lord Viṣṇu's cooking utensils can never be contaminated. On the contrary they can purify everything and every place simply by their touch. Similarly, I do not reside in a degraded place nor on a materialistic plane; everyone is purified by My contact.”

After speaking the absolute nondual truth just as a child would speak on ordinary topics, Nimāi smiled. By the influence of His illusory potency, no one could fathom His words. Nevertheless they all smiled condescendingly at small Nimāi's speech while Śacīmātā insisted He come for a bath.

Nimāi would not leave the pots so Śacīmātā coaxed, “Come quickly before Your father comes home and learns about all of this.”

But Nimāi was adamant. “If you do not permit Me to study, then I will not move from this spot. I am telling you clearly.”

The neighbors turned to Nimāi's mother and inquired, “Why do you forbid Nimāi to continue His education? Many persons tutor their sons with painstaking care. How fortunate for you that this young boy desires to study of His own accord. Which of your enemies has advised you to keep your son in the house as an illiterate fool?”

“Nimāi is not to be blamed in the least for this situation.” Turning to Nimāi they said, “Come child, if from today You are not allowed to study then You should continue Your work of destruction properly.”

Sitting atop the pots, Nimāi smiled sweetly and the fortunate souls who saw Him floated in an ocean of absolute bliss. The mother herself had to bring the child down. All the while Lord Gauracandra, looking like a beautiful blue sapphire, continued to smile sweetly.

Nimāi spoke the nondual absolute truth in the mood of His previous incarnation Lord Dattatreya, but none could grasp the import due to the influence of Lord Viṣṇu's illusory potency.

The pious mother Śacī took Nimāi for a bath and meanwhile Śrī Miśra returned. Mother Śacī told the entire story to Śrī Miśra and lamented, “Our son is sorry that He is not allowed to study.”

Some neighbor's petitioned Nimāi's father, “Dear Miśra, we know you are a high-minded soul. On whose advice did you forbid your son to continue His education?”

“Whatever Lord Kṛṣṇa desires will always come true, therefore discard all your worries and allow your son to study without anxiety.

You are truly fortunate that your son wants to learn of His own volition. Therefore choose an auspicious day, initiate your son with the sacred *brāhmaṇa*'s thread and begin His studies again properly.

Śrī Miśra replied, “You are all my dearest friends; whatever you decide I must consent to.”

Young Nimāi's activities were all superhuman and although everyone saw them with utter amazement, they could never understand their deep mystery.

Occasionally pious and fortunate people came to visit Śrī Miśra and informed him of the superhuman qualities of his child.

“This child must never be considered an ordinary boy,” they would advise. “Keep Him close to your heart with utmost care.”

The supreme actor of Vaikuṇṭha, Nimāi, frolicked mischievously in His own courtyard.

Then with His father's permission, Śrī Caitanya joyfully resumed His studies.

Chapter 8

All glories to Śrī Gauracandra who is an ocean of mercy! All glories to the radiant moon who has risen in the house of Śrī Miśra and Śacidevī! All glories to the life and soul of Lord Nityānanda! All glories to the treasure house of congregational chanting, the religion of this age! All glories to Lord Gaurāṅga, His devotees and His associates! Just by hearing the pastimes of Lord Caitanya, devotional service to the Supreme Lord is immediately achieved.

While Lord Caitanya lived in Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra's house, His true identity was wrapped in complete secrecy and no one could recognize Him. As many games as there are for boys in this world, young Nimāi played them all. Who knows the names of all these games? The wonderful pastimes of Lord Caitanya have been revealed in all the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*; within a short time all fortunate and pious souls will hear about them.

Totally absorbed in the mood of a child, Lord Gaurāṅga passed many years. At last the time arrived for Him to accept the sacred *brāhmaṇa*'s thread. When Śrī Mīśra decided to initiate his son with the sacred *brāhmaṇa*'s thread, he called his friends to his house for the occasion. They arrived in great delight and took up different duties to assist with the ceremony.

The ladies ululated in glorification and sang about the extraordinary qualities of Lord Kṛṣṇa, while the musicians played on different instruments—*mṛdaṅgas*, *sāṇāi*, and flute. The *brāhmaṇas* chanted Vedic hymns, and the orators offered verses in glorification. Śacīdevī's house was flooded with great joy—as if joy personified had made its appearance there.

At the time Lord Gaurasundara was to accept the sacred thread, all the planets were favorably positioned. The month, the day, and the moment were all auspicious when Gaurāṅga, Lord Hari, accepted the sacred thread.

The sacred thread adorning the beautiful form of the Lord was an enchanting sight; certainly Ananta Śeṣa must have assumed a thread form to circle the body of His beloved Lord.

The Supreme Lord Gauracandra then manifest His Vāmana form. Whoever saw that wonderful pastime felt unbounded joy. People saw a wonderful spiritual aura emanating from the Lord, and they immediately discarded their anthropomorphic vision. With a stick in His hand and a cloth bag hanging from His shoulder, Śrī Gaurasundara went begging from the houses of His devotees.

Each man according to his ability placed alms in Nimāi's bag and felt great satisfaction. The ladies also smiled with pleasure as they dropped their alms in His bag. Śrī Sarasvatīdevī, Śrī Pārvatīdevī, and the chaste and dedicated wives of other great sages appeared on the scene. Taking the position of *brāhmaṇas*' wives, they gave alms to the beautiful *brāhmaṇa* boy Nimāi. Seeing Nimāi's radiant Vāmana form, everyone smiled with satisfaction and gave Him alms.

He enacted the transcendental pastimes of Lord Vāmana simply for the redemption of all conditioned souls. All glories to Lord Gauracandra's beautiful form! Please place those lotus feet in the throne of my heart. Anyone who hears the narration of Lord Viśvambhara accepting the sacred thread attains the supreme shelter of Śrī Caitanyacandra's lotus feet.

Nimāi, the Supreme Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, performed various other pastimes while residing in the house of Śacīmātā. These pastimes seem obscure in the *Vedas*. Nimāi already understood the essence of all the scriptures even while studying at home, but still He desired to study in the company of others.

Śrī Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita, a resident of Navadvīpa, was a crown jewel amongst teachers. He was none other than Sandipani Muni (the teacher of Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa). He was extremely knowledgeable in grammar, and Nimāi expressed a strong desire to study under him.

Śrī Mīśra correctly interpreted his son's indications and went with Him to the house of the learned *brāhmaṇa*, Śrī Gaṅgādāsa. Śrī Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita stood up respectfully on seeing Śrī Mīśra and went forward to meet him. After embracing him warmly, Śrī Gaṅgādāsa offered him a seat.

"I give my son to you," said Śrī Mīśra. "Please let Him read and hear from you and personally teach Him everything."

Śrī Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita replied, "I feel immensely fortunate because of this offer. I will teach Him to the best of my ability."

Śrī Gaṅgādāsa was extremely pleased to have Nimāi as a student and kept Him always by his side like a son. Simply by hearing Śrī Gaṅgādāsa's explanations only once, Nimāi was able to grasp their meaning. He could refute His teachers' explanations and then re-establish those same arguments.

Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita had hundreds of students but none could engage in debate with Nimāi. The teacher was extremely pleased with Nimāi's extraordinary intelligence, and declared Him to be the best student. In the presence of Nimāi's arguments the other students in the school danced like puppets.

Amongst Nimāi's associates, Śrī Murāri Gupta, Śrī Kamalākānta, Śrī Kṛṣṇānanda, and others like them were prominent. Nimāi defeated everyone by posing tricky arguments on sophism. The older students, considering Him to be young, simply smiled without offering any rebuttals.

Each day after completing His studies, Nimāi went with the boys His own age to bathe in the Ganges. There were countless other students in Navadvīpa who also went to bathe in the Ganges after their classes each day at noon.

There were many teachers in Navadvīpa and each had many students. The students of one teacher would continuously challenge students of other teachers. Although Nīmāi was only in His early boyhood, He had a mischievous nature and continually started quarrels with other students.

One student might say, “What intelligence does your teacher have?” Another would say, “Look whose student I am.” In this way they would begin by being a little abusive towards each other. Then they would splash water at each other and end up throwing sand.

Fights would break out and boys would beat whoever they could catch. Someone might throw mud on another and then jump on him and beat him as well.

After falsely swearing in the name of the King, some boys would catch other boys and after beating them soundly, swim to safety on the other side of the Ganges.

The water of the Ganges became muddy by the wild wrestling and scuffling of the students. The women could not fill their water containers, nor could the *brāhmaṇas* and other respectable people take a bath.

Displaying His extremely restless nature, Viśvambhara Rāya went from one bathing *ghāṭa* to another, finding in each place an audience of students—an arena in which to debate and dispute. At one *ghāṭa* He played the stick game with friends.

The advanced students banded together and challenged, “Why do You always quarrel with everyone? Let us see how intelligent You are. Let us hear You give the purport to the explanation of the astrological treatise in the almanac.”

Nīmāi said, “That is very good indeed. I accept your challenge. Whoever wants can question Me.”

One irritated student said, “Why are You so conceited?” But Nīmāi replied, “You may question Me as you like.”

The student said, “Explain the laws of verbal roots.” Nīmāi replied, “I shall explain them but you must listen attentively.”

Nīmāi, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was the source of all potencies. Naturally His explanations of the grammatical rules were very authorized.

The challenging student praised Nīmāi for His explanation. Then Nīmāi said, “But now hear Me refute My own arguments.”

Nīmāi picked out the discrepancies in His own explanations, and said, “Who amongst you has the power to establish any point over and above My arguments?”

The students were all amazed by Nīmāi’s original arguments as well as the arguments He used to defeat Himself, so no one dared say anything. “Alright,” He said, “I shall have to establish the new argument which defeats the other two.”

Śrī Gauracandra gave His new explanation which was as beautiful and poetic as the first two. The students were all truly impressed and embraced Nīmāi sincerely.

The students said, “Go home today, but come back tomorrow and we will have fresh questions for You.”

Playing the part of a student enrapt in learning, Nīmāi, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, frolicked in the water of the Jahnavī (Ganges).

Nīmāi’s erudition was so profound that in the presence of the other students of Navadvīpa, He looked like Bṛhaspati himself surrounded by his disciples.

While performing their daily water sports, Nīmāi and His friends occasionally swam across the river to the far bank.

Since the time that Lord Kṛṣṇa sported in the water of the Yamunā River, the Ganges had nursed an intense desire to have that same good fortune.

Although the Ganges is worshiped by the prayers of such great personalities as Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, she nevertheless aspired to achieve the elevated position of the Yamunā.

The Supreme Lord Gaurasundara was a desire tree which continuously fulfilled that longing of Jahnavī (Ganges).

After a day of sports and fun, Śrī Gaurasundara returned home, worshiped Lord Viṣṇu in the prescribed manner, offered water to the *tulasī* plant, and sat down to eat.

Immediately after His meal Nimāi would take His books and search for a quiet place to study.

In that lonely place the gem of all Lords absorbed Himself in study, making annotations on different aphorisms.

Seeing his son's studious mood, Śrī Mīśra floated on the waves of happiness but never revealed his pleasure to anyone.

In intense parental devotion he revelled in the unparalleled beauty of his son, and in that mood he gained liberation.

But Śrī Mīśra considered the happiness of liberation to be quite insignificant. For the pure devotee there is no joy from either liberation or gross and subtle sense gratification.

I offer my countless obeisances at the feet of Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra whose son is the Supreme Lord of the unlimited material creation.

Śrī Mīśra continually floated in an ocean of bliss simply by seeing his charming son, Nimāi.

Cupid's beauty bows in defeat before the Lord's blossoming freshness. His every exquisite limb exudes incomparable charm.

In parental anxiety Śrī Mīśra once thought, "I hope no witch or spirit ever casts a spell on Nimāi."

Imagining the worst, he immediately prayed that Lord Kṛṣṇa would always give his son shelter. Nimāi overheard his father's prayers and smiled to Himself.

Śrī Mīśra prayed, "O Lord Kṛṣṇa, You are the protector of all. Please look upon my son graciously. Impediments of any sort never appear in the life of any person who remembers Your lotus feet, my Lord. Those sinful places where you are not remembered become infested with witches, ghosts, and evil spirits. O Lord, I am Your servant, so whatever is mine is automatically Yours. Kindly receive them within Your shelter. I therefore pray that no obstacles or difficulties will befall my son at anytime."

Śrī Mīśra continued to pray with unflinching faith. Lifting both his hands, he begged for the Lord's mercy. One day by divine arrangement Śrī Mīśra had a dream which caused him both intense delight and extreme grief.

He bowed down on the ground and prayed, "O Lord Govinda, allow Nimāi to remain in my house. O Lord Kṛṣṇa, this is the only benediction I beg of You; let Nimāi be a householder and live at home."

In surprise mother Śacī inquired, "Why have you all of the sudden prayed for benedictions from the Lord?"

"Today I had a dream," answered Śrī Mīśra. "In the dream I saw that Nimāi had shaved off His *śikhā*. Dressed in indescribably beautiful *sannyāsī* robes, He simultaneously laughed, danced, wept, and chanted Kṛṣṇa's name. Advaita Ācārya Prabhu and all the other devotees encircled Nimāi and joined in the chanting.

I saw Nimāi sit on Ananta Śeṣa, and place His foot on everyone's head. Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Śrī Ananta Śeṣa chanted, "Jaya Śacīnandana!"

"Although everyone around was jubilantly chanting praises, I alone stood silent in fear. In a flash I saw Nimāi, followed by millions and millions of people, roaming from town to town, dancing. Countless millions followed Him chanting Lord Hari's name in unison. That sound touched the very coverings of the material universe."

"While I listened to the glorification of Nimāi flowing from every direction, I saw devotees who followed Him to Nilācala, Pūrī. This dream caused me such anxiety! I am afraid our son will become disgusted with household affairs and leave home as a *sannyāsī*."

"What you saw was just a dream," pacified mother Śacī. "O learned husband, do not worry. Nimāi won't leave us. Nimāi knows nothing but His books and thinks that learning is all in all."

Because of their parental affection, those two extremely noble souls continued to discuss topics related to their son's future.

However, after a few days Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra disappeared from this mortal world in his pure form. Nimāi wept bitterly over His father's disappearance, as had Lord Rāmacandra when His father King Daśaratha left his body. Mother Śacī survived only because of Nimāi's irresistible attractiveness. As it deepens my grief to discuss this subject, I have described the incidents very briefly.

Nimāi stayed close to His bereaved mother and concealed His own grief well. Mother Śacī cared for her fatherless son without a thought of any other work. If mother Śacī lost sight of Nimāi for a moment she swooned and both eyes lost their vision.

Nimāi also reciprocated. Allowing His love and affection to flow continuously to His mother, He consoled her with calming, hopeful words. "Mother please do not despair. As long as I am with you nothing shall harm you," He assured her. "Soon I shall bring you that gift which is unobtainable even by demigods like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva."

Mother Śacī simply beheld the kind and beautiful face of Nimāi and forgot her own misery. How could she feel discouraged in His presence. The Supreme Personality of Godhead was living as the son of mother Śacī. Simply by remembering Him, one's every desire could be fulfilled. How could despair touch mother Śacī? Nimāi uplifted her spirits, and she attained an eternal blissful form.

The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha was present in Navadvīpa as a young *brāhmaṇa* boy, enjoying the bliss derived from His own supremely opulent self. Poverty in their house was only an external feature. Nimāi's commands were expressions from an autocratic all-opulent Lord of lords.

Whatever Nimāi demanded He had to get without considering its availability. If His demands were not supplied, there was no escaping His wrath. He would break and smash everything in sight, not thinking that the loss was His own. In spite of this, mother Śacī gave her son whatever He wanted only because of her deep affection for Him.

One day when Nimāi was going to bathe in the Ganges, He asked His mother for oil, *amalaki*, and other ingredients. "I want to bathe in the Ganges and also offer her worship," He said, "so please give Me a nice garland and aromatic sandalwood for this purpose."

"Please wait a few minutes my dear son," said mother Śacī. "I will have to go and get a garland."

Nimāi went into a fit of rage like Lord Rudra when He heard the words, "I am going to get it."

"You want to go now to bring a garland?" He raged as He stormed into the house.

In the fury He smashed all the pots of Ganges water. Then with a stick He smashed every pot or container He could find. As the supreme, independent Lord, He did whatever He pleased. Husked rice, cotton, grains, and salt from the broken vessels ran in rivets created by spilled oil, ghee, and milk. Mother Śacī saved dried foodstuffs in cloth bags which hung from the ceiling, but Nimāi pulled down every bag. He scattered their contents, and in His rage He even tore up the cloth bags. When nothing in the house remained whole, Nimāi directed His wrath on the residents themselves.

Taking up His stick again, Nimāi began to beat the walls. Not a soul dared to reproach Him. After the walls He smashed the windows and doors, and then He attacked a tree in the courtyard with the stick fixed in both hands. And without a moment of remorse over the tirade, He at last struck the ground with His stick and lost His sense entirely. In fear for her life mother Śacī hid in one end of the building.

Lord Gaurasundara, propagator of religious principles, came to establish eternal religion or Sanātana dharma. He would never raise His hand against His mother. Although his anger still boiled visibly, He refrained from beating His mother.

Having demolished everything in sight, Nimāi fumed as He rolled in the dust of the courtyard. His beautiful golden form was covered with dust. His glory was truly indescribable for even in that condition He was utterly charming.

At last He grew calm and lay quite still in the dust of the courtyard. That Lord of Vaikuṇṭha then called for His internal *yoga-māyā* potency with simply a glance and entered into a *yoga-nidra* sleep as He lay on the hard earth.

The transcendental form of Lord Ananta Śeṣa is Nimāi's resting place, and Śrī Lakṣmīdevī eternally serves His lotus feet.

That Supreme Personality, who is sought after by the four *Vedas*, lay asleep in mother Śacī's courtyard. The endless cosmic manifestation emanates from the pores of His body. His servants perform the act of creation, maintenance and annihilation. Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and other elevated personages become overwhelmed while meditating on His transcendental attributes. But that Supreme Lord, Nimāi, was resting peacefully in Śacī's courtyard.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu tasted the mellow of self perception and then fell asleep as the demigods looked on with joyous tears.

Mother Śacī brought a garland for the worship of Gaṅgādevī and placed it directly in front of Nimāi. She wiped the sand and dust from His transcendental body and lifted Him up. "Wake up, dear child," she said softly, "take Your garland and go worship Gaṅgādevī as You desired. What has happened is good, my son. I hope that all dangers and difficulties were driven out with the broken pieces."

Śrī Gaurasundara was ashamed, but He rose and went to take His bath.

Mother Śacī cleaned the house and prepared to cook. She felt no unhappiness although so much had been wasted by Nimāi's tirade. Mother Yaśodā in Gokula also endured the restless moods and activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa. As the universal mother, Śacīdevī also endured the restless behavior of Śrī Gaurasundara.

Just as Nimāi angrily smashed everything in mother Śacī's house, there were many other restless pastimes He performed. I could narrate many of them. Mother Śacī endured everything with body, mind and words as though she were mother earth in person.

After some time Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is full of wonderful pastimes, returned home from His bath in the Ganges. He worshiped Lord Viṣṇu, offered water *totulasī*, and sat down to eat. Satisfied with His meal, Nimāi washed Himself and chewed on betel leaf.

After sometime mother Śacī broke the silence. "My son what was the purpose of so much destruction and waste? This house, the furniture, all the food grains - everything belongs to You, and the loss is Yours. I am not responsible. You insist that You want to go to study this very moment, but I have run out of resources in the house. What will You eat tomorrow?"

Nimāi smiled at His mother's words. "Lord Kṛṣṇa is the maintainer. He will take care of us," replied Nimāi. With that, the Lord of Sarasvatī took His books in hand and went to study.

For sometime He remained in the mellow of learning, and in the evening He walked to the banks of the Ganges. From there He returned home. Calling His mother aside in secrecy, Nimāi gave her two *tolas* of shining gold. "You see mother, Lord Kṛṣṇa has given Me a treasure. Exchange it for money and spend it as you need."

Nimāi went off to bed, leaving poor dazed Śacīdevī to try to resolve the mystery of her son's behavior. "From where does He bring gold?" she pondered. "I'm afraid some danger will befall us because of this. As soon as there is a shortage of our necessary supplies. He brings gold, not just once but again and again. Does He borrow the gold, or create it by mystic powers? From where or whom does He get it?"

Noble mother Śacī was an innocent and honest woman. She was apprehensive even while exchanging the gold for money. Mother Śacī instructed the people, "First show the gold in several different places, then exchange it."

Thus Nimāi, the clandestine supreme controller of all mystic powers, lived in Navadvīpa.

Always seen clutching His books in His graceful hands, Nimāi looked like Cupid personified as He studied in the midst of His classmates. An *ūrdhva-puṇḍra tilaka* mark adorned His forehead, and the beauty of His shining curly hair could rob anyone of His mind. He was the embodiment of transcendental effulgence and round His shoulder hung the sacred *brāhmaṇa* thread. His ever-smiling enchanting face was delightful, showing off a set of twinkling teeth. How wonderful were His lotus eyes, and how wonderful was the charming manner in which He tucks his bright dhoti thrice in the waistband.

Whoever beheld Nimāi's beauty gazed at Him with unblinking eyes. No one could pass by Him without an adulatory comment like, "What extraordinary beauty!"

Nimāi Thākura could give such a marvelous explanation of anything that even His teacher felt immeasurable pleasure when hearing it.

Śrī Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita personally honored Nimāi by appointing Him foremost of all the students. The teacher said, "My boy please continue to study attentively and I am very sure You will soon be a great scholar and teacher Yourself."

Nimāi said, "Sir, once you have blessed someone, what can keep him from attaining the Bhaṭṭācārya title?"

There was not a student who could answer any of Nimāi's questions. He Himself would establish a law of principle, but in the end He could refute His conclusions. And if someone could not explain a principle, Nimāi would explain it perfectly.

While bathing, while eating, while walking or while performing any other activity, Nimāi thought only of scriptural conclusions. In this way Nimāi remained absorbed in the mellow of learning and education without revealing Himself to the world, a world spiritually blind and full of offenses.

The entire society had become devoid of devotional service to Supreme Lord Hari and the people were preoccupied. Grand festivals were held in honor of sons and relatives. Nothing in society found expression except the pursuit of bodily

maintenance, household welfare and other mundane activities.

The people in general sought happiness through false aspirations, and the society of Vaiṣṇavas lamented over the condition. The Vaiṣṇavas chanted Kṛṣṇa's names and lamented in their prayers, "O Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa, please be merciful to these unfortunate living entities."

And to the whole society they said, "You have not developed any attraction for the all attractive Lord Kṛṣṇa, in spite of receiving this rare human birth. How much longer do you want to enjoy such adversity? This rare human birth that even demigods desire is being wasted by you in false pleasures.

"Nobody follows the festivals that glorify and honor Lord Kṛṣṇa, rather they perform ritualistic ceremonies like marriages to enjoy themselves as they march towards the jaws of death."

And again to the Lord they prayed, "These living entities belong to You, O Lord. You are the protector. What power do we have to speak? You are the supreme father of everyone."

In this way the devotees considered the benefit of all living entities and then sang the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇacandra.

Chapter 9

All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the unlimited ocean of mercy! All glories to Lord Nityānanda, the dearest friend of the distressed!

All glories to Lord Caitanya, the life's treasure and soul of Śrī Advaita Ācārya, and the priceless treasure house of Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita! All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the son of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and mother Śacī! All glories to all the devotees who are such dear associates of the Lord!

Lord Ananta Śeṣa appeared in Rāḍhadeśa on an order given previously by Śrī Caitanya. He remained in the material world according to Mahāprabhu's transcendental desire.

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, the Lord of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, appeared in the village of Ekacakrā. His father was *abrāhmaṇa* named Hāḍai Paṇḍita and his mother was Śrīmatī Padmavatīdevī.

From His early childhood Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu had a serene disposition and was highly intelligent. He was a reservoir of excellences. His charming beauty overshadowed the attractiveness of millions upon millions of Cupids.

From the time of Nityānanda's birth, everything became auspicious in Rāḍhadeśa. Famine, poverty and all kinds of disturbances were totally dispelled.

On the day of Lord Caitanya's appearance in Navadvīpa, Śrī Nityānanda, who was still in Rāḍhadeśa, roared with jubilation.

The sound of that roar filled the universe and robbed everyone of his senses.

Some people speculated, "It must be a thunder-clap." Others thought it was the sound of some impending disaster. Still others said, "We know the reason for this sound. Lord Nityānanda, the Lord of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, is roaring in ecstasy."

People offered different opinions on this subject, but no one actually knew Lord Nityānanda in truth due to his illusory potency.

Lord Nityānanda concealed his identity and played gleefully with the other young children of His age.

The various games Lord Nityānanda played with His young friends were actually manifestations of different pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The children got together and formed a divine council where some of them took the role of mother Earth and submitted a petition.

Those children were accompanied by many others when they went to the bank of the milk ocean and offered their choicest prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

A certain young boy unseen by anyone called out in a loud voice, "I shall appear in Gokula, Mathurā."

On some evenings, Lord Nityānanda gathered his young friends and enacted the marriage of Śrī Vasudeva with Devakidevi.

Closing all the doors and windows to the room to create a dungeon, Lord Nityānanda enacted the birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa which took place deep in the night while the rest of the world slept.

Then they carried baby Lord Kṛṣṇa to their imaginary Gokula-dhāma and exchanged Him for the baby girl Mahā-māyā, the external potency of the Lord. Thus they tricked the wicked King Kāṁsa.

Nityānanda dressed a young boy as Pūtanā and had someone climb on her breast to suck her milk.

Helped by some friends, He one day built a cart with some tough reeds and then He smashed it.

Unseen by anyone, He entered the milkmen's houses in the near vicinity and stole butter with His young friends.

The young boys never wanted to leave the company of Lord Nityānanda and return home. Day and night they relished His transcendental association.

The parents of these young boys never remonstrated Him, but all of them affectionately held Him on their laps.

Everyone was amazed. "We never saw such wonderful activities. How does a mere child know so many transcendental pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa?"

On another day He made snakes just like Kāliyā out of leaves. He took all the young boys and went down to the water.

When the young boys jumped in the water and fell unconscious, Nityānanda revived them.

One day He went to the forest of tala trees with His young friends. After killing the donkey demon Dhenuka, He enjoyed tala fruits with everyone else.

When He would take His young friends out to graze cows, they would enact many different pastimes. Once He dressed them as Bakāsura, Aghāsura and Vatsāsura and then enacted Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes of killing those demons.

Playing His horn all the way, He would return home at sunset with the cows and His young friends.

One day He enacted the pastime of lifting the Govardhana Hill; another day he recreated Vṛndāvana-dhāma and played about while remembering its many different places.

He performed the pastime of stealing the clothes of the Vraja cowherd damsels, and He also met the wives of the *brāhmaṇas* who were engaged in performing sacrifices.

Someone would occasionally dress up as Nārada Muni--complete with dress and beard--and give secret council to Kāṁsa while sitting in a secluded place.

Once a young boy dressed as Akrūra enacted the pastime of taking Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma from Vṛndāvana to Mathurā on the order of the cruel King Kāṁsa.

Taking the part of the Vraja *gopīs*, Nityānanda wept bitterly in a mood of intense separation. His tears flowed like a gushing river and all the boys looked on in amazement.

Being deluded by the illusory potency of Lord Viṣṇu, no one could understand the truth about Lord Nityānanda. Oblivious to his identity the young boys played happily with Him.

After recreating Mathurā in their play, Lord Nityānanda roamed about the city with His young friends. Someone dressed up as a gardener and someone else adorned himself with a flower garland.

He dressed someone as the hunch-backed woman from Mathurā and enacted the pastime of going to her place to be smeared with fragrant sandalwood paste. Next He made a bow, strung it, and then broke it in the midst of great tumult.

Acting like Kṛṣṇa, Lord Nityānanda pretended to kill the mad elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa and the two wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika in the arena of Kāṁsa. Then he sought out the young friend who was dressed as Kāṁsa, pulled him down by his hair and straddled his chest.

He danced jubilantly with his young friends after the mock killing of cruel King Kāṁsa. Everyone who watched the drama laughed in appreciation.

In a playful mood Lord Nityānanda imitated the many different transcendental pastimes of the incarnations of the Supreme Godhead, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

One day Lord Nityānanda became Lord Vāmana, making someone else take the part of Bali Mahārāja. He enacted the pastime of Lord Vāmana tricking King Bali out of his vast kingdom which extended throughout the three worlds.

Someone acting as Sukracarya appeared in an old man's attire and forbid Bali Mahārāja to entertain Lord Vāmana's request for three paces of land. But King Bali granted Lord Vāmana's request and the Lord blessed him by placing His lotus feet on the King's head.

One day Lord Nityānanda became Lord Rāmacandra and built a bridge across the ocean to Lanka. All the young boys dressed as monkeys to form a monkey-army for the Lord. Shouting "Jai Raghunātha!" they felled some castor oil trees and threw them on the water, imitating Lord Rāma's monkeys throwing rocks in the water to build a bridge.

Another time, Lord Nityānanda played Śrī Lakṣmaṇa. Taking His bow in hand, He stalked off angrily to meet Sugriva. "O you wretched monkey, My Lord is in anguish. If you care for your life then come right now. Rāmacandra awaits us anxiously in Malyavan Mountain, and here you are enjoying in the midst of women."

On another day He chastised Śrī Paraśurāma with mounting fury, "I am not to be blamed for this, *Obrāhmaṇa*. Now run away, immediately!"

Lord Nityānanda was extremely adept when accepting the role of Lakṣmaṇa, but the young boys thought it was all in fun. They were unable to grasp its recondite significance. The young boys dressed up as the famous five monkeys and the Lord as Lakṣmaṇa inquired from them, "Who are you? I see all of you belong to the monkey race, but why are you roaming in the forest? I am the servant of Raghunātha, Lord Rāmacandra, please introduce yourselves."

They replied, "We are roaming in the forest in fear of Bali. Please take us to Lord Rāmacandra so that we may accept the dust from His lotus feet.

After embracing everyone, Lakṣmaṇa brought them to Lord Rāmacandra, and all of them fell at the Lord's lotus feet, offering Him their prostrated obeisances.

One day Lord Nityānanda enacted the pastime of killing Indrajit, and another day he lost Himself in the emotions of Lakṣmaṇa.

After dressing one boy as Vibhīṣaṇa, Nitāi brought him to Lord Rāmacandra and the Lord appointed him the King of Lanka.

One boy approached Nitāi and said, "I am Rāvaṇa, the demon King. I shall discharge my most powerful Śakti-silā weapon at you. Avert it if you can, Lakṣmaṇa." Challenging Lakṣmaṇa with these words the boy threw a lotus flower at Nitāi. Engrossed in Lakṣmaṇa's battle mood, Nitāi fell back and dropped to the ground unconscious. Despite the boys' efforts to rouse him, Nitāi lay there unmoving.

The Lord lay without a trace of consciousness in His entire body while His friends sat around holding their heads and lamenting. Nitāi's mother and father rushed to the spot but when they saw their son's lifeless body they both fainted and dropped to the ground. Whoever observed the situation was certainly astonished.

The young boys described the details to a crowd that had gathered and someone said, "I think I understand the reason for Nitāi's loss of consciousness.

"Previously Nitāi expertly enacted the role of King Daśaratha who suffered tremendously and finally died when he heard of Rāma's banishment to the forest.

"He is simply play acting," explained the man, "and if Hanumān gives Him medicine, He will become well again."

Before the drama Lord Nityānanda had instructed all His young friends, "If I should fall then surround me and weep. After waiting for a few moments send for Śrī Hanumān, and when he holds the medicine to My nose My life will be revived once again."

The Lord fell unconscious simply experiencing His own mood as Saṅkarṣaṇa, Lakṣmaṇa. Naturally this confounded His young friends.

The boys had become confused by Nimāi's seeming unconsciousness and forgotten the Lord's instructions to them. They simply repeated, "Wake up dear brother!" and wept in loud voices.

When the boys heard the man's suggestions they remembered the instructions of the Lord. A boy dressed as Hanumān and ran off to gather the medicinal herbs.

Another young boy, dressed as an ascetic but actually the demonic maternal uncle of Rāvaṇa, met Śrī Hanumān on his way and invited him to share some fruits and food. "Please remain here, dear Hanumān, and grace my humble hermitage. I feel greatly fortunate to be able to meet a personality like your good self."

"My mission is urgent and grave," replied Hanumān. "I must hasten; I cannot remain. You must have heard that Lakṣmaṇa, Lord Rāma's younger brother, is lying in a coma hit by the powerful Śakti-silā weapon of Rāvaṇa. So I must rush to the Gandharva hills to get medicine and save His life."

The ascetic persisted, "If you must leave then at least take your bath, and after eating something you can continue your victorious journey."

By the potency of Lord Nityānanda, His young friends played their individual parts so eloquently that the entire crowd watched in amazement.

On the prompting of the ascetic, Hanumān went to the big lake for his bath. A young boy dressed as a crocodile caught hold of Hanumān's feet and dragged him into deep water. But mighty Hanumān pulled the crocodile onto the bank of the lake.

He fought a short battle with the crocodile and after vanquishing him, Hanumān, who is also known as Mahāvira, moved on toward his destination.

Another young boy dressed as a demon chased Hanumān with the intent of eating him.

"You have killed the crocodile, but how do you propose to kill me? I shall devour you. Then who will save Lakṣmaṇa's life?" roared the demon.

Śrī Hanumān retorted, "Your Rāvaṇa is a dog. I despise him. You had better run far away." They hurled abuses at each other in this manner for sometime and then tearing at each others hair, they broke into a fist fight. Soon Śrī Hanumān destroyed the demon and continued toward the Gandharva Hill where he entered the forest.

Some young boys dressed as Gandharvas put up a fight and Hanumān was obliged to battle with them.

When they were defeated, Hanumān carried the Gandharva mountain on his head to Lakṣmaṇa.

Another young boy dressed as a physician, placed the medicine next to Śrī Lakṣmaṇa's nose thinking of Lord Śrī Rāmacandra.

Lord Nityānanda, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then stood up, to the great relief of His parents and all others present there.

Śrī Hṛdāi Paṇḍita hurried to Nītāi and took Him fondly on his lap. The young friends felt light hearted and jubilant.

Everyone was impressed with the drama and inquired, "Dear boy, where did you learn to play all these pastimes?"

Nīmāi smiled and replied, "These are all My transcendental activities."

In His early years Lord Nityānanda was an extremely handsome child. Who could resist holding Him to their heart's delight.

The people of Rāḍhadeśa loved Him more than they loved their own sons; yet no one could recognize Him as the Lord. His associates were deluded by the illusory potency of Lord Viṣṇu.

Lord Nityānanda played in this manner throughout His childhood. His only source of pleasure was the wonderful pastimes of Kṛṣṇa which He enacted.

Away from their homes, the young friends of Nityānanda enjoyed His sweet company.

I offer my countless obeisances at the feet of all those young associates of Lord Nityānanda who enjoy pleasurable pastimes with Him.

From His childhood Nityānanda's only inclination was to relive the transcendental activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Who can describe the unlimited superhuman pastimes of Lord Ananta Śeṣa, Śrī Nityānanda? Only by His mercy can proper percipience manifest within the heart.

Lord Nityānanda lived at home for twelve years, continuously enacting such pastimes. Thereafter He left on pilgrimage.

He travelled to different places of pilgrimage for twenty years. Then He at last met Śrī Caitanya.

Please hear the narrations of Lord Nityānanda's travels to different places of pilgrimage as I have written in this *Ādi-khaṇḍa* portion of the book. Whoever criticizes the Lord and His activities in anyway is certainly a mischievous sinful atheist. This Supreme Personality Lord Nityānanda, who liberated the entire universe, is surely the unlimited ocean of mercy. By His grace I am able to know the transcendental truth of Lord Caitanya, and by the same grace the divine glories of Lord Caitanya are revealed to me.

Hear attentively the description of the pilgrimage of Lord Nityānanda, the most beloved associate of Śrī Caitanya.

The first holy place Lord Nityānanda visited on His journey was the temple of Vakreśvara; thereafter He roamed the forests of Vaidyanātha all alone.

After visiting Gayā, Nityānanda went to Kāśī, the principal pilgrimage place for the Śaivites which is situated on the banks of the Ganges as she flows swiftly westward. Lord Nityānanda was exhilarated by drinking and bathing in the waters, yet for some reason his longing and fatigue clung to Him.

In Prayāga, the Lord bathed at the rivers' confluence in the early hours of a chilly Magha morning. Then He proceeded to Mathurā where He had appeared in a previous yuga. There He visited Lord Kṛṣṇa's birthplace.

Attracted by the River Yamunā, the Lord sported in her gentle waters at the bathing place named Viśrāma-ghāṭa. He then circumambulated Govardhana Hill and experienced spiritual ecstasy. One by one the Lord visited all twelve forests including Śrī Vṛndāvana and roamed at will in their shady woods.

In Gokula, the Lord saw the residence of Nanda Mahārāja. In ecstasy He sat down and wept profusely. The Lord then offered worship to the deity of Lord Madana Gopāla and went to Hastinapura, the famous fortress city of the valiant Pāṇḍavas.

Lord Nityānanda wept, being intensely moved by the sanctified place of the elevated devotees of the Supreme Lord. However, the residents of that place could not comprehend such emotions due to their lack of devotional sentiments.

The visit to Hastinapura brought back memories of Lord Balarāma's activities, and Lord Nityānanda called out, "Save Me O Lord Haladhara!" In this way he worshiped the holy place.

Thereafter Śrī Nityānanda travelled to the holy city of Dvāraka and bathed in the ocean, feeling great spiritual bliss.

Next He went to Siddhapura. That place was rendered holy by the presence of Lord Kapila. After that Nityānanda went to Matsya-tīrtha where He gave away grains in charity on the occasion of a big festival.

The Lord visited Śiva-kāñcī and Viṣṇu-kāñcī. Being the original Supreme Person, Nityānanda was amused at the fanatical conflict that existed between the followers of Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu.

He travelled to Kurukṣetra, Pṛthudaka, Bindu Sarovar, Prabhasa and Sudarśana-tīrtha. Then He went to Tritakupa, Visala, Brahmā-tīrtha, and Cakra-tīrtha.

With exhilarated spirits Nityānanda then travelled to Pratisrota where the Praci-Sarasvatī flows gently into the ocean. From there He visited the forest of Naimasaranya.

Lord Nityānanda travelled to the city of Ayodhya. Seeing the birthplace of Lord Rāmacandra, He felt spiritual ecstasy moving Him to shed profuse tears of divine love.

Then He travelled to the tribal kingdom of King Guhaka (Srnga Verapura). King Guhaka reigned during the time of Lord Rāmacandra, and in that holy place Śrī Nityānanda fell into a massive ecstatic trance.

When Śrī Nityānanda thought of His devotee, the tribal king of Guhaka, He went into a ecstatic trance for three days.

Lord Nityānanda visited the different forests in which the Supreme Lord Rāmacandra once roamed. His feeling of separation from the Lord made Him roll in the ground in anguish.

Then the Lord went to the spot where the holy Sarayū River quietly flows in Ayodhyā. After bathing in the water of the Kausiki River, He continued to Pulasta *āśrama*, a most sanctified place.

Thereafter Śrī Nityānanda went to Gomati and bathed in the waters of Gandaki and Sona. He climbed the Mahendra Hill where He offered obeisances to Lord Paraśurāma. From there He travelled to Haridvāra, the source of mother Ganges.

He visited Pampa, Bhima, Godavari, Benva and in the Bipasa (or Vyasa) river He remained submerged in the water for a while.

In Madurai he visited the temple of Lord Kartika and then went on to the place known as Śrī Prabat. There, in a massive and impressive temple, His devotees Lord Śiva and Pārvatī were being opulently worshiped as *abrāhmaṇa* and his wife.

Lord Śiva and Pārvatī recognized Lord Nityānanda as their worshipable Supreme Lord. The original Saṅkarṣaṇa appeared before them as a pilgrim in mendicant's dress.

Śiva and Pārvatī joyfully received their exalted guest and attended to him affectionately. Pārvatī cooked palatable dishes for His satisfaction and in reciprocation Śrī Nityānanda offered them his obeisances.

Only Lord Kṛṣṇa, knows the confidential topics that transpired between them, but thereafter Lord Nityānanda went to the Dravida territory.

He travelled through different pilgrimage spots touching upon the places of Vyēnkatanātha, Kamakosthipuri, and Kañci, arriving at last at the sacred River Kaveri. Then He proceeded to the famous holy place of Śrīrangam where merciful Lord Śrī Raghunātha received opulent worship from His devotees. Thereafter Lord Nityānanda visited Hari-kṣetra.

He then visited Rṣabha Hills, Madurai, Kṛtamala, Tamraparani, and Uttara Jawra. In the Malaya Hills He went to Agastya's hermitage and all the residents were spiritually enthralled by having such a divine personality as their guest.

Arriving in Badarikāśrama with unbounded spiritual joy, He absorbed its divine atmosphere and spent some days in quiet solitude.

From there He trekked to the hermitage of Śrīla Vyāsadeva who immediately recognized Lord Nityānanda as His worshipable Lord Balarāma. He cared for his guest attentively and Śrī Nityānanda reciprocated by offering His obeisances to Śrīla Vyāsadeva.

Continuing His travels, Lord Nityānanda came across a place where a number of Buddhist monks were sitting around. He made a few inquiries there but none of the monks would reply. This sparked His anger and He chastised them for their misbehavior by kicking each one in the head. The Buddhists dispersed in fear, and the Lord continued His journey, strolling fearlessly through the forest.

Śrī Nityānanda travelled South to Kanya Kumari and saw the beautiful deity of Durgādevī installed near the shore of the Indian Ocean at the southern tip of India.

He also went to Śrī Avantapura and the Panca-Apsara Lake. In Gokarna He visited the temples of Lord Śiva. In Kerala and Trigarla He went house to house showering His causeless mercy.

He crossed most of the rivers that flowed down from the Vindhya Hills and covered the tract of land south of the Vindhyas known as Payonci; then He wandered a while in Tapti. He visited Reba, Mahismati, Mallatīrtha, Surparaka and then headed westward.

Lord Nityānanda travelled all over the country in a joyful mood, fearless and carefree. He was constantly submerged in ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa. Overcome with ecstasy, sometimes He cried and sometimes He laughed. Who can understand the blissful turmoil which stirred in His heart?

During the period of His journey when He travelled in the western provinces, He met Śrī Mādhavendra Purī by divine arrangement.

Śrī Mādhavendra Purī is the embodiment of ecstatic transcendental love for Lord Kṛṣṇa and all His swanlike disciples are full of that spiritual love. His only means of subsistence is the nectar that flows out of Kṛṣṇa's loving exchanges. Lord Kṛṣṇa personally resides in the form of such unalloyed devotees as Śrī Mādhavendra Purī.

Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu is foremost amongst Śrī Mādhavendra Purī's disciples, so how can I begin to describe his intense love for Kṛṣṇa provided as I am with inadequate words.

On meeting Śrī Mādhavendra Purī Lord Nityānanda became paralyzed and lost consciousness, overpowered by ecstatic

transcendental love; and Mādhavendra Purī also went into an ecstatic trance, loosing all external senses upon seeing Lord Nityānanda.

Lord Caitanya often remarked that Śrī Mādhavendra Purī was the main trunk of the tree of nectarean devotional mellows.

Īśvara Purī and other disciples of Mādhavendra Purī witnessed the unique meeting. Tears flowed freely from their eyes as they saw the two forms lying in devotional trance.

When consciousness returned and they became aware of each other's presence, Mādhavendra Purī and Nityānanda embraced while crying tears of joy. They rolled in the sand and roared loudly, unabashed in expressing their sublime emotions, totally absorbed in the ecstasy of love of Godhead. Their profuse, unrestrained tears purified the earth. Mother Earth felt she was receiving her greatest benediction. Within their bodies different ecstatic symptoms of shivering, weeping and horripilation appeared in endless waves; such devotional emotions confirmed that Śrī Caitanya resided within each of them.

Lord Nityānanda spoke first saying, "Today, in one instance, I have received the utmost benefit of My pilgrimages. My eyes have rested on the lotus feet of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī and seeing his transcendental love, My life has become blessed and meaningful."

Śrī Mādhavendra Purī sat speechless holding Lord Nityānanda to his breast, his voice choked with tears of ecstatic emotions. Such was his feeling of love for Nityānanda that he never desired to release Him from his embrace. Īśvara Purī, Brahmānanda Purī and all the other disciples could perceive what had just spiritually transpired, so their natural attraction and attachment for the Lord increased.

In the past both Mādhavendra Purī and Nityānanda had seen pilgrims and many amongst them in saintly garb, but now they realized that none of those pilgrims had possessed the transcendental gift of love of God .

Remembering their brief association and conversations with such nondevotional persons they were overcome with remorse. They had wandered everywhere looking intently for Kṛṣṇa and His pure loving devotees. They found each other--pure transcendentalists--and they felt the burden of their despondency lift in each other's association. In each other they witnessed the manifestation of love of God.

Blissful days passed, filled with confidential Kṛṣṇa conscious discussions which created in both the Lord and Mādhavendra Purī an insatiable thirst for continued association. Śrī Mādhavendra's spontaneity drove him into ecstatic trance when he saw a dark cloud that reminded him of Kṛṣṇa's complexion. Day and night he seemed intoxicated by his love for Kṛṣṇa, sometimes laughing, next moment crying and sometimes making a great deal of noise or shouting.

Lord Nityānanda was also drunk with the divine nectar of love of Lord Govinda. He stumbled and fell repeatedly, often roaring with laughter.

The disciples were very impressed by the extent of their spiritual master's and Lord Nityānanda's extraordinary love for the Supreme Lord, and they in turn responded by continuously singing the name of Śrī Hari. Steeped in the ambrosia of transcendental love, they lost count of time; no one knew when day turned to night and their surroundings passed into oblivion.

Who can grasp the highly confidential topics Śrī Mādhavendra Purī discussed with Lord Nityānanda? Only Lord Kṛṣṇa, the omniscient Supersoul, knows everything. Śrī Purī grew so attached to Lord Nityānanda that he could not imagine leaving His company; he spent every moment of his time with Him.

Śrī Mādhavendra Purī said, "Nowhere have I found the exhibition of such supramundane love par excellence as in Lord Nityānanda. Wherever that love is found becomes the best of all the holy pilgrimages. I am now convinced that the blessed Lord Kṛṣṇa is graciously disposed towards me because I have found an intimate associate like Lord Nityānanda. Wherever one meets Lord Nityānanda - that place becomes the most holy place. The very spiritual planet of Vaikuṇṭha descends there. Whoever associates with Lord Nityānanda and hears from Him will surely attain purest devotional love at the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. And whoever harbors even a tinge of apathy for Lord Nityānanda is forever cast aside by Lord Kṛṣṇa, though he may be in the guise of a devotee."

Śrī Mādhavendra Purī expressed his feeling of deep affection for Lord Nityānanda with unhesitating praises. Simultaneously Lord Nityānanda developed His affection and reverential mood towards Śrī Purī which can only be offered to a mentor. A wonderful relationship blossomed where each continually exhilarated the other with his ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

They relished each other's transcendental association for some days and then Lord Nityānanda left for the South where Lord Rāmacandra built a bridge to Lanka with the help of the monkey army. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī set out towards Sarājau. They parted ways, merged in a state of complete bliss of love of Kṛṣṇa, unmindful of even their own physical

conditions.

Lives of such unalloyed devotees of Kṛṣṇa are sustained only by their intense love for the Lord. Otherwise, once they are aware of that love it would not be possible for them to continue living, feeling the excruciating pangs of separation from Him.

Those faithful souls who hear this narration of the wonderful meeting between Śrī Mādhavendra and Lord Nityānanda will surely attain the highest perfection, love of Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Nityānanda travelled for a few days submerged in that ambrosia of love of Kṛṣṇa and finally arrived in Setubhandha. He bathed in Dhanustīrtha and proceeded to Rāmeśvara. Thereafter He travelled to Vijayanagara, and from there, on to the temple of Lord Nṛsimhadeva in Geoda. He visited Mayapuri, Avanti, and the Godavari River. This time the Lord decided to go to Jagannātha Puri and on the way He visited Tirumala and Kūrma-kṣetra.

The Lord saw the high fluttering flag of Lord Jagannātha's temple just as He entered Puruṣottama-kṣetra, Purī, and immediately He fell into an ecstatic trance. He saw Lord Jagannātha, as the Lord of Dvāraka along with all His divine associates and devotees present in that holy dhāma. Such visions revived Lord Nityānanda's ecstatic mood and He fell unconscious to the ground. When He regained consciousness, the different ecstatic symptoms of shivering, paling, weeping, horripilation and loud roaring became manifest and again He fell to the ground. Who can perceive the magnitude of Lord Nityānanda's extraordinary love of Godhead?

He spent a few days more in Nilācala and then, immersed in total spiritual joy, He travelled north to Gangā-sagara. How is it possible for me to describe Lord Nityānanda's pilgrimage? My feeble attempt is made possible only by His grace.

Caught up in the fervor of His pilgrimage, the Lord again travelled to Mathurā and Vṛndāvana. Completely absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Nityānanda was unaware of the passage of many days and nights in Vṛndāvana. He forgot about eating and only occasionally drank a little milk if it came to Him unsolicited.

Śrī Nityānanda could visualize His Lord, Śrī Caitanya, living as an ordinary boy in Navadvīpa. He thought to Himself, "When Lord Gauracandra reveals his magnanimous pastimes of congregational chanting of the Lord's holy name, at that time I shall devote Myself to His service." He thus resolved to wait in Vṛndāvana and not proceed to Navadvīpa. He filled His days happily frolicking in the dark cool waters of the Kalindi, lost in the mood of a young cowherd boy. At other times He found inexplicable pleasure playing in the sand with young friends.

Lord Nityānanda was the original Lord Viṣṇu and He possessed the absolute full potency to grace anyone with love of Godhead. Yet He restrained Himself and waited patiently so that He could execute the order of Śrī Caitanya and profusely distribute that precious love of God to everyone. Lord Caitanya's associates did not desire to act without their Lord's instructions to guide them, nor did they feel slighted by taking a humble position. Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva all carried out Lord Caitanya's orders to maintain, create and annihilate this world according to their respective duties. Unfortunately the sinful atheists feel unhappy because they cannot accept this point, and unseen by the poor Vaiṣṇavas they thrive everywhere. Yet Lord Nityānanda is famous for inundating the universe with love of God.

Lord Nityānanda is the original devotee of Lord Caitanya. His tongue is the abode of Lord Caitanya's glories, vibrating incessantly the sublime pastimes of Śrī Gauracandra. One can obtain full devotion at Lord Caitanya's lotus feet simply by worshipping Lord Nityānanda. All glories to Lord Nityānanda, the primeval Lord! It is only by His causeless mercy that the glorious pastimes of Śrī Caitanya manifest in one's heart. And by the grace of Gauracandra one can become lovingly attached to Lord Nityānanda. All obstacles and misfortunes in life are extirpated as soon as the knowledge of the truth about Lord Nityānanda dawns upon one. Those who desire to overcome the material whirlpool and drown in the ocean of devotional service should worship Nityānanda. Many praise my Lord saying, "Lord Nityānanda is like Lord Brahmā", while others say, "He is very dear to Lord Caitanya." I hear various opinions about Him--that He is *asannyāsī*, or a humble devotee, or an erudite Vedic scholar. People conjecture without inhibition and stop at nothing; some go to the extent of saying that His connection with Lord Caitanya is not intimate. None of these affect me at all, I simply pray that His lotus feet remain impressed upon my heart eternally.

After repeated attempts to invoke good judgement in all people, if some sinful lot continues to criticize my Lord, then I kick them in their heads to save them from imminent disaster. Those who misinterpret the remarks of Advaita Ācārya Prabhu or Lord Nityānanda as criticism of Caitanya Mahāprabhu should realize that those remarks were in fact shaded glorifications of my Lord. All the Vaiṣṇava associates of Lord Caitanya are externally liberated and enlightened souls. What is wrongly understood to be disturbing arguments or abusive language used between them is actually one way they express their deep love for each other. An ordinary person is therefore discouraged from taking sides in such a mock fight, for if he criticizes anyone then he places himself in a precarious position. That person who is not critical of Lord Nityānanda and who is steadfast in his spiritual practices will certainly attain the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya. I intensely yearn to see the lotus feet of my Lord and master Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Caitanya.

Lord Nityānanda is my absolute master; by taking shelter of His lotus feet let me worship Lord Caitanya. I greatly desire

to study *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* in Lord Nityānanda's presence. This is my humble submission eternally. All glories to Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya! You are fully independent to act as You wish. You can give me the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda or separate me from them. I pray that You, my Lord Caitanya, be merciful to me and grant that my whole heart and soul remain fixed at Your lotus feet and at the lotus feet of Śrī Nityānanda. Nityānanda is devoted exclusively to You so no one can attain His shelter without Your blessings.

Lord Nityānanda roamed throughout Vṛndāvana waiting for Lord Gauracandra to manifest His pastimes openly. Lord Nityānanda's pilgrimage was part of His transcendental pastimes. Whoever hears these narrations with devotion is crowned with the most precious gem of success--love of Godhead. Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my heart and soul. Their humble servant, Vṛndāvana dāsa, offers his song at their lotus feet.

Chapter 10

All glories to Lord Caitanya, Śrī Gauracandra! He is the supreme controller of all controllers and He most dear to Lord Nityānanda. He possesses an eternal transcendental form. O Lord, mercifully look upon the conditioned living souls. All glories to You, for You are the best of the *brāhmaṇas*, the son of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra! All glories to Your devotees, the most elevated souls! You are an ocean of compassion, and Your beautiful eyes are like lotus petals. Be so kind, O Lord, as to grant me this prayer: May I remain constantly absorbed in Your magnanimous character.

Please read in this chapter about Lord Caitanya's pleasurable pastimes as a young scholar. He totally absorbed Himself in scholarly pursuits not finding time for anything else. After completing His daily brahminical duties early each morning, the Lord of the universe, Śrī Nityānanda, went to the house of Śrī Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita. He was accompanied by students who respected Him as an authoritative scholar and considered themselves His disciples. At Gaṅgādāsa's place He conducted debates. Many students who were not in His group for the debate and who did not submit to His tutorship were affronted or slighted by Nityānanda and His followers. After establishing His arguments in the debate, Nityānanda would discuss the different points He had made with His group, just as the other groups would do. Murāri Gupta was not amongst Nityānanda's group, so Nityānanda confronted him and refuted his arguments.

Nityānanda wore His *dhōṭī* neatly wrapped around His slim, elegant frame, and sat amidst the students in the mood of a valiant prince. The sandalwood paste *tilaka* decorating His forehead shone with a soft golden glow, and His exquisite and regular set of teeth were so effulgent that brilliant white pearls looked old and lack-luster in comparison. At age sixteen, Nityānanda's youth blossomed like spring. He was beauty personified; even Cupid fell captive to His charm.

The erudition He exhibited in His pastimes as a scholar far superseded the knowledge and learning of Brhaspati. If any of the students tried to learn the scriptures on his own, Nityānanda was quick to taunt him.

The Lord would challenge, "Who is here? Such a great scholar to refute My arguments? Without even knowing the rules of proper conjugation some persons try to understand grammar by themselves and fool themselves into complacency. Yet in spite of their vanity, because of their ignorance they cannot answer My arguments properly. They cannot even debate the arguments properly."

Murāri Gupta heard these provocative and boastful words of the Lord but remained silent and continued to do his work. Still Nityānanda would not leave him alone. He taunted Murāri Gupta at every opportunity, but seeing the calm reaction of His dear servant, the Lord was actually very satisfied.

Once Nityānanda said to Murāri Gupta, "You are a Vedic doctor. Why do you study grammar here? Go to your leaves and herbs and make a compound so you can cure the sick. Grammar is extremely difficult to learn. Here there is no mention of mucus, bile, or indigestion. How do you want to accomplish anything in learning grammar just by studying on your own? Rather, go home and try to cure the sick."

Śrī Murāri Gupta was the partial expansion of Rudra, Lord Śiva, and had a volatile temper. Yet Lord Viśvambhara could not see a single trace of anger in him.

In reply, Murāri Gupta said, "O learned *brāhmaṇa*, please tell me one thing: I see that you taunt everyone. Why are You so arrogant? On what subjects did You not receive a proper answer from me? Whether the discussion was on verb rules, astrology with its different purports, or other philological questions, I answered them all. Without asking and waiting for a reply You flaunt me. What do You really know? You are a learned *brāhmaṇa*, so why do You act like this? What more can I say?"

"Alright, discuss and analyze what you have read today," said Nityānanda. Murāri Gupta began his explanations and the Lord immediately refuted them. Murāri Gupta explained in a certain way but the Lord would explain the same subject in another way. At last the master, not His servant, accepted defeat. By the Lord's influence, Murāri exhibited great erudition

and the Nimāi was extremely pleased by Murāri's explanation. The Lord placed His soft lotus hands on Murāri Gupta, and upon receiving that sublime touch, Murāri experienced indescribable bliss.

"This Nimāi cannot be an ordinary person," thought Murāri to himself. "How would it be possible for an ordinary person to possess such vast learning? My body felt such spiritual excitement just by the touch of His hands. I think that I should not be ashamed to learn under His tutorship. There is no one as intelligent or learned in all of Navadvīpa."

Then Murāri Gupta, the Ayurvedic doctor, submitted to the Lord, "O Viśvambhara, I will learn under Your tutorship." In this affectionate manner the master and His servant interacted. The Lord then took all His friends to the Ganges for a bath. The divine pastimes of Śrī Caitanya as a scholar were enacted in this mood.

Śrī Mukunda and Sañjaya are truly very fortunate soul for in their house in Navadvīpa the Supreme Lord displayed many of these scholarly pastimes. Mukunda's son was studying under Nimāi Paṇḍita and he himself was very attached to the lotus feet of the Lord in devotional service. Annexed to Mukunda's house was a temple of goddess Durgā and in that courtyard students sat around the Lord, crowding the entire compound. There sat Nimāi Paṇḍita, the best of the *brāhmaṇas*. It looked as though Lord Gaurāṅga was holding a court of scholars. Nimāi Paṇḍita would deliver many explanations and establish many arguments, and then He would refute those arguments with new arguments.

He often spoke out against teachers in Navadvīpa. Once the Lord said, "Sometimes people do not even possess fundamental knowledge about conjugation, but because it is Kali-yuga such a person accepts the title of Bhaṭṭācārya. Let Me see if any one of these Bhaṭṭācārya's can find discrepancies in My arguments and explanations. Then I will accept when they flout their big titles like Bhaṭṭācārya and Miśra." In this way the Lord would act like a proud scholar; none of His servants could understand His mood nor could they recognize Him as their worshipful Supreme Lord.

Mother Śacī one day noticed that her son had grown into a handsome young man and she started thinking about His marriage. Śrī Vallabha Ācārya, a good and pious *brāhmaṇa* was then residing in Navadvīpa. He was equal to King Janaka, the father of Sitādevī, and in every respect his daughter possessed unsurpassed beauty. She was Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune in person. Her father was constantly thinking about finding a suitable match for her.

By divine arrangement Śrī Lakṣmīdevī once met Śrī Gaurasundara on the banks of the Ganges when they had each gone for a bath. Lord Gauracandra immediately recognized his eternal consort and smiled sweetly at her. Lakṣmīdevī also recognized her eternal master and offered Him prayers as she clasped His lotus feet. Both the transcendental personalities recognized each other, and they returned home in blissful expectation. Who can understand such sublime and supramundane pastimes of the Supreme Lord?

Again by arrangement of the Lord, a *brāhmaṇa* named Vanamālī came to visit mother Śacī. After they exchanged respectful greetings, mother Śacī affectionately offered the *brāhmaṇa* a seat. Then Śrī Vanamālī Ācārya asked, "Why aren't you seriously considering your son's marriage? In Navadvīpa resides a very pious and elevated *brāhmaṇa*. He is pure; he always follows the path of religion, and he is a descendent of good line of *brāhmaṇas*. His daughter is certainly not inferior to Lakṣmīdevī in beauty, character or respect."

"My son has lost his father," replied mother Śacī. "Let Him study further and grow a little older; then I shall certainly consider His marriage." The apathetic reply made Vanamālī feel dejected and he left Śacī's house. But by divine arrangement, on his way out he met Śrī Gaurāṅga. As soon as the Lord saw Vanamālī, He affectionately embraced him.

"Please tell me who you were just visiting," inquired the Lord.

"I came to pay my respects to Your mother," answered Vanamālī. "I brought up the subject of Your marriage to her, but I don't know why she didn't respond positively to it."

The Lord fell silent, and having offered due respects to the *brāhmaṇa*, He went home, smiling within Himself. At home He immediately spoke to His mother, "Why didn't you favor the *brāhmaṇa*'s proposal?"

Mother Śacī was more than pleased, for she could understand the Lord's indication. The next day she requested Vanamālī to return and told him, "The proposal you made yesterday--I request you to please act on it immediately." After touching her feet in respect, the *brāhmaṇa* went straight to the house of Vallabha Ācārya.

Śrī Vallabha received the *brāhmaṇa* with all respect and offered him the seat of honor. "I think it is time you arranged your daughter's marriage," said Vanamālī. "I have found the fit candidate for her. His name is Viśvambhara. He is the son of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra, a very elevated and respectable *brāhmaṇa*. Viśvambhara is most scholarly and He is certainly an ocean of all good qualities. Please consider these points and tell me how you feel."

Vallabha Ācārya was extremely pleased. He said, "Only through accumulating immense piety could a girl get such a husband. If Kṛṣṇa were pleased with me or if the goddess of fortune were satisfied with my daughter, only then could I ever hope for such a son-in-law. Please don't delay; proceed with this proposal and complete all the necessary details. But

first there is one thing that I must mention. I feel hesitant to speak about it. I have no means to give anything as a dowry. I can simply give my daughter and five pieces of auspicious haritaki fruit. Please convey this to them.”

The *brāhmaṇa* was extremely satisfied with Vallabha Ācārya's attitude and he returned to mother Śacī's house with the news of his success. "They are agreeable," he reported. "Now we have to choose the right day and right moment according to astrological calculations.”

The news spread. Close relatives and friends were jubilant and they all came forward with great enthusiasm to make themselves useful on the occasion. A special ceremony held before the day of the marriage was conducted at an auspicious time amidst festivities where professional dancers and musicians performed. *Brāhmaṇa* priests sat in the four corners of the wedding area and chanted Vedic mantras. In the middle sat the crown jewel of the *brāhmaṇa* class, Lord Gaurāṅga, as brilliant as the rising full moon. At the end of the function the *brāhmaṇas* were gifted with incense, sandalwood, flower garlands, and spices. Śrī Vallabha Ācārya had also come according to the customs and performed his ritualistic duties.

On the day of His wedding, Nimāi respectfully offered oblations to His forefathers at dawn. The sound of sweet music and the tinkle of a dancer's ankle bells filled the air. Sounds of joyful chatter came from all directions. The guests that came were numerous and large groups of chaste women thronged the place. Relatives and respectable *brāhmaṇas* also came. Mother Śacī satisfied all the chaste housewives with gifts of fruits, grains, vermilion, oils and other commodities. Different demigods, along with their wives, also came in human forms to see the marriage of the Lord. Vallabha Ācārya performed his many rituals with increasing pleasure. In the evening just before sunset, Nimāi went to the house of Śrī Vallabha Ācārya at the chosen auspicious time. He was accompanied by many people and when He arrived all the guests felt submerged in waves of ecstasy.

Vallabha Ācārya offered the Lord a seat with utmost respect strictly according to the rules of the scriptures. He felt an indescribable joy within. Finally he brought his daughter Lakṣmīdevī, fully decorated with beautiful ornaments, and presented her to the Lord. According to the marriage customs, Lakṣmīdevī was lifted off the ground and carried seven times around the Lord. The chanting of Hari's name resounded but Lakṣmī sat with folded hands and offered silent prayers to the Lord.

During the auspicious ceremony of exchanging glances between bride and bridegroom, people showered flowers jubilantly from all directions on Śrī Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa. That Śrī Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, had appeared as Lord Gaurāṅga, and Śrī Lakṣmī offered Him a garland of flowers at His lotus feet. She worshiped Him, surrendering herself as though she were those very flowers. Joyous sounds accompanied by loud chanting of Lord Hari's name rent the air. It was the only sound to be heard in any direction. The Lord drank in the moonlike beautiful face of Śrī Lakṣmīdevī as He sat with her on His left. His blooming youthful beauty excelled the attractiveness of Cupid himself. Who can possibly describe in detail the joy in Śrī Vallabha's house?

Looking like Bhīṣmadeva, Śrī Vallabha Ācārya then sat down to give away the bride. The Lord was exquisitely decorated with flower garlands and sandalwood paste and wore beautiful, shining clothes. Vallabha Ācārya poured water on His lotus feet, those same lotus feet which are washed and worshiped by Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva in order to acquire the strength and potency to create this material world. The *brāhmaṇa* then offered his daughter according to the regulations in the scriptures and all the while felt waves of ecstasy within his heart. The rest of the ceremonies were conducted properly and the Lord spent that night in their house.

The next morning Nimāi returned to His own house with Lakṣmīdevī. They were carried on a palanquin, and people came from everywhere to see the Lord and His bride. Beautifully decorated with flowers, gold ornaments, studded crowns and sandalwood paste artistically dotted over their beautiful faces, Lakṣmīdevī and Lord Nārāyaṇa were effulgent with a transcendental glow. People all around acknowledged their own good fortune at seeing this divine couple. The ladies especially stood mesmerized at the sublimely beautiful sight.

One lady commented, “She must have worshiped Lord Śiva and Pārvatī for a long time with great devotion; otherwise it could not have been possible to get a husband like Him. Perhaps they themselves are Lord Śiva and Pārvatī.”

“They are either Indra and Śacī, or Lord Madana and Ratī.” said another lady.

Someone else suggested, “No they must be Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa.”

“They look exactly like Sītā and Lord Rāmacandra,” said another woman, “and they are so charming as They ride on the palanquin.”

The ladies each offered a variety of opinions as they watched the divine couple with mixed wonder and joy. The Lord brought His new bride home in the evening amidst joyful shouting, sweet music and laughter. Mother Śacī went out to meet the newly-wed couple and brought them into the house. She felt infinite joy, and bustled around distributing valuable gifts to everyone and pleasing the guests with sweet words. Whoever hears this narration of the Lord's marriage with devotion will certainly be able to break the ties of material bondage.

Śacīdevī felt her house glowing with a new iridescent light. Now that Lakṣmīdevī was in her rightful position next to Lord Nārāyaṇa, Śrī Gaurāṅga, Śacīdevī saw an extraordinary light everywhere, inside as well as outside the house. She could not describe the wonderful phenomenon. Sometimes she saw a very beautiful light right next to her son, but when she looked again she saw it was no longer there. At other times she could smell the divine fragrance of flowers and lotuses and this surprised her beyond description. She often wondered about the actual truth of all this.

"I think I know the reason for all this," mother Śacī thought to herself. "My daughter-in-law must be an incarnation or expansion of Lakṣmīdevī. That is why I sometimes see a brilliant light or smell a divine lotus fragrance. My previous sufferings and our poverty seems to have vanished. I don't know how I have received this girl as my daughter-in-law for she is certainly Lakṣmīdevī."

In this way mother Śacī would speculate, but the Supreme Lord Gaurāṅga, although manifest, did not yet reveal His original and absolute identity. Who can understand the wonderful activities and potencies of the Supreme Lord? However and whenever the Supreme Lord desires to act, He is free to do so. And if the Supreme Lord Himself does not reveal these esoteric truths, then even Lakṣmīdevī does not have the potency to fathom the transcendental phenomenon. The *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* as well as all other scriptures repeat the same truth: No one can know the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Lord, without receiving the mercy of the Lord.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu are the life and soul of this insignificant servant Vṛndāvana dāsa, and he offers his humble song at their lotus feet.

Chapter Eleven

All glories to Śrī Gauracandra, the Supreme Lord of all lords! His youthful pastimes as a scholar revealed His attraction for learning. He stayed in Navadvīpa, but He concealed His true identity. The best of the *brāhmaṇas*, Gauracandra, spent all His younger days pursuing His studies. His handsome youthfulness could defeat the beauty of millions upon millions of Cupids. Every limb of His transcendental body was a perfection of beauty. His arms extended down to the knees, and His exquisite eyes were like lotus petals. His attractive lips were red, as if from chewing betel, and He was always dressed in fine, majestic clothes.

Ever in a happy mood, He walked amidst His colleagues and disciples, entertaining them with His sparkling wit. He was their unquestioned leader on the strength of His superior intelligence and learning. He roamed all over Navadvīpa carrying His books as if holding Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, within His palm, for He is the Supreme Lord of the entire cosmic manifestation. No scholar in Navadvīpa dared to find faults in His dissertations. Only the *brāhmaṇa* Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita, a very pious and fortunate soul, was capable of discussing with the Lord.

The different categories of people in Navadvīpa saw Mahāprabhu in their own way. The materialistic fruitive workers who were attached to family and home saw Him as the Lord and experienced an inexplicable wonder. "How remarkable that every house He graces should always have prosperity!" they exclaimed. The ladies saw Him as the most attractive Cupid. But in the hearts of the atheists He struck fear as the god of death. The scholars were convinced that Bṛhaspati, the most learned priest of the demigods, had taken birth on earth.

But the Vaiṣṇavas were seriously concerned about Gaurāṅga and His behavior. "He is endowed with such sublime physical beauty," they sadly commented, "yet He shows no attraction for Lord Kṛṣṇa. What will all His learning and erudition bring Him except years of wasted time." The Vaiṣṇavas spoke in this manner because they were bewildered by the internal potency of the Lord. Although they saw the Supreme Lord in person before them, they could not recognize Him.

Once a Vaiṣṇava met the Lord and inquired, "What is the use of wasting Your time in pursuit of material knowledge?"

The Lord smiled at the concern of His devotee and replied, "Truly it is My great fortune that you are instructing Me to accept the path of devotional service."

These are some of the exchanges of mellows between the Supreme Lord and His devotees. Yet even the devotees--what to speak of ordinary men--could not recognize the Lord as He unfolded His pastimes in the mood of a scholar. Navadvīpa was the seat of learning in those days, and students and scholars came there from all over. There were many pure Vaiṣṇava amongst them, especially from Caṭṭagrāma, who had come to live near the bank of the Ganges. By the Lord's desire all those Vaiṣṇavas had appeared in Navadvīpa. Abandoning all physical and material pleasures, they were fully attached to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. They met daily, studied together and in solitude--away from the bustle of materialistic life--they discussed pastimes of Lord Govinda's.

Śrī Mukunda was especially loved by all the other Vaiṣṇavas because he could melt anyone's heart with his beautiful

singing. Towards evening, the devotees would gather in Śrī Ācārya's house, and when Mukunda would sing devotional songs to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the devotees would lose their composure. Some would cry, others would laugh loudly, and still others would dance. Some lost consciousness of themselves and their clothes and would roll on the ground, feeling great ecstasy. Some chanted loudly as if roaring like lions, and others slapped their thighs as wrestlers do. Still others simply touched the feet of Śrī Mukunda. The whole place became transformed into a most blissful scene, and all the Vaiṣṇavas forgot their previous sufferings.

The Supreme Lord Gaurasundara was always pleased with Mukunda. Whenever He saw Mukunda He would go and embrace him. Nīmāi would ask Mukunda for his comment on some subject and Mukunda would earnestly try to explain it. But the Lord would immediately reply that Mukunda's arguments were all wrong, and inevitably an argument would ensue. Mukunda had become a respected scholar by such meetings with the Lord, and he would argue with the Lord, presenting pros and cons to establish his arguments. Of course, the Supreme Lord recognized His devotees and enjoyed such exchanges.

Lord Caitanya also harassed Śrīvāsa in the same manner whenever He saw him. Most of the Vaiṣṇavas therefore tried to avoid meeting the Lord, who they felt simply wasted their time in useless sophistry and argument. The Vaiṣṇavas were fully detached from material pleasures, being totally immersed in love of Kṛṣṇa. Hence, they found no interest in any topics other than those related to Kṛṣṇa. They were not inspired to argue with the Lord on logic or other such material topics. In any case, the interactions invariably ended with the Lord making fun of them. Therefore when any of them spotted the Lord, they would change direction and keep distant. They enjoyed only Kṛṣṇa conscious topics, yet whenever the Lord met them He would only ask questions on logic and other material subjects.

One day Caitanya was walking down the main street with some other students. Mukunda happened to be coming that way at the same time, going for his daily bath in the river. Seeing the Lord from a distance, Mukunda quickly turned away. The Lord saw Mukunda sneak away and He asked His servant Govinda, "Why did this fellow run away on seeing Me?"

"Dear learned *brāhmaṇa*, I don't know why he has gone away," said Govinda. "Maybe he has some other work."

"I know why he ran away," said Gaurāṅga. "He does not like to talk about mundane subject matters. This fellow only studies devotional scriptures while I juggle with astrology, theology, verb rules and grammar. Because I do not talk about Kṛṣṇa he has avoided Me." Using harsh terms He pretended to slander Mukunda, but He was actually very pleased with him. In this way He simultaneously revealed His own supreme identity.

"All right Mukunda, we will see how long you can avoid Me," laughed the Lord. "Let Me catch you another day and you will see how much of a Vaiṣṇava I am. I will become such a Vaiṣṇava that Śiva and Lord Brahmā will come and stand at My doorstep. So My brothers, now hear from Me carefully. I will become the most famous Vaiṣṇava. Those who are running away at the sight of Me now will also sing My glories." He laughed at His own speech and left with all His disciples. Who can appreciate such pleasurable pastimes of the Lord Viśvambhara if He Himself does not reveal it within one's heart?

While the devotees in Navadvīpa displayed wonderful qualities, the rest of the residents were mad after wealth, sons, and other such material properties. If they heard the chanting of the Lord's holy name they blasphemed the devotees saying, "They are singing only with the hope of filling their bellies."

Other atheistic persons remarked, "These people want to avoid speculative knowledge and prefer to dance in the road like upstarts. What sort of behavior is this?"

Another person said, "How much of the *Bhāgavata* and other scriptures have they read that they dance and cry all the time. Is this their devotional path? This Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and his three brothers will not even allow us to sleep after a good meal. I would ask them whether there is no spiritual benefit from chanting Kṛṣṇa's name softly, or is it only by howling and dancing that some special benefit is derived?"

The atheists hurled offenses at the Vaiṣṇavas whenever they saw them. The Vaiṣṇavas lamented the state of the people in general and ardently cried Kṛṣṇa's holy name. "O Lord! How long before all this suffering is eradicated from the world?" they prayed. "Dear Kṛṣṇa, please incarnate in this sinful material world."

At Advaita Ācārya's house the Vaiṣṇavas described the insults they had received from the Navadvīpa community. Advaita Ācārya Prabhu could hardly tolerate insults to the devotees and grew enraged like an incarnation of Lord Rudra, the destroyer of the material world. He roared furiously, "I shall destroy everyone! My Lord, the carrier of the Sudarśana disc will soon appear here in Nadia, and then everyone will see what He does. I shall report all these offenses to My Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. Then only will this slave Advaita be worthy to be called the servant of Kṛṣṇa. My dear brothers, please remain patient a little longer, then here in Nadia itself you shall see Kṛṣṇa reveal His wonderful pastimes."

Advaita Ācārya's encouraging words instilled new life in their hearts. The Vaiṣṇavas forgot their distressed condition and

began chanting the holy name of the Lord. With Śrī Advaita they jubilantly sang the all-auspicious names of Lord Kṛṣṇa and became blissfully intoxicated by the sweet sound. The caustic remarks of the atheists faded far into the background of their thoughts.

Nimāi Paṇḍita continued His education happily. He was a constant source of pleasure for mother Śacī. Around this time Śrī Īśvara Purī came to Navadvīpa unobtrusively dressed as a *ekadaṇḍī-sannyāsī*. He was a magnanimous personality, always absorbed in tasting the nectar of love of Kṛṣṇa. He was extremely dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa and compassionate towards all. Because of his humble attire, no one recognized him.

One day Īśvara Purī went to Advaita Ācārya's house, but the *ācārya* was engaged in *seva* at that time. Īśvara Purī sat in front of Advaita Prabhu. The Vaiṣṇava's effulgence can not be hidden from other Vaiṣṇavas, therefore Advaita Ācārya Prabhu repeatedly glanced towards Īśvara Purī.

Ācārya Prabhu then addressed him respectfully, "Dear saintly person, who are you? I have the feeling that you are a Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī*."

"I am worse than a fourth-class person," replied Īśvara Purī. I have come here simply to see Your lotus feet."

Mukunda also recognized the symptoms of a pure Vaiṣṇava in the *sannyāsī* and so he spontaneously broke into devotional song. At the sound of Mukunda's voice, Īśvara Purī fell to the ground. Incessant tears poured from his eyes while repeated and increasing bursts of devotional ecstasy overcame him. Advaita Ācārya was alarmed and drew Īśvara Purī quickly into His arms. Soon He was bathed with the saint's tears and they were both swept away by ecstatic waves of love of God, unable to control their spiritual emotions. Inspired by them, Mukunda sang *oneśloka* after another.

The assembled Vaiṣṇavas were astounded to see such a display of intense spiritual emotions and their hearts filled with divine happiness. Later, when the devotees learned that the humble *sannyāsī* was Īśvara Purī, they broke into spontaneous *kīrtana*, overjoyed that such a great devotee was in their presence. In this humble way Śrī Purī wandered around Navadvīpa, not recognized by anyone.

One day Lord Gauracandra was returning home after teaching some students and by divine arrangement He saw Īśvara Purī on the way. Recognizing His servant and dear devotee, the Lord offered him respect. Lord Viśvambhara's unsurpassed beauty was impossible to describe. He was a perfect personality in all respects. No one could understand His inner feelings, yet everyone regarded Him with awe and respect. Śrīla Īśvara Purī glanced at the Lord and knew immediately that Nimāi was a grave and sublime transcendental personality.

"What is Your name, O learned *brāhmaṇa*?" asked Śrī Purī. "Which book are You carrying? What do You teach and where is Your place of residence?" Some other students introduced Nimāi and Śrī Īśvara Purī exclaimed, "Oh, You are that same Nimāi Paṇḍita."

Śrī Īśvara Purī's pleasure was quite apparent. The Lord begged him to accept *prasāda* at His house and they returned home together, as Śrī Īśvara Purī lavished affection on Nimāi. Mother Śacī prepared a feast and offered it to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Purī accepted the *mahā-prasāda*, and afterwards sat in the temple room. He began to narrate the wonderful pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and at one stage he fell silent, perplexed with ecstatic emotions of love of Godhead and unable to speak any further. Nimāi and everyone else experienced wonderful joy as the nectar of devotion flowed profusely from Śrī Purī.

Īśvara Purī never exhibited ecstatic symptoms amongst materialistic people. He stayed in the house of Gopinātha Ācārya in Navadvīpa for seven months. The hearts of the Vaiṣṇavas were light with joy because of his association; the Lord himself visited Śrī Purī daily.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita was also a well-loved member of the Vaiṣṇava community because of his love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. From childhood he was completely detached from and disgusted with material life. He was favored and loved by Īśvara Purī. In his association Śrī Purīpāda would read *Kṛṣṇa-līlāmṛta* which he had composed, and then he explained the different esoteric truths.

Lord Caitanya visited Īśvara Purī every evening after teaching His students. Īśvara Purī was always glad to see Him. Although he did not know that Nimāi was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his love and affection for Him flowed unrestrained. He spoke affectionately to the Lord, "I know You are a great scholar. I have written a book about Lord Kṛṣṇa. I want you to go through it and find the mistakes. This will please me very much."

"These are descriptions of Lord Kṛṣṇa by a pure devotee," replied Nimāi. If anyone finds any mistake, then he is a sinful offender. The pure devotee never writes anything from his imagination, devoid of a scriptural basis. These writings are bona fide and always pleasing to Lord Kṛṣṇa. When offering obeisances in the temple an ignorant person might make a grammatical mistake in addressing Lord Kṛṣṇa, while a learned scholar would address Him using proper grammar. But the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa accepts both their obeisances. The Supreme Lord is not impressed with mere learning, but He is supplicated by the inner mood of surrender of the living entities. Whoever looks for faults in your writings is actually at

fault himself because Kṛṣṇa is fully satisfied by the writing of His pure devotee. Whatever you have written is an expression of your love for Kṛṣṇa. Who has the audacity to find some discrepancy in it?"

Īśvara Purī felt ecstasy surge through his entire body with the explanation of Nimāi Paṇḍita. Yet he affectionately persisted, "I know You are not critical, but in my works there may be so many types of errors. Please point them out to me." Such discussions between Śrī Purī and Nimāi Paṇḍita were a daily occurrence and everyone enjoyed such occasions together.

One day Nimāi Paṇḍita detected a fault in one of Īśvara Purī's poems and commented that the use of the verb root was inaccurate. "It should be a different verb, not *atmanepadi* as you have used here," said the Lord. After the discussion Nimāi went home. Īśvara Purī was an erudite scholar, well versed in all the scriptures and no less *apaṇḍita* in grammar and other materialistic subjects. After Nimāi left, he considered Nimāi's comment from various aspects and compared it with many different grammatical or sastric conclusions. When Nimāi came to see him the next day Śrī Purī said, "That verb root You considered to be wrong is actually correct as I have used it. It should not be *beparapadi* as You suggested, *atmanepadi* is the correct usage."

The Lord was overjoyed that His servant and devotee was victorious over Him. That was the Lord's magnanimous nature through which He always increased the name, fame, and victory of His devotees. This has been confirmed in all the Vedic scriptures.

Having enjoyed every moment of his association with the Supreme Lord—engaged in discussion and debate like two scholars—Īśvara Purī left Navadvīpa. He could never remain long in one place because the restlessness of ecstatic devotional love tugged at his heart. He travelled, purifying each place he visited.

Whoever is fortunate enough to attentively hear these wonderful narrations about Īśvara Purī is immediately transported to the place where the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa are ever offering shelter and mercy. Śrīla Īśvara Purī was fully empowered by Śrī Mādhavendra Purī and was thus endowed with intense love of God. He had received that full love and affection from his spiritual master by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. Īśvara Purī roamed everywhere, unconcerned and fully blissful.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Candra are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, humbly offer my song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter Twelve

All glories to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Gaurasundara! All glories to the servant followers of the Supreme Lord!

Nimāi was fully engaged in performing His transcendental pastimes as a scholar in Navadvīpa. Always with a book in hand, He went about Navadvīpa challenging all the scholars and teachers to debate on practically any subject matter, but no one could meet His challenge. The Lord was supposed to have studied only grammar. Yet He regarded acclaimed and titled scholars with disdain. He was a self-satisfied scholar and went about Navadvīpa with His disciples and student who were very fortunate due to His association.

One day He quite unexpectedly met Mukunda on the road. Catching him by the hand, the Lord demanded - "What is your reason for avoiding Me or turning away when you see Me? Today let Me see how you escape without answering My questions."

"How am I going to defeat Him today?" thought Mukunda. "I know that He is well versed in grammar, so I shall question Him on *alaṅkāra* (figures of speech) and defeat Him so thoroughly that He will never boast to me again." The debate began and they plied each other with questions. The Lord defeated each of Mukunda's explanations. Then Mukunda suggested, "Grammar is for small children. Only young students discuss these subjects. We should rather discuss figures of speech."

"Whatever you wish," replied Nimāi. Mukunda quoted difficult and lofty *śloka*s one after the other, asking questions on different aspects of the figures of speech. The omnipotent Supreme Lord pointed out mistakes in everyone of his compositions and smashed all his arguments. Mukunda was unable to establish any new points.

"Today, return to your house and please study your books properly," said the Lord smiling. "Tomorrow, if you want, I will put you to the test again." Mukunda took the dust from the Lord's lotus feet and left thinking about this wonderful incident. "It is not possible for a human being to possess such knowledge," thought Mukunda. "He is well versed in all the scriptures and subjects. There is not one thing He does not know. He is such a genius. If only He were a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, then I would never leave His company for a moment."

The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha enjoyed the mood of a scholar while roaming about Navadvīpa. On another occasion He met Gadādhara Paṇḍita. The Lord grasped both of Gadādhara's hands and said, "I heard you study logic. You must answer My questions before you leave." Gadādhara Paṇḍita agreed and the Lord began, "Tell me the symptoms of liberation."

Gadādhara replied according to knowledge he had gained from the books, but the Lord said, "Your explanations are not up to standard."

Gadādhara insisted, "According to the scriptures, liberation is the extirpation of extreme suffering."

Nimāi Paṇḍita, the Lord of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, pointed out various discrepancies in Gadādhara Paṇḍita's explanation. There was no one who could defeat the Lord, no one who could win in a debate with Him. Therefore Gadādhara only thought of escaping Nimāi's association.

"Gadādhara, you should go home today and come early tomorrow, then I will properly explain the meaning for you," said Nimāi. Gadādhara offered his respect to Nimāi and left as quickly as possible. Nimāi then continued to roam about Navadvīpa with His students.

Everyone now recognized Nimāi as an erudite scholar and people in general were very respectful towards Him. In the late afternoon the Lord would sit in the midst of His students on the bank of the Ganges. Nothing in the cosmic creation could compare with His charm for He was continually worshiped by Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of wealth.

Śrī Śacinandana explained the scriptures and all His students sat around him listening. Around evening time the Vaiṣṇavas came and sat at a distance from the Lord listening to his explanations with mixed feelings of elation and depression.

"What is the benefit of possessing so much beauty and such vast learning if one does not worship Kṛṣṇa?" commented one devotee.

"I have to run away when I see Him, lest He catch me and defeat me with His tricky questions," said another.

"If He catches you, you cannot escape. He forces you to stay as though He had the authority of some government official," complained another.

"But His strength is so extraordinary," concluded one devotee, "that I think He must be some great personality. Although He harasses us with tricky questions, somehow I feel very pleased each time I see Him. I have yet to meet anyone with His erudition. The only thing that disheartens me is that He does not worship Lord Kṛṣṇa."

The devotees sincerely prayed that Nimāi would develop some attachment for the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. They prostrated themselves on the bank of the Ganges and petitioned the Lord on Nimāi's behalf. "O Lord Kṛṣṇa, please allow the son of Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra to be always absorbed in You, leaving aside His other pursuits," they prayed. "Allow Him to worship You always in loving devotion and then we can all associate with Him."

In this way, Nimāi received the blessings of the pure devotees. As the Supreme Personality of Godhead residing in everyone's heart, He knew their mentality. Whenever He saw Śrīvāsa and other elevated devotees He would always offer them respect. He accepted the blessings of the Vaiṣṇavas, knowing that only through such blessings could love of Kṛṣṇa be achieved.

Often devotees questioned Him, "Why do You waste Your time pursuing material knowledge? What will You gain?" Others would advise, "You should begin to worship the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately. What is the ultimate aim of education? It is only to know the Supreme Lord, and if You miss this point then what is the use of all Your erudition?"

The Lord affectionately replied, "I am truly very fortunate that all of you are so intent about teaching Me the path of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Within My heart I know that whoever receives your blessings is most fortunate. I have always thought that I would take shelter of a pure Vaiṣṇava, but only after I have studied a little longer."

The Lord conversed affectionately with His devotees in this manner and yet remained undetected by anyone through the influence of His internal potency, *māyā*. The Lord charmed everyone and stole their hearts. There was no one who did not wait eagerly to meet the Lord again. The citizens of Navadvīpa were equally happy to meet Śrī Gauracandra and whenever they saw Him they offered respect.

Each of the townspeople saw the Lord according to his own mentality. The ladies thought, "O, here is Cupid." The scholars offered Him great respect thinking He was Bṛhaspati, the priest of the demigods. The mystic yogis considered Him to be a perfected being, while the evil-minded atheists and sinners beheld Him with fear.

Nimāi's charm was irresistible. Whoever conversed with Him became captivated as though bound by the ropes of love.

Although He acted like a braggart, flouncing His erudition, still people heard Him with affection. Even the Muslims and others felt affection for the Lord. That was only natural because the Lord's nature was magnanimous.

The Supreme Lord of all the spiritual planets was teaching many students in front of Mukunda and Sañjaya's house. Never tiring from debate on any point, Lord Viśvambhara, Śrī Śacinandana, exhibited His pastimes as a scholar. None of the fortunate souls who had contact with Gaurasundara, including Mukunda and Sañjaya, could understand the reason for their exhilaration in the Lord's company. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha had mastered all the branches of education, and He exhibited this transcendental pastime in the mood of a erudite scholar for the pleasure of everyone.

One day the Lord pretended He was sick from a certain kind of disorder and used this to reveal ecstatic symptoms of devotional service. Suddenly He uttered some thing mystical and indecipherable. Falling to the ground He rolled around breaking everything within reach. He roared like thunder - like a challenging wrestler - and struck whoever came near Him. At one moment His body would be paralyzed and in the next moment He would fall unconscious. Those who witnessed the malady were frightened. News spread that He was suffering from a wind disorder and all His friends rushed in to try to help. Buddhimanta Khān, Mukunda and Sañjaya came quickly to His house with the entire group. They applied different medicated, herbal oils on His head to bring Him back to a normal condition. In actuality Nimāi was pretending to be sick, so no one could cure Him from His condition. His whole body quivered uncontrollably and He alternately sighed and roared, making everyone fearful.

"I am the Lord of the entire universe," said Nimāi. "I am the maintainer and holder of the universe and My name is Viśvambhara. I am that same Supreme Personality who is the Lord of all the spiritual planets, but none of you know Me." In His madness He rushed out to catch someone. Although Nimāi revealed His real identity during His illness still no one recognized Him because of the Lord's internal potency.

"Some demon must have possessed him," commented one person. And another immediately questioned, "Is this how a witch works?" "He is speaking constantly, therefore He must have some sort of wind disorder," suggested another person.

In this way each one offered his own opinion, but none of them could understand the Lord in truth because of the influence of His illusory potency, the internal potency of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu.

People continued to try to cure the Lord by applying a variety of oils on His head and body. He dripped with oil, yet kept on laughing as if to substantiate the existence of a wind disorder that was affecting His mind. After some time the Lord became normal again of His own accord. Such are the wonderful pastimes of the Supreme Lord.

Everyone was relieved and jubilantly chanted Lord Hari's name. Their relief was so great that they began to give gifts and receive gifts from others without knowing to whom they gave or from whom they took. They all blessed the Lord with a long life. Who can comprehend these transcendental activities of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha if He Himself does not mercifully reveal it?

The Vaiṣṇavas, who were accustomed to give good advice to the Lord whenever they saw Him, now advised, "Dear Sir, please worship the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Time is short and the body is temporary. But what can we teach You, for after all You are the most learned person?"

The Lord smiled in acquiescence, offered the Vaiṣṇavas respect, and left to teach His students in the house of the pious Mukunda and Sañjaya. His hair still smelling sweet from the medicated oils, Lord Gaurasundara sat amongst His disciples and began to teach. In that gathering the Lord looked like a gem surrounded by many precious jewels. It is impossible to give proper analogy. It could have been Lord Nārāyaṇa in Badarikāśrama sitting in the midst of His devotees like Sanaka and others. There is no doubt that Śacinandana is that same Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality. Thus He enacted His scholarly pastimes with His students and devotees.

After holding class for several hours, Gaurasundara and His students would break at midday for their bath in the Ganges. After that the Lord would return home for His daily worship of Lord Viṣṇu.

He offered water to Tulasīdevī, circumambulated her, and then sat down to eat His meal while chanting the name of Lord Hari. Lakṣmīdevī served the *prasāda* to her Lord while mother Śacī looked on, drinking in the Lord's beauty to her full satisfaction. After eating the Lord chewed some betel leaf and lay down while Lakṣmī massaged His lotus feet. For a while He would rest in a transcendental sleep, and upon rising He would again take His books in His hand and leave the house. Out in the street, Gaurasundara gave and received great pleasure in talking with anyone He met. No one knew He was in fact the Supreme Lord, yet everyone offered Him respect. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Śacinandana walked casually throughout the town where everyone could see Him although He was unapproachable even by demigods.

One day Nimāi came to a weaver's house. The weaver received his guest with reverence. "Bring Me a fine piece of cloth," said the Lord, and the weaver immediately produced a very good piece.

“How much will you take for this?” asked Nimāi.

“Whatever You want to give,” replied the weaver.

Nimāi estimated the price and said, “I have no coins today.”

“My dear respected *brāhmaṇa*,” said the weaver, “You can give it to me in ten or fifteen days. Take this cloth and wear it. If You are satisfied, You can pay me later.” The Supreme Lord cast His merciful glance on the weaver and left his place.

At the house of the milkman Nimāi took advantage of His position as a *brāhmaṇa*. “Bring Me some milk and yogurt,” said Gaurasundara. “Today I shall accept some charity from you.” To the milkmen Nimāi looked like Cupid personified because of His brilliant beauty. Carefully and with great reverence they seated Him comfortably and began joking with Him. Affectionately they called Him uncle.

“Come Uncle, come to my house and take some rice,” said one milkman grasping Nimāi’s arm as though He would take Him physically. “No, come to my house for rice. Don’t you remember when You ate in my house previously?” said another jokingly.

Actually Nimāi had never visited their houses except in His previous incarnation as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The milkman could not know the depth of his joke, nor did Nimāi reveal it. He was satisfied with His secret. The milkmen brought milk, clarified butter, yogurt, cream and curd and offered it to the Lord. The Lord was pleased with the milkmen and after blessing them He left for the house of the perfumer.

The perfume maker received the Lord with great respect and offered prayers at His lotus feet. “Dear brother, bring Me some good perfumes,” said Nimāi. The perfumer immediately went inside and came back with his best collection.

“What is the price?” asked Nimāi.

“You know everything,” replied the perfumer. “Would it be proper for me to ask payment from You? Take this perfume and use it for a few days. If the perfume suits You, You may pay me whatever You like.” The perfumer smeared Nimāi’s body with fragrant oil and received indescribable pleasure from the service. How could he have remained unaffected while serving the beautiful body of the Lord, who attracts the hearts of all living entities? Nimāi blessed the perfumer and went on to the house of the florist.

The florist was stuck with wonder to see such an extremely charming person. He offered his obeisances to the Lord and with both respect and affection he gave Him a place to sit.

“I would like a very beautiful garland, but I do not have any money with Me,” said Nimāi.

Noticing the signs of divinity on the Lord’s person, the florist said, “You do not have to give anything.” The florist then brought a beautiful garland and placed it round the Lord’s neck. This pleased the Lord who began to laugh along with the disciples and students who had accompanied Him. The Lord blessed the florist and went next to the house of the betel leaf dealer.

The pan dealer saw that he had Cupid in person as a visitor. First touching the lotus feet of the Lord, the merchant then offered him a seat.

“It is my great fortune that you have visited this humble dwelling of mine.” He then spontaneously prepared a betel pan leaf for the Lord and offered it to Him. “Why did you give Me this pan without being paid?” asked the Lord with a sweet smile.

“I simply acted on the prompting of my heart,” said the pan merchant. The Lord was pleased with the merchant’s simple honesty and was satisfied to chew the betel pan he had been given. The dealer made a packet containing betel leaves with other valuable tasty spices like camphor and offered it to the Lord with faith and respect. In return he received the causeless mercy of the Lord. Nimāi continued to visit the people of Navadvīpa in this way. Being an exact replica of Mathurā, Navadvīpa was an opulent town even before the advent of the Lord. The *lakhs* of inhabitants busied themselves throughout the town. This was all prearranged by the desire of the Lord. Navadvīpa was prepared to receive the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Just as Lord Kṛṣṇa had gone through Mathurā meeting the various residents, in this incarnation Lord Caitanya had enacted the same wonderful pastime.

The Lord then visited the house of the conch shell dealer. The merchant received the Lord with great respect and offered his obeisances at the Lord’s lotus feet.

"Dear brother, please bring Me a beautiful conch shell," said Nīmāi. The merchant delivered his most beautiful shell and offered his obeisances again, but the Lord asked, "How will I take it with Me as I am not carrying any money?"

"Respected *brāhmaṇa*, please take this conch shell home with You. You can pay me later, or if You do not pay me at all it does not matter." The Lord was satisfied with the conch shell dealer's affection and blessed him.

In this manner the Lord visited many houses in Navadvīpa and showered each one with His mercy. Because of their great fortune, even today the residents of Navadvīpa receive the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Gauracandra and Śrī Nityānanda.

The fully independent Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Gauracandra then went to the house of the astrologer. The astrologer saw a divine personality before him, glowing with spiritual radiance, and he humbly offered his respectful obeisances and a seat.

"I heard that you are a good astrologer," said the Lord. "Tell Me who I was in My previous birth."

The astrologer chanted his Gopāla mantra and went into meditation. He saw the four-handed form of Lord Kṛṣṇa with a complexion of a dark monsoon cloud. The Lord was holding a conch shell, the Sudarśana cakra, a club, and a lotus in His hands. He saw the Lord bathed in divine effulgence with the Kaustubha jewel hanging from His neck, and His chest was marked with Śrīvatsa. He then saw the prison house of Kāṁsa, with Vasudeva and mother Devakī holding the newborn baby in the late night. Then Śrī Vasudeva carried the child to Gokula for safety.

Again the astrologer saw the Lord as a charming two-handed little boy without any clothes. The jewelry around His waist tinkled sweetly with each movement and both His hands were filled with creamy butter. The astrologer saw the same divine signs on Śrī Caitanya that he had always seen on Gopāla, the form of Kṛṣṇa on which he meditated daily.

Once again the astrologer's vision changed and he saw the threefold bending form of Lord Kṛṣṇa playing His flute, while the *gopīs* around Him played on different musical instruments. The astrologer was struck with wonder and he opened his eyes to observe the beautiful form of the Lord on which he continued to meditate.

Then he prayed aloud to his worshipable Lord Śrī Gopāla. "O Gopāla, please reveal to me the real identity of this young *brāhmaṇa*." The astrologer then saw in his meditation the Supreme Lord with the complexion of *durvā* grass holding a bow in one hand while sitting on a kingly throne. Again he saw the Lord as Varāha the boar, balancing the earth between His tusks as He rose magnificently out of the ocean depths. He saw Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, the terrifying half-human, half-lion incarnation who appeared to protect His pure devotees. Then Vāmana appeared in the sacrificial arena of Bali Mahārāja. After that he saw Matsya saving the Vedic scriptures from destruction in the waters of annihilation.

Within his meditation, the pious astrologer then saw Lord Balarāma carrying His divine plough, and after that he saw Jagannātha and Balarāma with Subhadrā standing between them. All the incarnations of the Lord appeared to the astrologer, yet because of the Lord's illusory energy he could not understand the deeper meaning of his divine vision.

The astrologer was mystified and thought to himself, "Maybe this *brāhmaṇa* is very expert in chanting mantras for incarnations, or maybe He is some demigod in the form of a *brāhmaṇa* trying to amuse Himself and test me. He certainly possesses an extraordinary effulgence. Maybe he has come as an astrologer and clairvoyant to disgrace me."

The Lord interrupted his thoughts and said, "What do you see? Tell Me, who am I. Tell Me everything in detail."

"Please go now," said the confused astrologer. "Later in the afternoon when I have chanted my mantras properly I shall tell You everything." The Lord wished him well and went to the house of His dear friend, Śrīdhara.

The Lord was always pleased with Śrīdhara's behavior and He would use any excuse to visit him. They would converse confidentially and joke with each other. In this way several hours a day could be passed very happily. Śrīdhara offered the Lord obeisances and a seat as soon as He arrived. Śrīdhara's calm and mild personality stood in obvious contrast to Nīmāi's stormy character.

"Śrīdhara you are always chanting Lord Hari's name, so what is the reason for your suffering? You are serving the husband and master of Śrī Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune, so why are you always in want of food and clothes?"

"I am not starving," replied Śrīdhara, "And as You can see, I have clothes on. They are neither fine clothes nor the right size, but my body is covered."

"But Śrīdhara," argued the Lord, "your clothes are torn in several places and I know you have neither straw nor rice in the house. Look around you. All the citizens worship goddess Candi (Durgā) the destroyer of all enemies, and none of them suffer for want of food, shelter, or clothing."

"You have made a good point," replied Śrīdhara, "but generally speaking, everyone's life is almost the same. The King may

live in a palace surrounded by opulence and eat sumptuously while the birds live in the open or in a simple nest in a tree top and gather their own humble food. But basically everyone's approach to life is similar. By the Lord's design each of us must meet the demands of duty and in doing so we behave more or less alike. Personally I prefer to live the life I am leading now."

"I am sure you have immense wealth hidden somewhere," accused the Lord, "and you are relishing opulent food in secret. Soon I will make it known to everyone, and then we will see how you continue to cheat the people."

"Come to my house, dear learned *brāhmaṇa*," invited Śrīdhara, "and see for Yourself. We should not start an argument here."

"I am not going to let you off so easily," said Nimāi, "Tell Me what you are going to feed Me?"

"I make a simple living selling leaf cups," replied Śrīdhara. "What can I offer to give You from such an income, respected *brāhmaṇa*?"

"I am not going to touch Your hidden wealth now: I will get that later," assured Nimāi. "But if you give Me banana root and some banana stalks right now without taking money, then I will not fight with you any more."

Śrīdhara thought to himself, "He is a very aggressive *brāhmaṇa*. Someday He might even beat me. But even if He does beat me, what can I do? I really cannot afford to give Him whatever He wants free each day. But I see He has a godly form; He is not an ordinary personality by any means. If He takes my things by force or by some other tricky means, then He is free to do so. I think this is my good fortune, and in spite of my poverty I will continue to give Him whatever He wants."

Having made his decision, Śrīdhara answered the Lord, "Dear *brāhmaṇa*, You do not have to pay me anything at all. I will give You whatever You want with an open and happy heart. Take Your bananas and other vegetables, take the leaf cups that I have, and please do not fight with me anymore."

"Yes that is a very satisfactory agreement," said Nimāi. "There should be no further fights, but please see to it that I get good quality bananas, banana stalks, and radishes." Daily the Lord ate with Śrīdhara from his leaf cups, relishing his bananas, banana stalks, radishes and Śrīdhara's cooking in general. When a gourd grew on Śrīdhara's roof top, the Lord had it cooked into a special preparation made with milk and hot spices.

One day the Lord asked, "Śrīdhara what do you think of Me? As soon as you tell Me that, I shall return to My house."

Śrīdhara replied, "You are a *brāhmaṇa*, part and parcel of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu."

"No, you do not know," said Nimāi. "I belong to the community of cowherds and milk men. You see Me as a young *brāhmaṇa* boy, but I consider Myself to be simply a milk man."

Śrīdhara just smiled at the Lord's comment; he could not recognize his own Lord and master, being deluded by the Lord's internal potency.

"Śrīdhara, I am going to reveal to you an esoteric truth. You see the River Ganges? I am the source of the Ganges."

"O Nimāi Paṇḍita! Have You no fear in disrespecting Gaṅgādevī like this?" asked the disturbed Śrīdhara. "People usually become grave and serious as they grow older, but Your frivolity seems to have doubled since Your childhood."

After staying with Śrīdhara for sometime, Nimāi Paṇḍita returned home. He entered the temple room of Lord Viṣṇu and His students took that as an indication that they should also return to their homes.

The rising full moon in the evening stirred wonderful spiritual emotions within Lord Nimāi. Memories of the moonlike Vṛndāvana Candra rose within His heart. Nimāi's flute played an extraordinary beautiful melody that only mother Śacī could hear. The flute that charms the entire creation stole mother Śacī's consciousness, carrying it away on the wings of ecstasy. Slowly she regained her external awareness and after steadying her mind, she listened to the beautiful melody. The captivating flute seemed to come from Gaurasundara's direction. The music drew mother Śacī from her room to the temple room where she saw Nimāi. The sound of the flute stopped completely and on her son's chest she saw the full rising moon and the fathomless firmament. She was overcome by amazement and glanced restively in all directions before returning to her room. She sat down to analyze what she had heard and seen, but she could not find a proper explanation.

Mother Śacī was fortunate to see Nimāi's endless supernatural phenomenon. Some nights she heard many people singing, dancing, and playing instruments as if some festival was in progress. She sometimes noticed the entire house, doors, walls, and windows emanating a brilliant light. On some days she saw divinely beautiful ladies—as attractive as Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune—roaming about with lotus flowers in their hands. Occasionally she saw effulgent demigods who would appear and disappear within a moment.

Mother Śacī's visions were certainly not imagination. She was the embodiment of devotional service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, and all the *Vedas* glorify her. Merely her glance on any person could purify him so that he could also have the same transcendental visions.

Śrī Gaurasundara, who is the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, lived incognito in Navadvīpa, simply relishing His own divine self. Sometimes He revealed His true identity, but none of His eternal servants could recognize Him. In His Navadvīpa pastimes the Lord liked to be very arrogant, in fact, no one could match that arrogance. Whenever the Supreme Lord performed any pastime, His activities could not be equaled by anyone. When the Lord feels like performing His chivalrous pastimes, then there is no one to challenge His mastery over weapons. And when He wants to reveal His amorous pastimes, then He captivates the hearts of millions of beautiful damsels. When He wants to enjoy opulence, then His opulence and magnificence is unmatched. Now in His pastimes as an erudite scholar there is no one to match His insolent arrogance, and when the same Lord accepts the renounced order of life, then who can excel Him in devotion, dedication, and renunciation? Is there anyone in the three worlds to match Him? Yet in all His incarnations and pastimes the zenith of all activities is voluntary loving defeat in the hands of His pure unalloyed devotees.

One day the Lord was walking down the thoroughfare in Navadvīpa surrounded by a few of His students. His movement, dress, and behavior was that of a king, and He wore a golden yellow dhoti exactly like Kṛṣṇa. His face reflected a million rising full moons, and He had soft red lips. People would look and say, "Is He Cupid in person?" His exquisite forehead held the *tilaka* mark, His hands clutched His books, and as soon as anyone beheld His lotus-petaled eyes, they were freed of all sinful thoughts and reactions.

The Lord had a restless nature. As he walked along with his students He swung his arms in a carefree manner. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita also happened to be walking on this road and as soon he saw the Lord he immediately felt great happiness. The Lord offered His obeisances to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita as soon as He saw him.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, the magnanimous personality blessed the Lord saying, "May You live a long life." Then with a laugh he inquired, "Where are You off to now, my dear epitome of vanity? What futile work are You wasting Your time on instead of worshiping the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. And why do You spend days and nights nonstop teaching people? And why do You not allow people to educate themselves so that they can get knowledge about Lord Kṛṣṇa and the process of devotional service? What is the use of education and knowledge if devotional service is not the ultimate goal? From now on do not waste even a single moment in futile activities. You have become educated; now utilize Your time in worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa."

"O respected Paṇḍita," replied Nimāi, "I am sure that by your grace devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is possible even for Me."

Graciously the Lord took leave of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and went to the bank of the Ganges. The Lord's beauty was indescribable as He sat in the midst of His students. One might say He looked like the moon surrounded by a starry firmament. But that analogy is inaccurate for the moon is not without flaw. Its waxing and waning diminish its glory, whereas the exhilarating beauty of the Lord was continuous. Therefore such a comparison is inaccurate in describing the Lord's beauty. To compare Him with Bṛhaspati is also inadequate for Bṛhaspati is the spiritual master of only the demigods, whereas the Supreme Lord Gauracandra is the supreme shelter and preceptor of all living entities. To compare Him with Cupid is also incorrect, for remembrance of Cupid gives rise to material desire and ultimately grief within the heart, whereas remembrance of the Lord brings purification and freedom from material bondage through which one enjoys blissful eternal life.

It seems that all analogies are inappropriate except the one which is readily accepted by my heart. On the banks of the Yamunā, Śrī Nanda-kumāra Kṛṣṇa sat surrounded by His young cowherd boyfriends. That same Kṛṣṇacandra and the same cowherd boys were also sitting on the banks of River Ganges. Whoever beheld the charming face of the Lord at that time experienced inexplicable ecstasy. The Lord's pure effulgent form inspired many opinions from the people who were present there.

One person said, "Such a brilliant effulgence is impossible for a human being." Another conjectured, "This *brāhmaṇa* must be a part or an expansion of Lord Viṣṇu."

"He has come to fulfill the prophecy that a *brāhmaṇa* would be the king of Bengal. I can see all the marks of royalty on His body," said another.

People continued to give their opinions as far as their intelligence would allow. And Nimāi, the cynosure of the residents of Navadvīpa, sat amongst His students, criticizing and minimizing the other teachers of Nadia. He would thoroughly defeat any argument on any subject, then by His superior intelligence he would again establish the same argument He had just defeated.

"I will accept that person as a scholar who has the courage to come and argue with Me," challenged Nimāi. "Who has sufficient intelligence to defeat My arguments?" In this way the Supreme Lord boasted and thus destroyed the false ego of

the scholars of Navadvīpa.

The Lord had a countless following of students. People would simply come and offer themselves to the Lord. Everyday many young *brāhmaṇa* boys would come and pray at the lotus feet of the Lord, “O great scholar, I want to study under You so that I may learn something. Please be gracious and grant me this wish.” The Lord would smile and accept them all, and in this way His students increased by the day.

The most precious gem of the Vaikuṇṭha planets sat amongst His students on the bank of the River Ganges, revealing His wonderful and pleasurable pastimes. The pious people could all see the Lord and everyone in Navadvīpa could feel His spiritual potency. There was no way to gauge the amount of good fortune that those people accumulated and the bliss they experienced just by seeing the Lord. One could become free from material bondage simply by seeing the fortunate souls whose hearts had been touched by the blissful existence of the Supreme Lord.

But alas for me, I have taken a sinful and wretched birth. I could not be born at that time. My life is bereft of that beautiful transcendental sight of Lord Gaurasundara. In spite of all this, O Lord Gauracandra, please grant me the mercy that I may remember this pastime of Yours in every birth. Wherever You and my Lord Nityānanda perform Your transcendental pastimes with Your eternal associates, may I also be present there as Your humble and insignificant servant. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. Your insignificant servant Vṛndāvana Dāsa offers this humble song at Your lotus feet.

Chapter Thirteen

All glories to Lord Gauracandra, the brightest lamp in the *brāhmaṇa* race! All glories to the Lord, who inspires the deepest feelings of ecstasy in the hearts of all His devotees! All glories to the Lord and master of Govinda dāsa, the door keeper! Please shower your merciful glances on the conditional living entities. All glories to the emperor of the *brāhmaṇas* and the crest jewel among all teachers! All glories to the society of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s devotees!

The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Nīmāi, was immersed in the mellow of an insolent and arrogant scholar. Navadvīpa town itself in those days was an institution, housing many scholars and teachers well versed in all branches of the scriptures. Titles like Bhaṭṭācārya, Cakravartī, Miśra, or Ācārya were common and the only work of these scholars was teaching. Their sport was debate and in their intolerant and impatient ways they did whatever was required to win an argument. Even if a well-respected superior scholar made valuable points, others would disagree with him.

Lord Nīmāi’s habit was to constantly rebuke the other scholars and refute their arguments right in front of them. There was no teacher in Navadvīpa who could confront the Lord’s arguments and offer a second opinion. As soon as they saw the Lord, such fear gripped their hearts that they immediately became obsequious. Whoever conversed with the Lord even by chance became His dedicated servant.

The Lord’s erudition and intellect from his early childhood was known to everyone. Within their hearts they also knew that Lord Nīmāi could never be defeated by anyone. The mere sight of the Lord created a feeling of awe and respect amongst the scholars, so they naturally became submissive in His presence. Yet His illusionary energy prevented anyone from knowing Him in truth. Only when the Lord revealed Himself of his own volition could one understand His real identity. Although the Supreme Lord is most munificent in every respect, it is entirely by His personal desire that one is able to perceive His confidential, transcendental pastimes. In Navadvīpa Lord Gauracandra performed His transcendental pastimes in the mood of a scholar, deluding everyone about His true identity.

Once a very learned but arrogant scholar holding the title Digvijaya—meaning one who has conquered scholars in all directions—came to Navadvīpa. He was a dedicated devotee of the goddess of learning, Sarasvatī, and he captivated her by chanting her propitiatory mantra. Mother Sarasvatī is actually the universal mother; she is nondifferent from Lakṣmīdevī, the eternal consort of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Nārāyaṇa. Lakṣmīdevī is the embodiment of transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord, she is the internal potency of the Lord and she is always situated on his breast.

By the *brāhmaṇa*’s desire and fortune he received benediction from her to become a Digvijaya scholar. For her to give such a boon was quite easy, for she is capable of benedicting anyone with even the rare gift of transcendental devotional service to the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa. Having received this benediction directly from goddess Sarasvatī, the *brāhmaṇa* proceeded to travel throughout the country, conquering scholars wherever he went. All the scriptures were on the tip of his tongue. No one in this world could challenge him. Many could not even follow his introduction to the main dissertations, so he went unchecked and unchallenged everywhere.

When Navadvīpa’s fame as a center for great scholars reached his ears, he went there with great éclat, leading a procession of elephants, horses and men. News spread like wildfire in every house of Navadvīpa, creating waves of confusion. After conquering the scholars of every land, the Digvijaya had at last come to Navadvīpa. The teachers of Navadvīpa were

further alarmed when they heard that he was a direct recipient of a boon from goddess Sarasvatī.

In those days Navadvīpa was the most famous center of learning in the entire world. If the Digvijaya were to defeat its scholars, Navadvīpa's glory would be minimized and the world would hear of its failure. Yet no one had the courage to challenge him for he was the recipient of mother Sarasvatī's special benediction. It was said that goddess Sarasvatī herself appeared on his tongue whenever he spoke. How could a mere human defeat him? The hundreds of Bhaṭṭācārya scholars residing in Navadvīpa were distraught with anxiety and abandoned all activities; Navadvīpa bustled with excitement as time for the trial of intellectual strength drew near.

All this was described in detail to Śrī Gaurāṅga by His students. "After conquering all other parts of the world, a Digvijaya Paṇḍita has come to Navadvīpa to challenge our scholars in debate. It is said that he has received the special favor of goddess Sarasvatī and he entered Navadvīpa in a great procession of horses, elephants, palanquins, and men. He says that if there are no challengers amongst the Navadvīpa scholars, he wants a letter of victory issued on his behalf."

Lord Gauracandra heard his students and then with a smile reminded them about the nature of the Absolute. "Listen brothers, and I will tell you the actual situation. The Supreme Lord does not tolerate anyone who indulges in continual insolence. Whenever He finds someone burdened by arrogance over some personal quality, He invariably removes the cause of their pride. A fruit-laden tree and a person endowed with good qualities will inevitably bend down in humility. You must have heard of other great conquerors like Haihaya, Nahuṣa, Veṇa, Bāṇa, Naraka, and Rāvaṇa. Did the Supreme Lord neglect to prune their overbearing pride? He never tolerates such ignominious insolence. Here in Navadvīpa you will witness the end of this supercilious scholar."

The Lord amused Himself with His students in this way. In the evening He went to the bank of the River Ganges, sprinkled some Ganges water on His head, offered His obeisances and then sat in the midst of His students. The Lord lectured on various subjects such as religion and its different scriptural explanations. No one, however, understood that the Lord was simultaneously thinking of the manner in which He could defeat the Digvijaya Paṇḍita.

"This *brāhmaṇa* has become extremely arrogant and he thinks that there is no one in this world to defeat him," thought the Lord. "If I humble him in front of everyone it will be like a shameful death for him. People will dishonor him, he will lose everything, and eventually he will die from humiliation. Therefore I must confront him secretly in a solitary place and yet insure his downfall. In that way I can eclipse his vanity without destroying him."

While the Supreme Lord was thinking in that manner the Digvijaya arrived at the Ganges. As dusk faded into night, the River Ganges looked radiant beneath the full moon in the soft, clear sky. The Supreme Lord was effulgent in the midst of His students and His exquisite beauty captivated the entire creation. A sweet smile decorated the glowing moon-like face of the Lord, and His two beautiful eyes showered transcendently merciful glances. Pearls were lack-luster in comparison with His teeth and His radiant lips were easily mistaken for the rising sun. With His soft and delicate body, He was the personification of compassion. His perfect head was covered with raven black curls; His graceful, lion-like neck rested perfectly on His beautiful broad shoulders. He was dressed in divinely exquisite clothes, His perfectly proportioned body was large and his heart was ruled by His munificent nature. The *brāhmaṇa*'s thread hanging loosely across his shoulders was the bow of Ananta Śeṣa. His long arms extended gracefully to his knees and the *ūrdhva-puṇḍra tilaka* decorating His wide forehead enraptured the hearts of everyone.

With His dhoti tied elegantly at His waist, Śrī Gaurāṅga sat in the cross-legged posture of a yogi, establishing and refuting various arguments in His usual manner of discourse. Many students had gathered around Mahāprabhu that evening, and the Digvijaya Paṇḍita was astonished to see the wonderful assembly. "Is this Nimāi Paṇḍita?" he thought.

Unseen by anyone he stood spellbound by the Lord's extraordinary beauty. "Who is this person?" he inquired from one of the students.

"This is the famous Nimāi Paṇḍita," replied the student.

After offering his obeisances to the Ganges, the Digvijaya moved a little closer to the Lord. On noticing him, Nimāi smiled at him and affectionately offered him a seat. Having already conquered all the scholars in the land, the Digvijaya Paṇḍita was naturally fearless, yet in the presence of the Lord he was filled with awe. By the design of the omnipotent Supreme Lord, whoever approaches Him in a challenging mood will feel both awe and fear.

The Lord exchanged a few words with the Paṇḍita and asked him a few questions. "You are an extremely versatile poet," said the Lord. "There is no subject which you cannot perfectly describe. Therefore, please elucidate the wonderful glories of the holy Ganges so that whoever hears it will be freed from sin."

At that very instant the Digvijaya Paṇḍita began to extemporarily compose and recite unparalleled verses in praise of the holy river. Who can imagine the countless ways in which he described mother Ganges! Verses swiftly passed his lips and his voice resounded like a continuous roll of thunder. It certainly seemed that mother Sarasvatī herself had appeared on the tip of his tongue. Whatever he uttered was precisely appropriate. Was it humanly possible to find a mistake in his

eloquent composition? There seemed to be no one present who could even understand them.

Nimāi's hundreds of students who had assembled there stared at the Paṇḍita with mouths agape. "O Lord Rāma," they said, "How wonderful! Is it possible for a human to compose such eloquent poetry?" His composition was profusely ornamented with the most exceptional figures of speech applied to the most appropriate topics. His word usage perplexed even the scholars who were present. For nearly an hour the Digvijaya composed and recited his unparalleled verses; there seemed to be no end to his brilliant oration.

When at last he finished, the Lord smiled sweetly and said, "Your poetry was so exceptional that no one can understand the meaning unless you yourself explain it. The verses you have composed are certainly appropriate for glorification of the Ganges, but we entreat you to analyze them for us."

The Lord's sweet words affected him like an intoxicating beverage and he began to explain his verses. But as soon as he started to speak, the Lord interrupted him to point out three mistakes—one in the beginning, one in the middle and one towards the end of the Paṇḍita's composition.

The Lord said, "According to grammar, the figures of speech you have used show numerous imperfections. Please tell us in what context you have used them."

The Digvijaya Paṇḍita, foremost of the favorite sons of mother Sarasvatī, lost his intelligence. He tried but failed to offer proper explanations for the mistakes Nimāi pointed out. His feeble and confused attempts to defend his composition brought further criticism from the Lord, who then elucidated the flaws in the explanations as well as the verses. The Paṇḍita's unparalleled talent seemed to vanish and the situation grew incomprehensible to him. He could not even understand his own identity.

Lord Nimāi then said, "Leave this poem aside for now and compose another one." But, alas, the great world-conquering Paṇḍita was unable to compose a single verse. He sat before the Lord in a state of total bewilderment.

Of course, even the *Vedas* personified have become perplexed in the presence of the Lord. Powerful personalities like Ananta Śeṣa, Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva—who can each create a universe by their mere glance—have also been deluded by the Lord's presence. The bewilderment of the Digvijaya Paṇḍita in front of Nimāi is not surprising because even mother Lakṣmī, mother Sarasvatī, and other internal potencies of the Lord, who can delude the entire creation, become themselves deluded by the Supreme Lord and thus remain forever in an inferior position. The reciter of the *Vedas*, Lord Śeṣa, and the compiler of the *Vedas*, Śrī Vedavyāsa, are even bewildered in the presence of the Lord, what to speak of a mere Digvijaya Paṇḍita.

It is impossible for any human to match the accomplishments of the Lord, therefore, I say, all of his activities are extraordinary. And whatever the Supreme Lord does is always for the ultimate benefit of the suffering living entities, to release them from material bondage.

While the Digvijaya Paṇḍita was struggling to swallow his ignominious defeat, the students began laughing and giggling excitedly. The Lord immediately stopped them and spoke soft, soothing words to the Paṇḍita, "Today let us stop here. Please return to your home and tomorrow we can continue our discussion. You must be tired after composing such a lengthy recitation. It is also very late now; soon it will be time to sleep."

The Lord's behavior was so gentle and compassionate that even a defeated person did not suffer in humiliation. Although the Lord was victorious, He nevertheless spoke words of concern for the scholars and teachers of Navadvīpa. Again He said to the Digvijaya Paṇḍita, "Please go home now and study your books. Tomorrow I will ask you questions and you must try to answer them." The Lord was so merciful that despite His victory, He did not dishonor the great scholar. Hence, everyone felt pleased. The scholars and teachers of Navadvīpa were very affectionate toward the Lord because of His sweet disposition.

The Lord and His students left the assembly to go home, but the Digvijaya sat alone in utter shame and dejection. He thought to himself, "Mother Sarasvatī herself has given me this boon. I have not come across anyone in the whole world who would dare confront me in a debate. Neither the expert scholars in the six philosophical branches like logic, Sāṅkhya, Pātāñjala, Mīmāṃsa, Vaiśeṣika, and Vedānta, nor the scholars of *śāstra* would contest my authority. How is it that the Lord has allowed this insignificant teacher of children to defeat me in this manner. Seeing the power of mother Sarasvatī undermined in this way causes me equal consternation. How have I offended the goddess that all my talent and knowledge were disparaged in this humiliating defeat? I must try to determine the cause of this situation." With that he chanted his mantras and then lay down to sleep.

In his dream mother Sarasvatī looked compassionately upon the *brāhmaṇa* and spoke confidentially to him. "O learned *brāhmaṇa*, listen to me. I will now reveal to you that knowledge which is undisclosed even in the *Vedas*. If for any reason you reveal this secret to anyone, you will immediately forfeit your body. The person who defeated you today is actually the Supreme Lord of the entire cosmic manifestation. I am an eternal servant at His lotus feet, and out of shyness I

hesitate to stand before Him.”

“In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* it is mentioned, ‘Being ashamed of her position, the illusory energy of the Lord cannot take precedence, but those who are bewildered by her continually talk nonsense, being absorbed in thoughts of ‘It is I’ and ‘It is mine’. Because of the Lord’s presence it was impossible for me to appear on the tip of your tongue as I have in the past. I lost my potency, but that is not my fault. How could it be otherwise? Even Lord Ananta Śeṣa who describes the *Vedas* with his thousands of mouths, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and all the other demigods worship Him and are totally bewildered in His presence. What to speak of me? He is the Supreme Absolute Truth—eternal, pure, indivisible, and infallible. He is the omnipotent Supreme Lord residing in everyone’s heart as the Supersoul. The person who appeared before you as a young *brāhmaṇa* boy is none other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate cause of destruction of the entire cosmic manifestation. He is the cause of the dualities of fruitive action, knowledge, learning, good and bad, manifest and unmanifest—everything.

It is by His desire that all living entities from Lord Brahmā down experience happiness and distress. He is the supreme source of all incarnations like Matsya, Kūrma, and others. It is He who appeared as Lord Varāha to lift the world and again as Nṛsiṃhadeva to protect His devotee Prahlāda. He appeared again as Lord Vāmana to trick Bali Mahārāja and thus His lotus feet became the source of mother Ganges. He appeared in Ayodhyā as Lord Rāmacandra and performed many wonderful pastimes, ultimately killing the demon Rāvaṇa. He who is known as the son of Śrī Vasudeva and Śrī Nanda Mahārāja has now appeared as a young *brāhmaṇa* boy immersed in the mellows of a scholar.

“Where in the *Vedas* is this incarnation of the Supreme Lord revealed? Who will know about it if the Lord Himself does not reveal His true identity? To become the greatest of all the scholars of the world is not the real result of chanting the mantra I gave you. You have received the factual result; you were able to see in person the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord of the entire cosmic creation.

“O *brāhmaṇa*, go quickly to Him and take shelter of His lotus feet. Surrender yourself completely to Him. Do not imagine my advice to be a dream or hallucination. The power behind the mantra you chant has brought me here and forced me to reveal the most esoteric knowledge of the *Vedas*.”

Mother Sarasvatī disappeared after consoling the Paṇḍita. He awoke from his sleep feeling purified and fortunate. Early dawn had just touched the eastern sky when he left for the Lord’s house. He threw himself at the feet of Nīmāi Paṇḍita to offer his obeisances and the Lord reciprocated by lifting him up and embracing him.

“Why, it is you!” said the Lord. “Why are you behaving in this manner?”

“So that I may attract your kind grace,” replied the Paṇḍita.

“But you are a famous and erudite Digvijaya scholar. Why do you approach Me like this?” questioned the Lord.

“O Lord of the learned *brāhmaṇas*, please hear me out. The highest perfection in all activities is achieved simply by worshipping You. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Nārāyaṇa. You have appeared as *abrāhmaṇa* in this age of Kali, but no one has the potency to perceive Your real identity. Doubt entered my heart the very moment You asked me questions and then remained silent. Now I have personal realization that You are magnanimous and free from any pride, and my realizations are confirmed in all Vedic scriptures.

“You defeated me three times, yet You kept my honor intact. Is such behavior possible for anyone other than the Supreme Lord? I am convinced that You are that Supreme Personality of Godhead.

“I have travelled far and wide—Bengal, Trihatta, Delhi, Kāśī, Gujarat, Vijayanagara, Aṅga, Baṅga, Tailaṅga, Uḍhara and many other places. The most qualified scholars in each place were defeated by me. They could not even understand my discourses, let alone find fault with them. Such a person am I. But I could not establish my conclusions before You. I don’t know where my intelligence has gone. I now realize, however, that this was not an extraordinary feat for You, because You are the Lord and master of mother Sarasvatī. She personally revealed this to me.

“I was wallowing in material existence, but because of my immeasurably good fortune I came to Navadvīpa and met You face to face. I was captivated and deluded by the desire for material knowledge, and in self-deception I roamed about neglecting real absolute knowledge. Destiny has favored me and thus I have met You personally. O Lord, kindly purify me by Your benevolent glance and destroy my nescience. You have a magnanimous nature and You are inclined to favor others, so there is no one but You from whom I can seek shelter. O Lord, please instruct me so that I shall never again allow unholy desires to enter my heart.” As a meek and insignificant man the Digvijaya Paṇḍita spoke with repentance before the Lord.

Śrī Gaurasundara replied, “O learned *brāhmaṇa*, you are very fortunate because mother Sarasvatī resides on the tip of your tongue. But conquering the world with mundane knowledge is not a suitable objective for one with true wisdom. Knowledge becomes valuable only when it augments the worship the Supreme Lord. Try to carefully understand. When

death strikes and the soul is forced from the body, no one can take his material knowledge or opulence with him. The learned and self-realized souls completely reject this transient phenomenal existence and engage with unalloyed faith in the Lord's devotional service.

“Now O *brāhmaṇa*, leave aside all extraneous engagements and utilize your time worshiping the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa for the remainder of your life. Remember that the fruit of true knowledge is tasted when the heart and mind are unflinchingly attached to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Of all activities, devotional service to the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, is the only manifestation of absolute truth. This is the advice I offer you.”

Lord Gaurasundara embraced the Paṇḍita and at once the shackles of material existence fell away from the Digvijaya. The Lord said, “O *brāhmaṇa*, curb your arrogance and insolence; worship Kṛṣṇa and be kind to all living entities. And be careful that you do not reveal anything mother Sarasvatī has told you. Revealing the confidential knowledge of the *Vedas* to unauthorized persons reduces the life-span and deviates one from the spiritual path.”

Having received the Lord's instructions, Digvijaya Paṇḍita begged permission to leave. He repeatedly offered his prostrated obeisances at the feet of the Lord and uttered prayers, feeling fortunate and purified. By the Lord's mercy, the *brāhmaṇa* was immediately blessed with detachment from material affairs, perception of Absolute Truth and devotion to the Supreme Lord. Within moments the *brāhmaṇa*'s arrogance and vanity diminished and he grew as humble and meek as a blade of grass. He renounced everything - his elephants, horses, palanquins, money, and the undesirable associates he has previously kept. Lord Gauracandra's mercy had such a miraculous effect that the *brāhmaṇa* Digvijaya abandoned everything and travelled alone.

That mercy could make a king leave his palace and take up a beggar's bowl. The remarkable example of this was Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī who was also known as Dabira Khāsa. He left his kingly position and lived in the forests of Vṛndāvana. A servant of Kṛṣṇa can ignore the material wealth, position and prestige which are desired by the common people. Any person who has not realized the value of devotional service to the Supreme Lord will naturally consider the position of a king most comfortable and enviable. But for the devotee of Kṛṣṇa, even the happiness derived from liberation is insignificant, therefore mere kingly comfort is of no consequence whatsoever. Reality and true happiness lie solely in the merciful glance of the Supreme Lord, and therefore the *Vedas* advise everyone to serve Him.

Lord Gaurasundara's wonderful defeat of the Digvijaya and the Paṇḍita's subsequent conversion was soon known in all corners of Nadia. People were astounded by the news and they commented, “Nimāi Paṇḍita must be a truly great scholar for even the Digvijaya, the greatest of all *paṇḍitas*, was humbled by Him. Nimāi Paṇḍita has now made Himself worthy of our praise and His fame will definitely spread.”

Someone said, “If this *brāhmaṇa* boy studies logic, he can immediately claim the highest title, Bhaṭṭācārya.”

But another suggested, “Let's jointly offer Him the title of Bādisiṁha now.”

The Lord's illusory potency was so strong that in spite of witnessing His miracles, no one could perceive His true identity. From that time on the people of Nadia could only discuss Nimāi's victory over the Digvijaya. I offer my obeisances to the feet of all the residents of Navadvīpa for they were fortunate enough to see the Lord's transcendental activities. Whoever faithfully and attentively hears this pastime of the Lord defeating Digvijaya Paṇḍita will always be victorious, and whoever hears about His captivating pastimes as a scholar will immediately become His eternal servant.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, an insignificant soul, humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter Fourteen

All glories to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Gaurasundara, who was very dear to Nityānanda Prabhu! His transcendental body is comprised of eternity, knowledge and bliss. All glories to the Lord who was the life and soul of Pradyumna Miśra! All glories to the most treasured object of Śrī Paramānanda Purī! All glories to You my Lord, for You are the life and soul and the most precious gem of all the devotees! O Lord, please look mercifully upon us, the living entities, and liberate everyone from the bonds of nescience. I humbly request everyone to please listen faithfully and attentively to the wonderful activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, in His form as a young *brāhmaṇa* boy.

The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha absorbed Himself in the mood of a scholar and passed His time in academic pursuits with His disciples. In every neighborhood of Navadvīpa He was seen performing His playful pastimes. But by that time every person unquestioningly accepted Nimāi Paṇḍita as the superior scholar and teacher in Navadvīpa. Rich, influential and aristocratic men would immediately take a humble position upon seeing Nimāi and offer their respects to Him. The very sight of Him induced a sense of awe and reverence in the residents who were all captivated by His charm.

Nimāi Paṇḍita would frequently receive gifts from various classes of people in Navadvīpa. He set the perfect example as a householder and was as charitable as the Supreme Lord Himself. Whenever Nimāi saw a poor person, He would kindly offer him food, clothing or money. In this way Nimāi generously distributed gifts to the poor.

An endless stream of guests visited the Lord's house. The Lord offered each one respect according to his position and rendered him service to his full satisfaction. On some days *sannyāsīs* would visit His house and the Lord would serve them graciously. Once twenty *sannyāsīs* came at one time, so the Lord sent word to His mother to cook for all of them. Mother Śacī fell into immediate anxiety for she had nothing in the house to feed twenty *sannyāsīs*. Lost in her problem she did not notice that someone had brought all the different ingredients she might require and left them in the kitchen. Lakṣmidevī immediately went to the kitchen and, pleased with the array of ingredients, she cooked some special preparations. After the cooking, the Lord checked the arrangements and then invited the *sannyāsīs* to sit down. He supervised the serving of their *prasāda* and He satisfied each one of them personally. In this way the Lord satisfied all His guests and taught the world how to behave as a perfect householder.

The foremost duty of a householder is to serve his guest and responsible householders live by that standard. The householder who does not serve and satisfy his guests properly is worse than an animal or a bird. Even those who because of their previous impious activities have insufficient means to be hospitable can at least offer a place to sit, some water and a place to rest. That simple hospitality is sufficient to satisfy any guest if it is offered with love and affection. A householder who is pious may be poverty stricken and possess very little with which to serve a guest, but his disposition should be hospitable. He can offer drinking water and water with which the guest can wash his feet. He can offer a grass mat on which the guest can sit or rest to become refreshed and he can offer sweet words to please the weary ears of the traveller. The host must endeavor with all humility to keep the guest from leaving his house and beg forgiveness for any mistakes in his humble hospitality. A householder who sincerely tries to satisfy his guests even though his means are meager is considered hospitable.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead set the example of a perfect householder and repeatedly asked His guests if they had any further needs or if they were satisfied. Those guests of course were the most fortunate souls for Śrīmatī Lakṣmidevī, the goddess of fortune, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, the proprietor of the entire cosmic manifestation, personally fed them. Because of the wonderful activities of the Supreme Lord, that divine food which is cherished by great souls like Lord Brahmā and other demigods was distributed to common people and ordinary citizens in Navadvīpa.

The twenty *sannyāsīs* who were guests in the house of Lord Nimāi had become a subject of conversation amongst the people. Someone said, "Those guests could not have been ordinary persons. They must have been Lord Brahmā, Śiva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Nārada Muni, and other such elevated personalities. Who else could be eligible to take food in the house of Śrī Gaurāṅga who is nondifferent from Lord Nārāyaṇa with His wife Lakṣmidevī? The Supreme Lord has appeared in Navadvīpa and these great personalities and demigods must have known of the advent and come in the guise of *sannyāsīs* to take *prasāda* in their house. Other than Brahmā, who has the great fortune to eat in the house of Mahāprabhu?"

Some others expressed their opinion that, "The Supreme Lord has appeared to alleviate the sufferings of humanity. Along with the Supreme Lord, other demigods like Lord Brahmā have also appeared, for they are the eternal associates of the Supreme Lord. Yet in this incarnation the Lord has promised that, 'I will give the living entities that which is rarely achieved even by Lord Brahmā and others.' Therefore, the Supreme Lord distributes *prasāda* generously from His own house simply to release the wretched and needy living entities from material suffering."

Lakṣmidevī worked without any assistance to serve her Lord and master yet she was always in a cheerful mood. Seeing the wonderful qualities and pious nature of Lakṣmidevī, mother Śacī's joy increased by each hour and each day. From early morning she would work alone at the household chores, setting the example of an ideal wife. In the temple room she decorated the floor with auspicious designs made from colored paste; she drew the different symbols of the Lord like the conch shell and cakṛa. She also arranged for the paraphernalia required for the Lord's worship like incense, flowers, lamp, water, etc. She worshiped Tulasīdevī and also saw to the needs of mother Śacī, serving her with great affection. The wonderful attributes of Lakṣmidevī's nature did not go unnoticed by Lord Gauracandra; although He never commented on it, He was extremely satisfied with her.

Frequently Lakṣmidevī would sit for long hours massaging the Lord's lotus feet on her lap. At times when she served her Lord like that, mother Śacī could see a brilliant effulgence emanating from the feet of Gauracandra. At other times the fragrance of lotus flowers would fill the entire house, and although mother Śacī would search everywhere, she could not find the source of the fragrance. Śrīmatī Lakṣmidevī, the goddess of fortune, and the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa remained incognito, unrecognized by the residents of Navadvīpa.

Without any prior indication, Lord Gaurāṅga one day announced His desire to visit Bangladesh, the eastern part of Bengal. "I'll be gone for a few days." He told His mother. He then instructed Lakṣmidevī, "Please always look after your mother's needs."

The Lord gathered a few of His confidential disciples and prepared for His journey. People gathered to see Him off, but as the Lord departed they stood transfixed in their places simply staring after Him. It was difficult for them to take their eyes away from the Lord.

The ladies said, "The mother of this young man must be very pious and fortunate, we offer our obeisances at her feet. Fortunate also is the wife of this young man; her birth as a woman has become worthy just by gaining such an excellent husband." In this way the residents discussed the Lord's glory as they watched Him leave. It was only by His mercy that the ordinary residents of Navadvīpa could see Him directly; even the demigods long to see the Lord in this way.

Lord Gaurasundara continued His unhurried journey and at last arrived on the banks of the River Padmāvatī. The river view was enchanting: small waves constantly creased the wide expanse of water, and on either bank green forests lined the powerful current. The Lord was refreshed by the sight of the river and joined His friends for a swim in the clear water. Padmāvatī became fully spiritualized by the touch of the Lord's lotus feet, and her water was thereafter capable of purifying the entire creation. Padmāvatī was truly a beautiful river, her lapping waves and swift current most pleasing to the mind. The enchanting forests on her banks were equally pleasing so the Lord stayed there for a few days. It was Padmāvatī's good fortune that the Lord blessed her, joyfully playing in her water just as He has played in the Ganges in Navadvīpa.

From the moment the Lord entered East Bengal the land became blessed and remains so, even today. The residents were happy to learn that the Lord had spent a few days on the banks of the Padmāvatī. News of the Lord's arrival swiftly spread far and wide. "Nimāi Paṇḍita, the crest jewel of all scholars and the foremost of teachers has arrived," the residents announced.

Pious *brāhmaṇas* came forward to greet the Lord, each bearing a gift for Him. They offered their obeisances to Him and humbly submitted, "Our great fortune must be immeasurable to have your presence in this country."

People of East Bengal make a tremendous endeavor to collect funds and arrange to go to Navadvīpa to study under the great scholar Nimāi Paṇḍita, said one *brāhmaṇa*. "But by the divine grace of the Supreme Lord that ocean of knowledge has personally come to our doorstep. You are certainly the incarnation of Bṛhaspati, for no other teacher can compare with you. On closer scrutiny however, that comparison is inaccurate. I am convinced that you are an empowered part of the Supreme Personality of God. My heart tells me it is impossible to find such erudition in anyone except the Supreme. We all submit this humble petition to you: it is our greatest wish that you impart knowledge to us. In your absence we have kept you in our memories, studied your commentaries amongst ourselves and also taught others. But now you are here in person so please accept us as your disciples, and let the whole world know of your wonderful pastimes."

The Lord smiled at all of them, giving them assurance and hope and remained in East Bengal for sometime, enjoying the land and the people. It is because of this event that the residents of East Bengal are attracted to the holy name and engage in congregational chanting even today.

At the time of the composition of this book, a group of evil persons were trying to mislead people in general from the spiritual path with wrong advice. These sinners claim to be pious and cheat people just to fill their bellies. Another group of sinful offenders stopped performing congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord and began instead to chant Nārāyaṇa, referring to themselves. It is most obvious that these men are under the clutches of the modes of material nature, so how can they shamelessly profess themselves to be the Supreme Lord?

In the district of Raar there lived a man who externally appeared to be a *brāhmaṇa* but internally was a sinful demon. He declared himself to be Gopāla, the Supreme Lord, but more intelligent men considered him a sly and evil fox. Anyone who claims to be the Supreme Godhead, separate from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, is certainly the most wicked soul, fit to live only in hell. I loudly declare with both my hands raised that the only true Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord of the entire material creation, is Śrī Gaurahari. Just by remembering his name one becomes free from material entanglement; even by simply remembering His servant one becomes victorious in every sphere of life. See around you that the whole world is chanting the glories of His name, so discard your misdirected conceptions and serve the lotus feet of the Lord.

Lord Gauracandra, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, enjoyed travelling in East Bengal immersed in the mood of a scholar. On the enchanting banks of the River Padmāvatī the Lord roamed through the forests and imparted knowledge to large gatherings of eager students. Hundreds came from everywhere to crowd his lectures. They all had one thought in mind, "I want to study from Nimāi Paṇḍita." Such was the extent of the Lord's mercy upon them that within two months all the listeners became very knowledgeable and scholarly. Although many came simply to hear the Lord, hundreds of students returned to their homes with degrees. In this way the Lord passed His time as a scholar in East Bengal.

Meanwhile in Navadvīpa, Lakṣmīdevī was feeling the pangs of separation from her Lord. She never spoke of her loneliness to anyone. She served mother Śacī very lovingly but reduced her own eating almost to nothing after the Lord left Navadvīpa. Bereft of His company she silently suffered, crying alone throughout each night, trying to suppress the restlessness which welled in her heart. Unable to bear any further separation from the Supreme Lord, Śrī Lakṣmīdevī, the

Lord's eternal consort, left her transcendental body behind and went secretly to meet her Lord. Seated on the bank of the Ganges, Lakṣmīdevī fixed the lotus feet of the Lord within her heart and went deep into meditation, never to return again.

Mother Śacī's shock and deep grief is indescribable, her pitiable lamentations could have melted stones. Since I am incapable of describing the mellow of sadness experienced by mother Śacī, I shall not go into further details but simply mention incidences as reference. The saintly Vaiṣṇavas were also grief stricken by the news and they all came forward to help complete the necessary rituals.

The Supreme Lord remained for sometime in Bangladesh and then returned of His own desire to Navadvīpa. When the residents of East Bengal learned that the Lord would leave they immediately collected gifts and precious treasures to give Him. They presented Him gold, silver, drinking vessels, beautiful mats, soft and warm blankets and a variety of clothes. Each person took what was most precious in his house and joyfully offered it to the Lord. In reciprocation the Lord blessed each person and accepted his gift. The Supreme Lord Śrī Gauraharī personally visited each of the residents and after taking leave, He started for Navadvīpa. Many students decided to accompany the Lord to Navadvīpa where they could study under Him.

As the Lord was about to leave, an intelligent *brāhmaṇa*, named Tapanā Mīśra approached Him. Although Tapanā Mīśra was a pure devotee and was well versed in the conclusions of the *Vedas*, he could find no one to answer his questions on the perfect spiritual path and the ultimate and absolute worshipable object. He constantly chanted the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, yet he felt dissatisfied in the absence of proper spiritual practice. He had lived in a perturbed state of mind for sometime, but because of his piety he was awarded a vision in an early morning dream. An effulgent person who looked like a demigod spoke some confidential constructions to him. "Listen O *brāhmaṇa*, you are a renounced soul, so do not worry so much. Pacify your mind. Go and meet Nīmāi Paṇḍita. He will explain all that you want to know about the spiritual path and spiritual goals. He is not an ordinary mortal, but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa. He has appeared in this material world, accepting a human body to perform his wonderful transcendental pastimes. But I warn you not repeat to anyone what I have just told you, for this knowledge is most confidential. It is not available, even in the *Vedas*. If you reveal this then you will suffer unbearable pain life after life."

The demigod disappeared from his dream and the *brāhmaṇa* woke up. He was thrilled by his wonderful vision and shed tears of joy. Convinced that his fortune has changed, the *brāhmaṇa* received new life and left immediately to meet the Lord. When he reached the bank of Padmāvati he saw Lord Gaurasundara surrounded by many hundreds of disciples. In the midst of that enchanting scene he threw himself down at the Lord's lotus feet and then stood up with folded hands.

The *brāhmaṇa* said, "I am a fallen and wretched person. Please look upon me mercifully and destroy my bewilderment. I have no knowledge about the perfect spiritual path and the ultimate goal of human life. Be gracious and impart this knowledge to me. My heart does not long for material enjoyment and luxuries, please tell me, O merciful Lord, what will be the ultimate shelter for my soul."

The Lord said, "O *brāhmaṇa*, who can describe your good fate? You have a desire to worship the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, and that is the highest and most perfect path. It is very difficult to be a devotee of the Lord so the Lord comes in every millennium to establish proper standards of religion. He appears in each of the four yugas to establish the particular religious practice for that yuga Himself, and then He returns to His spiritual abode. "In order to deliver the pious and annihilate the miscreants as well as to reestablish the principles of religion I advent millennium after millennium." The Lord appears in every millennium, accepting different incarnations with different complexions like white, red and yellow. Most recently, in the later portion of Dvāpara-yuga, He appeared with a blackish complexion so He was called Kṛṣṇa.

"In the four Yugas there are four different authorized processes of religion for the elevation of human society. The religious practice for the age of Kali is congregational chanting of the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The real purpose of religion is to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Hari. In different Yugas different religious practices were established by the Supreme Lord himself to achieve this end. In Kali-yuga the recommended authorized religious practice is congregational chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name and this process includes all the other previous processes. Therefore, in Kali-yuga chanting the holy name is the essential religious principle and no other religious practice can help one cross over the material ocean of nescience. Constantly chant the Lord's name in any situation. Even the *Vedas* fail to sufficiently describe the super excellent qualities of chanting of the holy name of the Lord.

"Listen, my dear Mīśra, in Kali-yuga there is no need for severe penances or performance of opulent sacrifices; whoever worships the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa he be crowned with fortune and success. So go back to your home and worship Lord Kṛṣṇa with undeviating faith and attention, giving up falsehood and pretensions. By chanting the holy name of Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa, you will simultaneously obtain both the proper spiritual practice and the ultimate goal. In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy the only means of deliverance is chanting the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way. I am repeating this great chant for deliverance, to you this consists of sixteen names of the Supreme Lord with thirty-two syllables: Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. By constantly chanting and worshipping this *mahā-mantra*, your heart will feel the first blossoming of love and God; then gradually you will understand the truth about the proper spiritual path and the ultimate spiritual goal."

Having received such sublime instructions from the Lord, Tapana Miśra offered repeated obeisances at His lotus feet and then said, “O Lord, with Your permission, I would like to accompany You.”

The Lord replied, “You should go immediately to Vārāṇasī, where I shall reveal the answers to your request.”

The Lord then embraced him, and the *brāhmaṇa* felt his entire body surge with horripilations and spiritual ecstasy. The Lord's embrace filled Śrī Miśra with immeasurable happiness. As the Lord prepared to leave, Miśra held His feet tightly and confidently narrated his entire dream. After hearing it the Lord said, “You must be very careful not to reveal this to anyone.” He repeated the same instruction to the *brāhmaṇa*, and then sensing that the auspicious moment had arrived for Him to leave, He laughed loudly and proceeded to Navadvīpa. Thus the Lord purified the entire tract of East Bengal and then returned home.

The Lord reached Navadvīpa in the evening, laden with the gifts he had received. He offered full obeisances at His mother's lotus feet and gave her all the gifts. Then the Lord and His students left to bathe in the Ganges. Although her heart was breaking with pain, mother Śacī busied herself preparing a meal for her son.

Nimāi Paṇḍita acted as the instructing spiritual master to all His students. He joined them in offering deep and repeated obeisances to the Ganges, and then sported for some time in the water. When His bath was complete He returned home, performed His daily religious rituals and then sat down to eat. The Lord of the Vaikuṇṭha planets, Śrī Gaurahari, ate with great satisfaction and then went to the temple room. One by one His relatives came forward to greet Him after His long absence. They sat around Him as He joked and laughed while describing His stay in Bangladesh, Nimāi imitated the strange habits of the people of East Bengal and everyone and a good laugh. None of them mentioned the passing of Lakṣmīdevī, knowing that the shock would cause the Lord grief. After some time, the relatives all returned to their homes, and the Lord sat quietly chewing on the betel pan and reflecting on the humorous conversation.

Mother Śacī avoided meeting the Lord; she stayed in her room, affected by the pain of Lakṣmī's death. When Nimāi found His mother He saw the marks of deep sorrow which lined her face. In a sweet, comforting voice He said, “What is the reason for your sorrow mother? I have returned from My journey in good health, so you should be happy, but I see only sadness on your face. Tell Me the truth mother, what is the reason?” Her sons words simply increased her pain and she wept silently, unable to speak.

“Mother, I know everything,” said Nimāi. “Tell me what has happened to your daughter-in-law.”

Some relatives stepped forward to speak, “Listen Nimāi Paṇḍita, Your mind must have reached the lotus feet of the Lord.”

The Supreme Lord Śrī Gaurahari remained silent, casting his head down as He contemplated the death of His eternal consort and wife Śrī Lakṣmīdevī. He allowed the pain of separation to engulf Him, and although He is the personification of all Vedic truths, He remained silent. Like any ordinary human being, He displayed the emotions of deep sorrow, but after controlling Himself, He spoke, “Because of bodily attachment one is regarded as a husband or son. These illusory relationships are caused by misunderstandings. O mother, why do you feel sad? How can you hope to change that which is ordained by the Lord's desire? No one can check the passage of time, and all relationships in this are temporary. This is the verdict of the *Vedas*. The activities of the entire cosmic creation rest in the hands of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Who but our Lord can bring people together and then separate them? Why should these arrangements of the Supreme Lord, make you so unhappy? It is fortunate for the wife if she can leave before her husband. This is proof that she was a very pious woman.”

The Supreme Lord tried to console His mother by these philosophical truths, and everyone felt the veil of sadness dissipate by His soothing words. In this way the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Śrī Gaurahari, performed wonderful pastimes in the mood of a scholar. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana Dāsa, humbly offer this song at their lotus feet.

Chapter Fifteen

All glories to Lord Gauracandra! All glories to Lord Nityānanda! Kindly offer me Your lotus feet so that I may hold them in the inner recesses of my heart. All glories to Lord Gaurāṅga and His associates! One achieves devotional service to the Supreme Lord just by hearing the wonderful pastimes of Śrī Caitanya.

The Lord continued to perform His pastimes as a scholar without anyone detecting His real identity. He rose early each morning, performed His daily religious duties, offered obeisances to His mother, and went to teach His students.

Mukunda Saṅjaya was an eternal servant of the Lord and his son was Puruṣottama Dāsa. He was so fortunate that the Lord went to his house everyday to teach. Nimāi would sit alone in the courtyard in front of the temple of Durgā and

gradually His students would assemble. Occasionally some student would forget to mark his forehead with *ūrdhva-pundra tilaka*. As the propagator and maintainer of Sanātana Dharma, Nimāi felt compelled to protect the conditioned souls from deviating from the path of religion. Therefore he never neglected to rectify His students when necessary. He would chastise the forgetful boy to such a degree that the student would acquiesce in shame and certainly never again forget to apply his *tilaka*.

“My dear boy, I see that you have not put on *tilaka*. What is the reason for this?” demanded Nimāi. The Vedic literature says that the forehead which does not bear the mark of *tilaka* is as good as a crematorium. I can also understand from this oversight that your brahminical practices have been rendered useless. Go home and perform your brahminical duties again, and then with *tilaka* on your forehead you may return to the school.”

In this way the Lord taught all his students to maintain the proper standards of brahminical and religious practice. The Lord did not modify His arrogant spirit, nor did He spare anyone His criticism. Whoever was negligent was eligible for the Lord's strict correction. Nimāi's character was always exemplary; He never made jokes or laughed in the company of women. In fact, He kept His distance from women and avoided meeting them.

Nimāi especially liked to taunt and find fault with the residents of Śrīhaṭṭa, imitating their peculiar pronunciation. The infuriated residents of Śrīhaṭṭa would retort, “O Lord, which land do you hail from? Tell us where Your father and mother and their descendants come from. Which one of you was not born in Śrīhaṭṭa? You Yourself are a descendent of Śrīhaṭṭa. So why do You make such fun of us?” The more they tried to chastise the Lord, the more fun He had imitating their pronunciation and making jokes at their expense. It required little provocation to infuriate them further and occasionally one of them would chase the Lord with dastardly intentions. The chase was usually futile for the Lord could not be caught easily, and ultimately the angry fellow would simply stomp the ground in frustration and shout invectives. Occasionally someone managed to capture Him and drag Him to the local Moslem Magistrate to register a complaint. His friends would arrive in time to pacify the angry parties and reach some mutual understanding.

The Lord would also search out the house of a person from east Bengal. He would break in, destroy the foodstuffs and run away in mock fear. In this way He created havoc in Navadvīpa, but He never had any one incident which involved women. He never even looked at a woman.

In this incarnation, the Supreme Lord did not even hear the name of a woman. Therefore, those realized souls who are fixed in the scriptural conclusions never glorify Lord Caitanya as Gaurāṅga Nagara, the Lord in the mood of a paramour. Although every kind of eulogy is applicable to the Lord, knowledgeable pure devotees glorify the nature of that the Lord manifests in a particular incarnation.

In Navadvīpa the Supreme Personality of Godhead was Nimāi Paṇḍita, the scholar. The Lord of the Vaikuṇṭha planets enjoyed His transcendental activities as a teacher in the house of Śrī Mukunda Saṅjaya. All his students sat around him and he taught them with great pleasure. Sometimes He pretended to have a headache and ordered medicated oil massaged into His head. Then he continued His discussion, submerged again in His intimate spirituality.

From early morning till afternoon He taught His students and then went to the Ganges for His bath. Then again, from early evening to late evening He continued His discussions and teaching. If any student studied under Nimāi for a year, he left the tutelage as a full fledged scholar well versed in scriptural conclusions.

While the Lord was absorbed in His activities, mother Śacī constantly thought of the Lord's marriage. She searched all of Navadvīpa for a daughter-in-law suitable for her Nimāi. Śrī Sanātana Mīśra was a pious and charitable *brāhmaṇa*, a benevolent and pure-hearted devotee of Lord Viṣṇu. He lived in Navadvīpa and engaged himself in serving guests and assisting less fortunate people. Born of a noble family, he was truthful and self controlled. As a scholar he earned the title Raja Paṇḍita and as a gentleman in Navadvīpa he personally maintained many needy people.

Sanātana Mīśra's daughter was like Lakṣmīdevī in beauty and character. As soon as mother Śacī saw her, she was convinced that this girl was the best choice to be her son's wife. From early childhood the young girl bathed regularly in the Ganges two or three times a day. She was dedicated and obedient to her parents and she had no other interest than devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Everyday when she met mother Śacī at the bathing place in the Ganges, she humbly offered her respects. Mother Śacī reciprocated and blessed her saying, “May Kṛṣṇa bless you with a suitable husband.” But as mother Śacī bathed she thought, “This girl should marry my son.” Śrī Sanātana Mīśra and all his near relatives were equally eager to have the Lord as a son-in-law.

One day mother Śacī sent for Kāśīnātha Paṇḍita and told him, “My dear Śrī, I have a proposition: go tell the Raja Paṇḍita that if he so desires he may offer his daughter's hand in marriage to my son.” Kāśīnātha Paṇḍita proceeded immediately to Śrī Sanātana Mīśra's house, repeating the Lord's name in silent joy.

When the Raja Paṇḍita saw Kāśīnātha Paṇḍita at his door he immediately offered him a seat with due respect. “What brings you here, my dear Sir?” asked Śrī Mīśra.

"I have come with a proposal, and if you so desire I will reveal it to you, replied Kāśinātha Paṇḍita. "You should offer your daughter Viṣṇupriyā in marriage to Viśvambhara Paṇḍita. I think it is a perfect match, He is a divine personality, suitable in all respects for your daughter. Your daughter, who is chastity personified, will be the best for him. Viṣṇupriyā and Nimāi Paṇḍita remind me of the divine couple Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī, so perfectly suited they are for each other."

Raja Paṇḍita disclosed the news to his wife and near relatives and waited for their advice and comments. Unanimously they agreed, "What is the need for further debate? This is a perfect proposition. Quickly make all the necessary arrangements." The Raja Paṇḍita happily replied to Kāśinātha Paṇḍita, "I have decided to marry my daughter to Viśvambhara Paṇḍita so I will proceed with all the arrangements. If the Lord desires my family and ancestors will be greatly blessed by this marriage for my daughter. Kindly go to their house and tell them everything, I am fully in favor of this marriage."

Śrī Kāśinātha Paṇḍita was extremely satisfied with the outcome of his mission and he promptly told mother Śaci everything that had transpired. Mother Śaci was relieved that everything had gone smoothly. Without wasting further time she began the preparations.

Nimāi's students were jubilant when news of His marriage reached them. A rich gentleman named Buddhimanta Khān immediately offered, "I shall bear the cost of the entire marriage."

But Mukunda Saṅjaya objected, "My dear brother and friend, if you take all the responsibilities, then what am I supposed to do?"

"Listen my dear friend," said Buddhimanta Khān "I will not allow this marriage to become another poor *brāhmaṇa*'s wedding, I will make such arrangements for Nimāi Paṇḍita's wedding that everyone will think a prince is getting married."

Adhivāsa, a important ceremony before the day of the marriage was held at an auspicious time amidst great joy and festivity. The area set aside for the actual marriage ceremony was decorated with colorful hangings around the sides and across the tops. Water pots with intricate designs, ghee lamps, grains, yogurt, and strings of young mango leaves were all around. Different auspicious ingredients required for such an occasion were placed on the floor which had been beautifully designed with colored rice paste.

The devotees of the Lord, the *brāhmaṇas*, and all the gentlemen and of Navadvīpa attended the auspicious occasion. Invitations had been sent to all of them requesting them to attend the feast in the evening of the day of the *adhivāsa*. By early afternoon the musicians had already arrived and began to play. Loud and melodious sounds of *mṛdaṅga* and other drums, shanai, and cymbals were carried in all directions. The priests began to chant the Vedic mantras and the ladies ululated, adding to the festive mood.

The crest jewel of the *brāhmaṇa* race, Nimāi Paṇḍita, seated Himself in the midst of the Vedic chanters. The priests and *brāhmaṇas* around Him felt a surge of joy in His presence. Different objects required to formally receive the guests were brought to Nimāi Paṇḍita. He garlanded the respectable gentlemen with flowers and applied sandalwood paste on their foreheads, offering each of them a betel nut and betel leaf according to the custom of the time.

The *brāhmaṇa* population in Navadvīpa was large in those days, so countless gentlemen came and went with one keeping track. Some amongst them were very greedy and returned again and again, mixing with the crowd and pretending they had just arrived in order to receive another gift. Having received invitations, people came from distant localities and were unknown to each other, but despite such anonymity there was a strong festive spirit. The Lord was in a joyful mood and He played the perfect host.

"Give all the flower garlands, sandalwood paste and other gifts to the guests at least three times," ordered Nimāi. "Do not think about the cost, just give freely to everyone. The greedy *brāhmaṇas* who were endeavoring to take the free gifts several times were suddenly checked and felt ashamed because of the Lord's generosity. The *brāhmaṇas* were dear to the Lord and He wanted to protect their religiosity. Some men were committing offenses by deceitfully collecting extra gifts, therefore He gave the instruction to give the gifts three times to any person. After receiving the gifts three times, no one wanted anymore. They were satisfied.

No one amongst the milling guests knew that the flower garlands, sandalwood paste and betel leaf they had received were actually expansions of Lord Ananta Śeṣa, serving his master the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nimāi Paṇḍita. In the profuse distribution of gifts, some flowers, sandal paste and betel leaf fell to the ground, and the quantity of those remnants would have sufficed for five opulent weddings, not counting those gifts which were taken home by the guests. Every visitor was impressed by the arrangements and left the wedding praising the opulence of the ceremonies. Even the wealthiest men of Navadvīpa were impressed for their father's had not spent so lavishly for their weddings. The profusity of flowers, sandal paste, betel leaf, betel nut and other gifts had never been seen in Navadvīpa.

Raja Paṇḍita, Śrī Sanātana Miśra, was extremely happy. He and his close relatives attended the *adhivāsa*, laden with valuable gifts. At an auspicious moment, he joyfully applied tilaka to the Lord's forehead, just as the *Vedas* recommended. The excitement of the moment was heightened by the loud chanting of Lord Hari's name accompanied by the musicians

and the ululating ladies.

Having completed all of his ceremonial duties Raja Paṇḍita returned home. The relatives of Nimāi Paṇḍita then went to Raja Paṇḍita's house to perform the same *adhivāsa* ceremony for Viṣṇupriyā. Whatever was customary for a marriage in those days was performed in the midst of great festivity.

Early the next morning the Lord went for his bath in the Ganges, and on returning he went directly to the temple to worship the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu. Thereafter he sat with his close relations to offer obeisances to their forefathers for their satisfaction. The festive mood was maintained by the musicians, dancers and singers performing loudly enough for everyone to hear. Every corner of the house was decorated, there were beautiful designs on the floor, water pots, grains, yogurt, lamps and strings of auspicious mango leaves hung everywhere. Colored festoons fluttered like flags in the wind, and the air was filled with festive excitement. The chaste ladies of Navadvīpa accompanied mother Śacī while performing all the customary and traditional rituals.

First they went to the Ganges for their bath and then, followed by musicians, they visited the village deity Sastī where they prayed for her blessings. From the temple they visited the house of different relatives and then returned home. She distributed khoi, bananas, oil, betel nut, betel leaf, and vermilion to the ladies who had accompanied her and satisfied them in every respect. By the will of the omnipotent Supreme Lord, there was no dearth of anything so mother Śacī generously distributed her gifts to the ladies several times over. Not a single lady was dissatisfied. They happily rubbed oil on their bodies and bathed.

Lakṣmīdevī's house was also in a state of great excitement; her mother bustled with happiness. Caught in the waver of ecstasy, Raja Paṇḍita spent lavishly and offered his daughter wholeheartedly to Lord Gaurasundara.

After completing all of His rituals the Lord sat down to rest and from that place He humbly distributed food and clothes to all the assembled *brāhmaṇas*. He offered respects to each person according to his position and gave in charity to satisfy each person's need. The *brāhmaṇas* blessed the Lord and returned to their houses fully satisfied.

In the afternoon the relatives came to dress Lord Gaurasundara for his marriage that evening. They decorated his entire body with sandalwood paste and applied aromatic perfumes on different parts of his body. On his forehead they drew a half-moon shaped tilaka with sandalwood paste, placed a beautiful crown lightly on His head and draped His neck with fragrant flower garlands. A fine, expensive silk dhoti was tied expertly around His hips; it shone golden yellow like the setting sun. His pink lotus-shaped eyes were smeared with kajal ointment, black as the bumblebee. He held the auspicious three-bladed grass and the pit of a banana tree, while exquisite and expensive golden earrings swayed from his ears and other valuable jewelry decorated His upper arms and His neck. Each of the relatives decorated the Lord according to his won taste, hanging different types of jewelry on different parts of His body. Men and women both marvelled at the Lord's exquisite beauty. They forgot themselves fixed as they were on the beauty of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Almost an hour before the time of marriage the relatives decided that the Lord should proceed to the house of the bride. "Let us begin the journey," they announced. "For an hour the bridegroom will parade through the town before arriving at the bride's house." Buddhimanta Khān appeared suddenly with a beautiful palanquin. The musicians started up afresh and the priests began chanting Vedic mantras; singers, dancers and guests all joined in a jubilant clamor. The Lord first circumambulated mother Śacī and offered her respects, then offered respects to the *brāhmaṇas* and sat on the palanquin in the midst of the joyful confusion which included the ululating ladies.

It was early evening and the marriage procession went first to the bank of the River Ganges. The waxing moon hung nearly full above their heads and shimmered in the water of the Ganges. Hundreds of lamps were lit and music played on with undying enthusiasm. In front of the Lord's palanquin were two long rows of Śrī Buddhimanta Khān's estate employees followed by the festoon holders bearing colored flags. In their midst were the jesters, joking and evoking laughter. There were a variety of dancers performing many different dance styles, while the countless musicians played at least five kinds of drums, cymbals, conch shells, flutes, bells, kettle drums and a variety of horns. Excited young children danced amongst the musicians and caught in the festive atmosphere, even older people abandoned their reserve and joined the children while the Lord smiled at the happy sight. On the bank of the Ganges they stopped for a while singing, dancing and playing the instruments before proceeding to the bride's house. After offering flowers to mother Ganges, the entire procession turned towards town.

Whoever witnessed the parade was struck with wonder at its opulence. "I have seen many extravagant marriages, but I have never witnessed anything like this one before," said one person. The residents of Navadvīpa were fortunate to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead in person as He swayed past them in His palanquin.

The *brāhmaṇas* who had beautiful, unmarried daughters in their homes all lamented. "It is a great pity and certainly my misfortune that I could not give my daughter in marriage to this handsome young man. But what can I do?" I offer my obeisances at the feet of all the residents of Navadvīpa who witnessed this transcendental joyful pastime of the Lord.

After the procession had passed through all the different localities of Navadvīpa they arrived at the house of Śrī Sanātana

Miśra, the Raja Paṇḍita. Everyone came out of the house, ululating and making other loud sounds of welcome for the procession. Raja Paṇḍita came forward to receive the Lord from the palanquin, helped Him step down and took him inside where a seat had been prepared. The Joy Raja Paṇḍita felt was indescribable and the love and respect he felt for the Lord was visible on his face as he escorted Nimāi Paṇḍita into his house. He showered flowers on the Lord as a blessing and welcome.

The reception party from the bride's side consisted of relatives and priests who came forward with fine clothes, jewelry and other precious gifts for the Lord. The bride's mother placed the auspicious three-bladed grass on the Lord's head and then worshiped him with seven ghee lamps. At that time Lakṣmidevī, who had been dressed exquisitely took her seat. The relatives of Nimāi Paṇḍita were both impressed and satisfied to see such a beautiful bride. They lifted the Lord onto His seat according to the marriage ritual. They hung a curtain around the Lord, and Lakṣmidevī circumambulated Śrī Gaurasundara seven times. Then facing Him with folded hands, she offered her respectful obeisances. The relatives threw flowers on the couple, and the air filled with loud music and the ululations of the ladies. Lakṣmidevī placed a flower garland at the lotus feet of her Lord offering Him her life and soul. The Lord picked up the flower garland and smiling sweetly, placed it around her neck. Again the divine couple was drowned in a shower of flower petals. Unseen by the common men, demigods like Lord Brahmā also showered flowers on Śrī Lakṣmidevī and Śrī Gaurasundara. Lord Gaurasundara's group competed with Lakṣmidevī's group in showering flowers and making joyous sounds. Absorbed in the contest, everyone forgot their own cares and worries. Sometimes the Lord's side seemed to be victorious and at other times Lakṣmidevī's side seemed more enthusiastic. The Lord was pleased to see everyone enjoying himself in such a wonderful way.

Thousands of lamps shed bright light everywhere and the loud and joyous sounds of song and instruments filled the sky. By the time the moment came for the bride and bridegroom to exchange glances, the universe seemed inundated by tumultuous and joyful sounds. Then the divine couple sat down and Raja Paṇḍita sat with them to officially offer his daughter to Lord Gaurasundara. In the midst of all rituals and chanting of Mantras, the marriage began with Raja Paṇḍita offering his daughter and praying for the Lord's pleasure. Along with his daughter Raja Paṇḍita also gave nice cows full of milk, lot of land and property, beds and furniture, maids and servants, and other valuable gifts. Lakṣmidevī sat on the left of the Lord as the *brāhmaṇas* lit the fire and began the 'Homa'. After all the customs and traditional rituals were complete the bride and the bridegroom went into a well decorated reception room.

Raja Paṇḍita's house was transformed into Vaikuṇṭha, and the guests came in to enjoy the marvelous feast. Countless people came and all left fully satisfied. The newly-wed bride and groom spent the night in Lakṣmidevī's house amidst great joy.

The happiness Sanātana Paṇḍita felt can not be described. He revealed in the same inconceivable good fortune which befall great sages such as Nagajit, Janaka, Bhiṣma and Jambavan who also became the fathers-in-law of Lord Kṛṣṇa or Lord Rāmacandra.

The divine couple passed the night and next morning till mid day in Sanātana Miśra's house. Then the Raja Paṇḍita and his relatives bid farewell to Lord Gaurasundara and Viṣṇupriyā. In the midst of music, *kīrtana*, the blessings of the *brāhmaṇas* and the chanting of mantras appropriate for such a journey, Nimāi offered His respects to the elderly members of His father-in-law's family and left with Lakṣmidevī on a palanquin for Śacīmātā's house.

The people they met on the way all blessed them and congratulated them, ladies spoke respectfully of the good fortune of the bride saying, "She is very fortunate, She must have worshiped Lakṣmidevī for many births."

Others commented, "This couple is just like Lord Śiva and Gaurī."

Still others said, "They must be Lakṣmī and Śrī Hari."

"They are Cupid and Rati, or Indra and Śacī, or they must be Rāmacandra and Sītādevī."

Truly, the good fortune of the residents of Navadvīpa is unfathomable, for they were able to see the Supreme Lord and His eternal consort. Such was the extent of their piety. The whole of Nadia was blessed and the residents experienced unrestrained joy by being able to see Lakṣmidevī and Lord Gaurasundara, Nārāyaṇa.

Finally the divine couple arrived in the house of mother Śacī. Accompanied by other ladies, mother Śacī went out to jubilantly welcome the divine couple into her house, where she seated them amidst joyous sounds and music. How can one express the joy mother Śacī and everyone else felt at the presence of Viṣṇupriyā and Gaurahari? So magnanimous is the Supreme Lord that one becomes completely free from all sinful activities and their reactions just by looking at the transcendental lustre of the Lord. Moreover, he becomes eligible to enter the spiritual sky, the Vaikuṇṭha planets. Everyone from all walks of life could see the Lord and His spiritual effulgence. Therefore He has been called the most compassionate, the only friend of the fallen souls.

Nimāi Paṇḍita freely distributed clothes and gifts to all the performers, dancers and the beggars who had come to the

house of mother Śacī. To the *brāhmaṇa* relatives and friends, He gave sufficient gifts to satisfy them all, and satisfy Himself as well. To Buddhimanta Khān the Lord gave a tight and affectionate embrace, leaving Buddhimanta Khān in indescribable ecstasy.

According to the Vedic literature, there is no end to the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. Those divine activities which transpired in only a few houses can not be described by hundreds and hundreds of years of discourse. As for myself I am simply giving brief descriptions, and that only by His mercy. I am unable to fully describe His wonderful pastimes.

Whoever hears or reads these transcendental activities of the Supreme Lord can certainly reside in Lord Gauracandra's eternal association. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana Dāsa, humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter Sixteen

All glories to Lord Gaurasundara, the friend of the meek and poor! All glories to the husband of Śrīmatī Lakṣmīdevī, the omnipotent Supreme Lord, the maintainer and controller of everyone and everything! All glories to You, Śrī Gaurahari, for You descend to protect Your devotees! All glories to Gauracandra, the personification of the holy name, the supreme friend, and the Absolute Truth! All glories to Lord Gauracandra and His devotees! One is elevated to the platform of pure devotional service simply by sincerely hearing His transcendental pastimes.

The transcendental topics narrated in the *Ādi-khaṇḍa* of this book are like a stream of pure nectar, for they describe Lord Gauracandra's enchanting pastimes. The Supreme Lord of the Vaikuṇṭha planets lived in Navadvīpa as a householder teaching His students. He had appeared specifically to reveal and propagate the process of pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord, but it was His wish that no one should know His true identity.

The entire human society was totally devoid of any spiritual aspirations; they were immersed in base and perverted enjoyments of the body. Those who held discourses on the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* were scarcely better for they did not instruct people on the essence of those scriptures, the congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord. Seeing the hopeless plight of the living entities, the devotees of the Lord often met together, away from the public view, to clap their hands and chant the holy name in ecstasy.

The materialistic people of Nadia continually criticized the devotees saying, "What is the purpose of howling so loudly! After all, I am Brahmā and the absolute resides within me, so why discriminate between master and servant?"

Others angrily said, "They beg food to fill their bellies and they call out, 'Hari! Hari!' Let us break down their doors and smash their houses.!"

The devotees were discouraged by these derogatory remarks and the fact that they had no one to complain to made their dismay even greater. Wherever they looked, the devotees found the people devoid of devotion to the Supreme Lord. They simply cried to Lord Kṛṣṇa and lamented the plight of human society.

About this time Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura came to Navadvīpa; his body glowed with pure devotion for the Supreme Lord. Now I will narrate the wonderful activities of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Whoever hears this narration will receive the full shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was born in a village called Buḍhana, and because of his presence there, many people became purified and took up the chanting of the holy name. After some years he left his village and travelled to a place near the River Ganges. He finally settled in the village of Phulia near Śāntipura.

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu was overjoyed to meet Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura in Navadvīpa and expressed his joy by roaring loudly. Haridāsa Ṭhākura was similarly swept away by the waves of ecstatic love of Godhead in the transcendental company of Advaita Ācārya Prabhu. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura passed his time wandering on the banks of the Ganges chanting the name of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Haridāsa had absolutely no attraction for material enjoyment. The holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa continuously vibrated on his tongue, creating an extraordinary beauty about his mouth. Never for a moment did he feel any apathy towards his chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa; he remained absorbed, tasting the nectar of devotional service. He occasionally danced in ecstasy or cried in lamentation while other times he lay still in a state of unconsciousness. Sometimes he spoke in mysterious languages, and later explained the meaning of his words. All the ecstatic symptoms of love of Kṛṣṇa were manifest in him—profuse crying horripilation, laughing, fainting, perspiring, etc. It was common to see Śrīla Dāsa Ṭhākura dancing while he sang the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa's name. People would gather around him just to see the unrestricted tears of love of Godhead that flowed profusely from his eyes, drenching his entire body. Even the strictest atheists marvelled at his behavior. Horripilations swelled across his body like thousands of blooming flowers and even Lord Brahmā and Lord

Śiva were amazed by his devotion.

In the village of Phulia even the ritualistic *brāhmaṇas* were sincerely impressed if not astonished by Śrīla Dāsa Ṭhākura's spiritual ecstasies. The saint was held in full respect by the people of the village, and having won their trust, he lived there quite peacefully. He bathed daily in the Ganges and roamed freely, chanting the Lord's holy name.

The local Moslem authority known as the Kazi became envious of Haridāsa Ṭhākura's popularity and reported to the Nawab, "This man is acting like a Hindu; arrest him and punish him appropriately." The envious words of the sinful Kazi sparked an immediate response from the equally sinful Nawab, and Haridāsa Ṭhākura was arrested and brought forth. Having received the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Haridāsa had no fear of the Moslem authorities nor even of death itself. With the name of the Lord on his lips, Haridāsa appeared before the Nawab.

When devotees and other pious persons in the locality of the Nawab's palace heard that the saint Haridāsa was coming, they were extremely happy, but when they subsequently learned that he was coming as a captive of the Moslem ruler, they were horrified. Previously many religious people had been terrorized and incarcerated by the Moslems; those prisoners were happy to learn that Haridāsa might be joining them. His presence in their miserable situation would certainly eradicate their suffering. The prisoners even requested the prison wardens to allow them unrestricted association with Śrīla Haridāsa.

When Śrīla Ṭhākura was brought into the prison, he looked compassionately at all the prisoners who immediately prostrated themselves at his lotus feet. His long graceful arms which extended to his knees, his lotus eyes, and his charming moonlike face enchanted everyone. They offered their most sincere respects to the saint, and love for Kṛṣṇa stirred in their hearts. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was pleased with the tremendous devotion which had grown in the hearts of the prisoners and he blessed them, "Just remain as you are." But the miserable prisoners could not grasp the depth of that blessing and they felt quite dejected.

Haridāsa could see the misunderstanding and compassionately explained himself, "My blessing to you is that you will remain as you are, but please do not feel dejected. I could never wish you any misfortune. I simply desire that the love you now feel for Kṛṣṇa should always remain the same. From now on chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's name and constantly remember His pastimes, inspiring one another to retain his devotion. Violence and tyranny are absent in the spiritual world, so sincerely cry out for Kṛṣṇa's help and constantly think of Him. When you are released from this prison do not return to your old materialistic ways nor associate with degraded or sinful people because one can never cultivate love for the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa by living a mundane life. You should know for certain that Kṛṣṇa is unobtainable by the materialistic person.

"A materially engrossed mind is shaped by unwanted, mischievous desires; the attachment for wife, children, family and other such illusions brings about destruction. If by divine arrangement any person reaches the platform of pure devotion toward Kṛṣṇa, certain realizations dawn on him and he gradually becomes detached from material life, giving himself instead to the worship of the Supreme Lord. If that person returns again to his materialistic life, his mind will become contaminated by capricious, mischievous desires.

"I certainly do not want you to remain prisoners forever, but I do pray that you develop a distaste for material pleasures. Please chant the holy name of the Lord. My blessing was meant to free you from your present miserable condition and to insure that you remain happy in love of Kṛṣṇa. I look upon everyone equally and wish the best for all living entities. I pray that you may develop unflinching devotion for Kṛṣṇa. Do not be sad; you will be freed within two or three days. You may believe me. Once you leave the prison you may live in the forest or you may live in your home, but always think of Kṛṣṇa and try to cultivate spiritual life." Having showered his unrestricted mercy upon the prisoners, Haridāsa went before the Nawab.

Because of his purity, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura radiated a certain effulgence which the Nawab could not fail to notice. He rose respectfully when Haridāsa entered and offered the saint a seat. Although he himself had become quite confused, the Nawab asked Haridāsa, "What sort of mentality has overcome you? Knowing you have the good fortune to become a Muslim, why do you behave like a Hindu? We do not even accept rice touched by a Hindu. Yet you want to ignore your high birth and become a low- caste Hindu? To discard your own race, land and religion for another is perverted. How do you expect to attain the liberated platform if you behave like this? I have decided to punish you according to the mandates of the Koran so that you will be freed from your sins."

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura patiently listened to the threats and accusations of the Nawab, recognizing his words as the illusory potency of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu. Without any apprehension, Haridāsa simply smiled at the Nawab and spoke in a sweet, soothing voice, "My dear Sir, there is only one God for all living entities. The difference between the Moslem god and the Hindu God is in name only. According to knowledgeable Hindus and Muslims, and according to every scripture—be it *Koran* or *Purāṇa*—God is one. He is the nondual, eternal, transcendental Absolute Truth, infallible and perfectly complete, and in that capacity He resides in everyone's heart.

"The omnipotent Lord is the supreme controller of everything. The living entity is moved by the desire of the Supreme Lord, and he acts and works only according to the Lord's design. The Supreme Lord's transcendental name, activities,

qualities, associates, and abode, etc. are glorified according to different classes of spiritual instruction. But irrespective of the manner in which He is worshiped, the Lord accepts everyone's individual mood of surrender towards Him. However, if one living entity feels hatred or envy toward another, he ultimately reflects those emotions in his relationship with the Lord. Whatever you see of me and my activities are direct manifestations of the Lord who guides me from within.

Looking at it from another perspective, a person may be born in a family of *brāhmaṇas* but despite his high birth he demonstrates the perverted behavior of a fourth-class, uncultured person. What can the Hindus do with such a person? He is forced to act in degrading ways because of his innate propensities, and he accordingly suffers or enjoys the reactions of his activities. What could be achieved by punishing him for activities which are an intrinsic part of his nature? My dear respected Sir, please consider these points seriously, and if you still find me guilty then punish me."

The Moslem courtiers were sincerely moved by the honesty of Haridāsa Ṭhākura's words and presence. But his wisdom could not penetrate the envious and sinful heart of the Kazi who turned to the Nawab and instructed, "You must punish this man! He is evil and mischievous. Others will fall under his influence and become equally sinful. He will disgrace our Muslim religion and community. Therefore he must be appropriately punished. If he wants to be excused, then let him preach from his own scripture."

The Nawab tried again, "My friend, just speak from your own scripture and accept the path. Then you will have nothing to fear. Otherwise, the Kazi's present will force me to punish you; they will revile and insult you. Why should you let that happen?"

"Whatever the Supreme Lord desires is destined to happen; there is no one who can check it," replied Haridāsa. Each one of us suffers according to the degree of his previous offenses. You should know without a doubt that you are merely an instrument of the Lord's desire. Even if my body is cut into pieces and I lose my life, I will never give up chanting the Lord's holy name."

The Nawab heard the fearless reply of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and turned to the Kazi, "Now what is your decision about him?"

"Lash him in twenty-two market places until he dies," replied the envious Kazi. "There is no other judgement I find appropriate. If he lives despite the punishment, then I will conclude that our big scholar has spoken the truth."

The sentries were called in and the orders boomed out, "Lash him until he breathes his last! The sin a Muslim incurs by becoming a Hindu can only be punished by death!"

The Kazi's envious designs had fructified in the heart of the Nawab and Śrīla Haridāsa was dragged away by the sentries. From one market place to another they beat him mercilessly, their black hearts consumed by hate for the pure devotee of the Lord. But Haridāsa was a pure soul, completely surrendered to the Supreme Lord, so he faithfully chanted Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name. So absorbed was he in the fervent chanting that he did not feel any pain.

Good-hearted and pious people could not bear to see the torture inflicted on such an innocent person. Some begged the sentries to stop while others predicted, "If they continue to torture this good man, the entire kingdom will be ruined." Many of them cursed the king to die, while some tried to stop the sentries physically. One person threw himself at the feet of the sentries and pleaded, "I will give you any reward you like if you stop this merciless beating." But none of these protests evoked the slightest mercy from the sentries who continued to drag Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura from one market place to another, lashing him relentlessly.

By the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Haridāsa felt little pain in his body. Just like Prahlāda in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* who was tortured by demons, Haridāsa never suffered at all. Not only was Haridāsa freed from his pain, whoever remembers this story of Śrīla Haridāsa will also be saved from the miseries of life. Throughout his ordeal, Haridāsa's one emotion was pity for the sentries. "O Lord Kṛṣṇa, please be merciful upon these poor souls so they may not be punished because of me,"

Nothing could stop the insensitive sentries who were determined to see their assignment through to its deathly end. Yet for all their beating, Haridāsa showed no signs of distress as he was absorbed in remembering the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. At last the guards had to stop in amazement. "How can a human being survive such a brutal beating? Any ordinary man would have died after the beating we gave in the first two or three market places. We have lashed him continuously through twenty-two market places and he still shows no sign of either pain or death. Occasionally he looks up to smile at us." They concluded that he must be a saintly person.

"O Haridāsa," they pleaded. "Because of you we shall certainly be punished. When the Kazi sees that despite our beating you are still alive, he shall certainly kill us instead."

"If my survival brings such terrible misfortune to you," replied Haridāsa, "then I shall definitely give up my body. Just see how I die."

Śrīla Dāsa Ṭhākura immediately fell into trance. A pure devotee of the Supreme Lord possesses all mystic power so without any hesitation, Śrīla Haridāsa fell lifeless, without a trace of breath. The Muslim sentries were astonished but gladly brought the body of Śrīla Haridāsa to the Nawab. When the Nawab ordered the sentries to bury him, the Kazi protested, “No, if he is buried he will be saved and ultimately gain entrance into heaven. Although he got the high birth of a Moslem, he behaved like a low Hindu, therefore it is proper for him to be thrown in the Ganges to suffer eternally like the other lost Hindus. By being buried he will become elevated and freed from his sin.”

On the Kazi's order the sentries picked up the body of Haridāsa Ṭhākura and carried him to the Ganges. Haridāsa remained in his deathly trance, meditating on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The spirit of the Lord Kṛṣṇa then descended into the body of Śrīla Ṭhākura and he became so heavy that it was impossible to move him. The strongest sentries came forward to push him into the waters, but he remained in deep trance and could not be moved. Haridāsa had already drowned in the ocean of love of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and he had no perception of the world around him. He knew not if he were still embodied, or wandering somewhere in the universe, or deep in the water of the Ganges. Just like Prahlāda Mahārāja, Haridāsa Ṭhākura had the spiritual ability to constantly remember the Supreme Lord. Such an extraordinary capability was not surprising for Haridāsa's heart was the permanent residence of Lord Gauracandra.

This entire episode with Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is a replication of the heroic activities of Śrī Hanumān in Śrī Lanka. Indrajit, Ravana's son, had sent the Brahmāstra, a weapon given to him by Lord Brahmā, to capture Hanumān. Hanumān could easily have escaped it, but to show respect to the potency of Lord Brahmā, Hanumān allowed himself to be bound by the Brahmāstra. Similarly, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura could have escaped the punishment of the Moslems, but by allowing them to torture him, he taught the world a lesson: Despite the extreme miseries of life, one must never stop chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa.

Dāsa Ṭhākura was directly protected by the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa Govinda, therefore who could harm him? If one simply remembers the name of Haridāsa—not to mention his terrible ordeal at the hands of the Moslems—he becomes free from his own pain and misery. Most certainly Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was one of the closest and most important associates of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanyacandra.

Haridāsa floated downstream on the currents of the Ganges, and after some time he became conscious, by the Lord's desire. Fully awakened and overwhelmed with ecstasy, he climbed the bank of the Ganges and proceeded toward Phulia, loudly chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa as he walked. When the Moslems saw Śrīla Haridāsa they were convinced that he possessed extraordinary mystic powers. Pure, happy feelings replaced the envy and hate in their hearts. They offered him obeisances, worshipping him as a very saintly person. By this worship the Moslems became free from material entanglement. In the presence of the Nawab, Haridāsa stopped chanting and smiled compassionately at the Moslem ruler who was standing respectfully with folded hands.

In a humble and meek voice the Nawab said, “I can now understand that you are truly a saintly person. You have realized the absolute truth, and you have seen the one Supreme Lord everywhere and in everyone. Absolute knowledge and liberation—which the mystic yogis and philosophers proudly boast—has been easily attained by you because you are a perfect human being. I have come just to see you, simply to beg forgiveness. Kindly forgive me for the offenses I have committed against you. Because you see everyone equally, you have neither friends nor enemies; there is no one in the entire world who can actually grasp your extraordinary position. You are a free man in every respect. You may stay wherever you wish—in a lonely hut or a cave on the bank of the River Ganges. But please be merciful upon those of us who have committed this great offense against you.”

Everyone—whether elevated or wretched—automatically forgets about mundane life when he sees the lotus feet of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. The Muslims had been angry enough to kill him, yet they were transformed and they worshiped his feet, accepting him as a holy man. After forgiving and blessing them, Haridāsa went to Phulia.

With the holy name resounding from his lips, he reached an assembly of *brāhmaṇas* near Phulia. The *brāhmaṇas* were overjoyed by his arrival and they joined him in a roaring *kīrtana*. As he danced in their midst, he felt ecstatic joy sweep through his body; crying, shivering, laughing, falling unconscious, swelling with horripilation, and roaring loudly, he fell to the ground totally immersed in love of God. The *brāhmaṇas* could not contain their unbounded joy. After sometime Śrīla Haridāsa calmed himself and spoke to the *brāhmaṇas* who sat around him, “My dear *brāhmaṇa* friends, do not feel sad because of what happened to me. This punishment was certainly due me. I stood in the court and listened to the Moslems blaspheme my Lord; for this the Lord has punished me suitably. I am really very happy because my punishment should have been more severe; the Lord let me off very easily. One goes to hell if he hears blasphemy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. My sinful ears were filled with such blasphemy and the Lord has given me the proper punishment so that I may never commit this offense again.”

Śrīla Haridāsa passed his time relishing the nectar of the holy name and giving his enlightened association to the *brāhmaṇas*. Those Muslims who tortured Dāsa Ṭhākura, and their families as well, were all eventually destroyed. Haridāsa left the village and moved into a cave on the banks of the River Ganges where he maintained himself on the sweetness of the holy name and the memory of the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. Daily he chanted a minimum of three hundred thousand names of the Kṛṣṇa. By the influence of the transcendental sound of the holy name and the holy presence of

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the cave was transformed into a Vaikuṇṭha planet of the spiritual sky.

In Haridāsa's cave lived a large and poisonous snake who emitted such strong vapors that not a soul could remain in the cave for more than a moment. People from the village came every day to visit Haridāsa, but they could not stay long enough to speak with him. Although the visitors were all driven away by the poisonous air, Haridāsa was completely oblivious to the presence of the snake. The *brāhmaṇas* consulted one another about the foul air in the cave and then discussed the matter with some Ayurvedic physicians in Phulia. After some research they determined that a poisonous snake had indeed built its home under Haridāsa's cave. The physicians felt strongly that Haridāsa should vacate his cave, for living with such a snake was improper. They joined the *brāhmaṇas* and approached Haridāsa to explain the situation. "Because of the vapors from a poisonous snake living underneath your cave, no one can remain here," they explained. "You should also vacate this place and find a suitable cave to live in."

"I have been living in this cave for a long time, and I have never been inconvenienced by these vapors you speak of," replied Haridāsa. "But if none of you can remain in the cave because it causes you such distress, then I shall leave here tomorrow. If it is true that a snake lives here, and if he doesn't leave by tomorrow, then I shall certainly go. I can assure you that one of us will leave this cave by tomorrow. Please do not worry about this problem any longer. I am concerned that all of you not waste your time in futile, mundane talks; every moment should be utilized discussing topics on Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

In the course of this discussion, a miracle occurred. Evening had gradually descended around the *brāhmaṇas* and Haridāsa when the snake slithered out of its hole. Its huge, frightening body, crossed with effulgent red, yellow, and blue stripes and crowned with a brilliant gem, slid quietly past the *brāhmaṇas* and left the cave forever. Its appearance was both awesome and attractive, and as it slithered past, the *brāhmaṇas* remembered Kṛṣṇa as their only shelter. After the snake left, the burning sensation from the poisonous air also vanished and all the *brāhmaṇas* were satisfied. Their faith in the extraordinary spiritual potency of Haridāsa Ṭhākura swelled for they understood that the snake had left because of Haridāsa's assurance to the visitors. Simply the sight of Haridāsa dissipates one's innate nescience and material entanglements. Our of His love for Haridāsa, the Supreme Lord never minimizes or neglects Haridāsa's words.

There is another similar incident related by a snake charmer. One day in the courtyard of a rich man's house this snake charmer was performing a snake dance. He was chanting a special mantra accompanied by musicians playing the *mṛdaṅga* and *mandira*. Haridāsa was passing by and stood to one side watching the snake dance. Although the snake charmer was an ordinary human being, by the influence of his mantra he could dance as though he were possessed by the spirit of the king of the snakes, Ananta Śeṣa. With an enchanting melody he sang about the pastime of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the lake called Kaliyādaha where the Lord vanquished an evil serpent called Kālīya.

Haridāsa listened intently to the pastime of his beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa, and suddenly moved by ecstasy, he fell unconscious to the ground. When he regained consciousness, he jumped to his feet and roared like a lion, dancing in ecstasy as he babbled with joy. The snake charmer was impressed by Haridāsa's manifestation of ecstatic symptoms and stood respectfully to the side. As the various symptoms of horripilation, crying, and shivering traversed his body, he rolled in the dust, crying in love for Kṛṣṇa. He remembered how his beloved Lord had mercifully saved the snake Kālīya, and as he floated in ecstatic trance, the people around him obliged by singing songs about the wonderful pastimes of the Lord. The snake charmer simply stood to the side, overcome by awe and reverence for Haridāsa. When his ecstasy subsided, Haridāsa left and the snake charmer resumed his performance.

Everyone who witnessed the ecstasy of Haridāsa felt spiritually exhilarated and they smeared their bodies with dust from his feet. However, one cunning and deceitful *brāhmaṇa* in the crowd decided to cheat the people. "I will also dance here," he told himself. "I can see that the people are not very intelligent. They are offering so much respect to this lowborn Haridāsa just because he dances and cries; if I, a *brāhmaṇa*, also dance and cry they will certainly worship me as well.

The *brāhmaṇa* threw himself on the ground and feigned unconsciousness as though he had fallen into trance. But as soon as he touched the ground the dancing snake charmer became furious, picked up a stick, and began beating the *brāhmaṇa* relentlessly. He struck him again and again on every part of his body until the *brāhmaṇa*, howling in agony, got up and ran away just to save his life. The snake charmer then resumed his dance while the entire crowd stood dumbfounded. At last, a man with folded hands humbly requested the snake charmer to explain why he had stood respectfully to the side while Haridāsa danced, yet he had beaten the *brāhmaṇa* for what seemed to be the same activity.

The spirit of Ananta Śeṣa who dwelt within the snake charmer then spoke in glorification of Śrīla Dāsa Ṭhākura. "The subject matter of your inquiry is very confidential. Although such a topic is rarely discussed because of its highly esoteric nature, I shall nevertheless answer your question. When Śrīla Dāsa Ṭhākura was dancing in ecstatic trance, each one of us felt our respect and affection for him spontaneously increase. But the deceitful *brāhmaṇa* was simply imitating Haridāsa in order to get some cheap adoration from the crowd. Not out of love for Kṛṣṇa, but out of enviousness toward a pure devotee, the *brāhmaṇa* threw himself on the ground and feigned ecstasy. Furthermore, he interrupted my dancing. Because he disturbed me and tried to imitate the pure devotee, I punished him severely."

“He is presenting himself as a important person by imitating some religious sentiments. This arrogant and deceitful *brāhmaṇa* has no love for Kṛṣṇa. To receive the shelter of devotional service at the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, one has to become pure, free from deceit. By seeing Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura dance one becomes liberated from material bondage; even the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa himself dances when He sees Śrīla Dāsa Ṭhākura dance. The entire universe becomes cleansed of all sinful reactions just by seeing Śrīla Haridāsa dance. He is truly worthy of his name, Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the servant of the Supreme Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa, who shines eternally like a full moon in the heart of His devotee.

“Haridāsa is affectionate and compassionate towards all living entities, and he descends as the eternal servant of the Supreme Lord in each of the Lord’s incarnations. He is totally free from any fault or offense towards the Supreme Lord or his devotees. Even in his dreams he never commits an offense. A moment’s association with Haridāsa can purify any living entity and assure him the eternal shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. Even Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva constantly desire his association.

“Haridāsa appeared in the family of a lowly Moslem on the order of the Supreme Lord, just to teach human society that material designations like caste, creed, birth status, and family position are all illusory and pursuing them is futile. If a pure devotee of the Lord is born in a low-class family, he is no less worthy of worship; that is the injunction of the scriptures. On the other hand, if someone is born in a sophisticated family but does not worship the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then his high birth is useless for he lives just like a resident of hell. Just to prove the truth of these scriptures Śrīla Haridāsa took birth in a low-caste family. Prahlāda Mahārāja, one of the greatest devotees of the Lord, had previously appeared in a family of demons, and Hanumān, the greatest devotee of Lord Rāmacandra, took birth in the monkey species. Similarly, Śrīla Haridāsa appeared in a family of Moslems.

“The demigods desire the touch of the pure and transcendental form of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and mother Ganges also prays that her water will be sanctified by his presence. But one need not touch Śrīla Dāsa Ṭhākura; simply by seeing him one is automatically freed from the eternal cycle of birth and death. Furthermore, one who sees a devotee who has taken shelter at the lotus feet of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is also granted freedom from material bondage. Neither a thousand mouths nor a thousand ears would be sufficient to describe and hear the wonderful qualities of Śrīla Haridāsa. You are a fortunate soul for your inquiry gave me an opportunity to glorify the pure devotee and gave you the opportunity to hear the transcendental topic. From the moment a person speaks the name of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, his ascension to the supreme abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa is guaranteed.”

Nagarāja, the snake charmer, then fell silent. The assembled *brāhmaṇas* and pious gentlemen felt thoroughly satisfied by his glorification of Śrīla Haridāsa. Of course, Ananta Śeṣa is a pure devotee of the Supreme Lord and is always engaged in glorifying the Lord and His devotees; this was not his first occasion to describe the outstanding qualities of Haridāsa. The assembly accepted the Nagarāja’s appraisal of Haridāsa, and the love each person felt for Haridāsa increased.

Śrīla Haridāsa was a pure devotee of Lord Caitanya and although Śrī Gauracandra was yet to reveal the process of devotional service to the Supreme Lord, Haridāsa continued to demonstrate his love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. People in general were disinterested in the process of devotional service, and they could not understand the purpose behind chanting the holy name of God. Because of a general apathy toward the holy name, the mood of devotional service was absent. People taunted and jeered at the Vaiṣṇavas who engaged in *kīrtana*, so the saintly devotees assembled in a quiet spot away from everyone where they could sing and dance undisturbed.

Even then, atheistic people angrily condemned them. “These degraded *brāhmaṇas* will completely destroy this entire country,” they complained. “All this loud, sentimental singing and dancing will probably cause a famine in the land. These emotionalists sing like this just to fill their bellies, not realizing that Lord Viṣṇu takes rest during these four months of the rainy season. They will just disturb Him, and in irritation He will send some natural calamity. Can’t these fools understand the disaster they could cause?”

Another man threatened, “If there is an increase in the price of food grains then I will catch them one by one and beat them soundly.”

“It may be proper to chant loudly on the night of Ekādaśī, but what is the use of this daily recitation of Govinda’s names?” questioned another irritated atheist.

The devotees felt genuine compassion for the atheistic people, and despite their harassment, the devotees continued the *kīrtanas*. Śrīla Haridāsa was one of those sincere devotees who felt sorry to see that the majority of the people in society were not the least inclined toward devotional service. He continued his loud chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s holy name which the extremely sinful people in society found unbearable.

Once in a village named Harinadi an arrogant *brāhmaṇa* offended Śrīla Haridāsa. He shouted angrily, “Hey Haridāsa, why do you behave like this? Why must you chant so loudly? The actual injunction is to chant softly in your mind. Which scripture instructs you to chant loudly? Who has taught you this type of religious practice? Here is an assembly of scholars; you can ask them about the correct method of worship.”

Śrīla Haridāsa humbly replied, “I do not know the scriptural conclusions about the glories of the holy name of God. You must certainly know more than I. I can only repeat what I have heard from scholars like yourself. The principle effect of chanting the name of God loudly is that it purifies the soul one hundred times more than any other form of worship. Nowhere in the scriptures is loud chanting of the holy name condemned; on the contrary, there are excellent benefits which have been described in many places. In one scripture it says: Loud chanting of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s name is a hundred times better than silent chanting.”

“Why is the result of loud chanting magnified a hundred times over any other process?” demanded the *brāhmaṇa*.

“My dear sir, please listen to the conclusions of the *Vedas* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.” As Śrīla Haridāsa spoke, he floated in the ocean of love of Kṛṣṇa and his explanations capsulized the essence of all scriptures. “*Obrāhmaṇa*, please try to understand that when any living entity—whether human, animal, insect, or bird—hears the holy name chanted by a pure devotee of the Lord, he goes directly to the spiritual world, *Vaikuṇṭha*, after leaving this body. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.34.18) it says: ‘O Lord anyone who chants Your name purifies all who hear his chanting, as well as himself. How much more beneficial, then, is the touch of Your lotus feet?’

Lower species such as animals, birds, and insects which do not possess the ability to chant the Lord’s name can be liberated simply by hearing the name chanted by a pure devotee. One who chants the holy name to himself liberates himself only, but one who chants the Lord’s name loudly liberates anyone who hears him. The sound of the Lord’s name is beneficial for everyone. Therefore the scriptures all assert that loud chanting of the Lord’s name is a hundred times more effective than any other religious process. Again, in the *Nāradya Purāṇa* Pahlāda Mahārāja says, ‘I see perfect logic in the fact that a person who chants the Lord’s name loudly is a hundred times more pious than the person who chants to himself. One who chants softly liberates only himself, but one who chants loudly liberates himself and any other living entity who hears him.’

“O *brāhmaṇa*, listen carefully. It is easy to understand that a person who acts for the benefit of the entire society including the lower animals is certainly on a higher religious platform than a person who is simply concerned with his own liberation. Only the human being has been endowed with the capacity to utter the Lord’s name; an animal cannot. If loud chanting can liberate these unfortunate animals, who otherwise have no hope for liberation, then what is the harm in chanting loudly? A selfish person is interested in his own welfare, but a selfless devotee is concerned with everyone’s welfare. If you understand this, you can easily determine who is on the higher platform. I must emphasize that loud chanting of the Lord’s holy name is the most efficient type of chanting.”

The foolish *brāhmaṇa* became even more infuriated by the unequivocal instructions of Śrīla Haridāsa. He angrily retorted, “O Haridāsa, you have now become the master of the *Vedas*. It seems you have propounded the seventh philosophical thought, the other six having been destroyed with the passing of time. It has been prophesied in the *Vedas* that at the end of Kali-yuga, a lowborn *śūdra* will propagate the *Vedas*. But I see it already happening right before me, what is the need to wait for the end of the Kali-yuga? You deceive everyone by acting like a holy man, but all you do is visit the homes of householders and fill your belly. If I find your explanations unauthorized or not bona fide according to *śāstra*, then I will cut off your ears and nose.”

Completely equiposed, Śrīla Haridāsa simply smiled at the harsh, revengeful words of the fallen *brāhmaṇa*. Without another word, he walked away, chanting loudly the Lord’s holy name. The scholars of the assembly were as sinful as that vicious *brāhmaṇa* for they neither accepted the correct, bona fide explanations of Śrīla Ṭhākura nor did they condemn the offensive words of the wretched *brāhmaṇa*. Those men were *brāhmaṇas* in name only, while in actuality they were demons; their residence was hell and they suffered untold misery in the hands of Yamarāja, the god of death. In Kali-yuga the demons will be born as *brāhmaṇas* who harass and offend pious people.

The *Varāha Purāṇa* says, “In the Kali-yuga, demons find shelter in *brāhmaṇa* families and torture the transcendentalists who are rare souls.” All the scriptures have strictly forbidden us to touch, hear, or worship persons who live in the guise of *brāhmaṇas*; one simply becomes contaminated by their contact. In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is mentioned, “There is no need for a detailed explanation: those *brāhmaṇas* who are not devotees of the Lord should neither be respected nor touched by anyone.” Meeting a nondevotee *brāhmaṇa* is as contaminating as meeting a lowborn dog-eater; on the other hand, a pure devotee of the Lord, born in any family or any class, can purify the entire universe.

A few days after this incident with Śrīla Haridāsa, the fallen *brāhmaṇa* contracted such a severe case of smallpox that his nose fell off. He was justly punished by Kṛṣṇa for his offenses against the Vaiṣṇava saint. Haridāsa sighed in deep depression over the sad state of the human society which was engrossed in mundane life.

For a long time he had desired the association of other pure devotees, so he went to Navadvīpa where the Vaiṣṇavas were overjoyed to see him. Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu grasped him to His chest in a loving embrace, and the other devotees showered their affection on him, just as he reciprocated their emotions. The atheists continued their offensive criticism of the devotees, while the Vaiṣṇavas continued their transcendental discussions of the subjects in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Anyone who listens with faith and devotion to these narrations will find eternal shelter at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord Śrī Gauracandra.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, humbly offer this song at their lotus feet.

Chapter 17

All glories to Śrī Gaurasundara, the Supreme Lord of all lords! He possesses an eternal transcendental form and is very dear to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. All glories to the Lord, for He is the life and soul and the most precious object of love of all the Vaiṣṇavas! Kindly bestow Your merciful glance on the living entities so they may be liberated from material entanglement.

Now listen carefully to the narrations of Lord Gaurasundara going to Gayā. The Lord of the Vaikuṇṭha planets now resided in Navadvīpa as the crest jewel teacher and scholar. The condition of human society had deteriorated to such an extent that there was an increase of atheistic people, and the process of devotional service had become very rare. People in general were attracted by the temporary and illusory pleasures of the senses and this greatly saddened the devotees. Another reason why the Vaiṣṇavas were despairing was because Lord Gaurasundara was so engrossed in scholastic pursuits. The mischievous and sinful population continued to hurl abuses at the Vaiṣṇavas, and they simply bore the insults quietly. The Supreme Lord, Gaurasundara, desired within His heart that now the time was ripe to reveal His true identity and manifest His transcendental pastimes but first He decided to visit Gayā, such was the desire of the fully independent Supreme Personality Gaurasundara.

He performed the *śrāddha* ceremony of His father according to the scriptural injunctions and then, accompanied by His disciples, proceeded to Gayā. The Lord was in a very blissful mood at the thought of being able to see Gayā so taking leave of mother Śacī He left for Gayā. He passed through many towns and villages and by the touch of His transcendental lotus feet they have become places of pilgrimage.

On the way He discussed many spiritual topics and explained difficult conclusions to His disciples sometimes joking with them, sometimes in a serious mood, finally He arrived in Mondata. In the Mandara hill there is a very famous place, the Lord visited the temples on the hill, the temple of Lord Madhusūdana.

One day while travelling the Lord pretended to have fever. In order to teach the living entities the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, the Supreme Personality, pretended to have fever just like an ordinary mortal. Half way to Gayā the Lord got fever which brought anxiety to His disciples. They tried various medicines and means to bring the fever down but such was the desire of the Lord that His fever persisted. At last the Lord Himself suggested a remedy. "The remedy for all suffering is drinking the water that has washed the feet of a pure *brāhmaṇa*." To teach the world of the unique position of a pure *brāhmaṇa* the Lord drank the water that had washed the feet of the *brāhmaṇa*. Immediately upon drinking that water, the Lord became healthy and His fever was gone.

Such activities of the Lord is His real nature, this has been described in all the Vedic scriptures. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.11) it is said, "All of them, as they surrender unto Me I reward accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Partha." When the devotee sincerely desires to become a servant of the Lord then the merciful Lord grants him eternal servitude. Therefore He is known as *sevaka-vatsala*, or one who is very affectionate to His servitors. The Lord readily accepts defeat if it increases the name and position of His surrendered devotee. How can devotees who have totally surrendered themselves to the lotus feet of the Lord even think of leaving the shelter of the Lord's lotus feet? The Lord continued His journey now cured of His fever, He came to the holy Punapūnā River.

The Lord took His bath and offered worship to the departed soul of His father and then He entered Gayā. On entering Gayā the Lord offered His obeisances with folded hands to the holy place of pilgrimage. He came to Brahmā-kunḍa and took His bath and worshiped His father in the proper way the Lord then went to Cakravedā, went inside to see the impressions of Lord Viṣṇu's lotus feet.

All the *brāhmaṇa* priests sat surrounding the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu, flower garlands offered to the lotus feet were piled around. One could never take account of all the incense flowers, perfumes, clothes and ornaments which were offered to the lotus feet and which now lay all around. The *brāhmaṇas* looked like divine beings and sat there describing the wonderful glories of the lotus feet of the Lord.

They said, "Lord Kāśīnātha, Śiva, holds these lotus feet always close to his heart, and they are the life and soul of Śrīmatī Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune. The Supreme Lord blessed Bali Mahārāja by placing these feet on his head, now all of you pious souls, see His very same lotus feet. Just a moment of sincere meditation on these lotus feet will immediately save you from hell. These lotus feet are rarely attained even by great mystic yogis. You have the good fortune to see them. Mother Ganges sprang forth from these lotus feet and surrendered souls of the Lord always hold these lotus feet deep in their hearts. All you fortunate souls please see these lotus feet that lies on the head of Ananta Śeṣa."

Hearing the wonderful glories of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, Lord Gaurāṅga merged into an ocean of ecstatic bliss. Tears flowed profusely from His lotus eyes, and ecstatic symptoms like horripilation, shivering manifested on His transcendental body at the sight of the lotus feet. For the benefit of the entire human society, for the good fortune for all living entities, the Supreme Lord, Gauracandra, now began to manifest the process of devotional service, love of Godhead. All the *brāhmaṇa* priests marvelled at the sight as an unrestricted stream, like mother Ganges, poured from the Lord's lotus eyes.

By divine arrangement Śrīla Īśvara Purī was also present there at that time. When Lord Gauracandra saw Śrīla Īśvara Purī, He offered His obeisances with great affection. Īśvara Purī was also overjoyed to see Lord Gauracandra and he embraced Him very lovingly. They could not control their intense joy of meeting each other and tears flowed profusely from their eyes drenching each other.

Lord Gaurāṅga said, "Now that I have seen your lotus feet My visit to Gayā has become successful and worthy. Oblations offered in a place of pilgrimage for the liberation of the departed souls of forefathers effect only those who they are intended for, but just by your presence you have liberated the souls of innumerable departed forefathers. Therefore no place of pilgrimage can be compared to you, in fact you are the purifier of even the places of pilgrimage. So kindly save Me from drowning in the ocean of material existence, because I am surrendering My heart and soul and body to your feet. The only benediction that I desire from you is that you make Me drink the nectar from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet."

Then Īśvara Purī spoke, "Listen to me Paṇḍita! I know very well that You are an expansion of the Supreme Lord. Otherwise how is it possible to possess such vast learning as You have or such a transcendental nature as You have? I had a dream last night of meeting the Supreme Lord and now, by meeting You, that dream has been fulfilled. To tell You the truth, O Paṇḍita, every moment I am feeling increasing ecstasy in Your presence. Ever since I saw You in Navadvīpa, there has been nothing else on my mind except for You. Whatever I have spoken is certainly the truth. I have no other motivation for speaking this. The same bliss one achieves in Lord Kṛṣṇa's presence I am fully experiencing in Your presence."

The Lord was very pleased to hear these sincere words from His beloved Īśvara Purī. He said, "It is My good fortune that I have met you." They were very happy with each other's company talking confidential topics of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrīla Vedavyāsa in the future will describe in details these discussions between Lord Caitanya and Īśvara Purī. The Lord then left Īśvara Purī taking permission to go and take His bath and perform sacrifice in honor of His father, the *śrāddha* ceremony.

After completing His necessary rituals of offering oblations to His father He left for Preta-gayā in Girirīṅga. In Preta-gayā, Lord Śacīnandana again performed a *śrāddha* ceremony, and He satisfied the attending priests with very humble and sweet words, this was His way of pleasing the priests. From there He proceeded to Dakṣiṇa Manasa then to Rāma-gayā. In Rāma-gayā the Lord offered *śrāddha* to the incarnation of the Lord, Rāmacandra. He then proceeded to Yudhiṣṭhira-gayā and offered oblations to Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja. Each time the Lord performed a *śrāddha* ceremony, the *brāhmaṇa* priest would sit around Him and chant mantras. After the sacrifice when the oblations were offered into the water the *brāhmaṇa* priests were almost swooping down upon Him for fees and other gifts. The Lord simply smiled at such behavior and mercifully cut the knots of material entanglement in their hearts.

Then from Uttara Manasa, Lord Śrī Gaurāṅga went to Bhima-gayā, then to Śiva-gayā and Brahmā-gayā and various other holy places. When He arrived in Sodāsa-gayā He offered a special sacrifice with 16 special ingredients and offered everyone oblations very respectfully. In Brahmā-kuṇḍa the Lord took His bath then in Gayāśir oblations. There the Lord offered beautiful flower garlands and sandalwood paste with His own hands and worshiped the lotus feet impressions of Lord Viṣṇu.

Completing His pilgrimage in all the places and satisfying all the *brāhmaṇa* priests He returned to His place of residence. He rested for a while, then feeling refreshed from rest, He made preparations for cooking. As He completed the last preparation Śrīla Īśvara Purī came to visit Him. Intoxicated from chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and feeling ecstatic love for the Lord, he walked into the room swaying as if drunk. The Lord immediately left His cooking in the kitchen and offered His respectful obeisances and sat him down comfortably.

Laughing Śrīla Īśvara Purī said, "O Paṇḍita, I have certainly come at the right time." The Lord replied, "When good fortune has smiled upon Me today by sending you here, I pray that you will please accept some *riceprasāda*." Śrīla Purīpāda smiled and said, "But then what will You have?" The Lord replied, "I will cook some rice for Me now." Śrīla Purīpāda asked, "What is the use of cooking again? Whatever You have already cooked, let us share that amongst ourselves." Smiling the Lord replied, "Whatever is already prepared that is all for you, in no time I can prepare something afresh, please do not feel hesitant, you eat first."

Offering to Īśvara Purī what He had cooked for Himself the Lord went back into the kitchen and began preparing food once again. Feeling great happiness the Lord exhibited so much mercy to Īśvara Purī and Śrīpāda Purī also had no other thought in mind other than Kṛṣṇa. The Lord served Śrīpāda Purī with His own hands and Śrīpāda Purī relished the Lord's cooking with great delight. While this was going on Rāmādevī, the goddess of fortune, personally appeared and cooked for

the Lord unseen by anyone in the kitchen. After seeing that Śrīpāda Purī was fully satisfied, the Lord sat down to eat. These transcendental activities of the Lord and His devotees are so wonderful that anyone who hears them with faith and sincerity is immediately granted unalloyed devotional service at the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

After the meal, the Lord arranged for Śrīpāda Purī to rest. As a disciple would serve a spiritual master, the Lord began massaging Śrīpāda Purī with scented oil. Who can describe the elevated position of Śrī Īśvara Purī?

Śrī Caitanya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, acting like an ideal disciple, went to see the appearance place of Śrī Īśvara Purī. The Lord said, "I offer My obeisances to the village Kumārahaṭṭa, where Śrī Īśvara Purī appeared." The Lord was so spiritually moved by this place that He shed profuse tears of love for Īśvara Purī and continuously repeated his name. He picked up a handful of earth and tied it to the corner of His cloth. The Lord said, "This handful of earth from the place of Śrī Īśvara Purī's appearance is My most precious possession." Only the Supreme Personality of Godhead is capable of increasing the glories of His devotees, which was exemplified by Lord Caitanya's intense love for Śrī Īśvara Purī. The Lord said, "By being able to associate with you I have fulfilled a reason for coming to Gayā." The next day the Lord went to meet Īśvara Purī and approached him for an initiation mantra with sweet and humble words. Śrīla Purīpāda said, "How is it that You ask for an initiation mantra from me? I can give You my very life and soul." The Supreme Personality of Godhead Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme instructing spiritual master of everyone, accepted initiation from Śrīpāda Purī, with an initiation mantra consisting of ten syllables. The Lord circumambulated Śrīpāda Purī, and said, "I have surrendered My life to you, please always look upon me with a merciful glance, so that I may always float in an ocean of love of Kṛṣṇa." Śrī Purīpāda was moved by the Lord's words and he embraced the Lord holding Him close to his breast. The profuse tears of love flowed like torrents from their eyes drenching each other.

The omniscient Supreme Lord remained in Gayā for sometime, profusely distributing His mercy to Śrīla Purīpāda. The time was slowly approaching for the Lord to reveal to the world the reason for His incarnation. His love for Kṛṣṇa manifested increasingly day by day. One day the Lord sat in a solitary place chanting and meditating on His specific mantra. The Lord was lost in the ecstatic world of meditation on the Supreme Lord, and when His consciousness returned He began lamenting and calling out to the Lord. His object of meditation. "O My Kṛṣṇa, My dear Lord. O Lord Hari, You are My life and soul! You have stolen My heart, now where have You run to? Where can I find My beloved Lord?" The Lord cried out in intense separation from His beloved Lord and wept bitterly. The Lord was totally absorbed in relishing the nectar of love of Kṛṣṇa and rolling on the ground His body was covered with dust. He cried out as if greatly afflicted, "Where is my beloved Kṛṣṇa? Where has He gone leaving Me behind?"

Lord Nīmāi, previously a grave and serious scholar teacher, now exhibited extreme restlessness as He was stunned by the arrow of love of God. He rolled about on the ground and cried out loudly and floated on the waves of ecstasy from intense separation from Himself. Soon His students returned and treated the Lord with great care, they brought Him back to normal condition. The Lord said, "All of you return to your homes, I do not want to go back to My family anymore. I am going to Mathurā to find the beloved Lord of My heart, Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra." The students used all their intelligence and in various means they kept the Lord calm and still. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha was now in the mood of an unalloyed devotee. He was constantly absorbed in love of God and His heart was restless in separation from the Lord. He could not remain anywhere still.

One morning in the early hours, the Lord, desiring to go to Mathurā, slipped out of the house without anyone's notice. He was in a state of ecstatic trance. He cried to Kṛṣṇa as He walked, "O Lord Kṛṣṇa! My dear Lord, where can I find You?" After some distance He heard a divine voice saying, "Do not proceed to Mathurā now, the time will come, then You will go to Mathurā but for now return to Navadvīpa, to Your house. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord of the Vaikuṇṭha planets. You have come into this material world with all Your eternal associates to liberate the entire world, You will propagate the congregational chanting of the holy name of God all over the universe and distribute freely to everyone the most treasured object, love of Godhead. You are omniscient. You already know everything, we know the reason why You have descended to this material world. You have come to distribute the most desired object whose nectarean taste bewitches the mind of even Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Sanaka and the other sages, and whose glories Lord Ananta Śeṣa continuously sings of. We are Your eternal servants it is our duty to remind You of Your incarnation, we place this request at Your lotus feet. You are the maintainer of all living entities, the Supreme independent truth. No one can obstruct You from carrying out Your own pure desires. So my Lord please return to Your home and very shortly You shall go to Mathurā."

The Lord Śrī Gaurasundara returned home feeling very happy after hearing the divine message. His pilgrimage over in Gayā the Lord returned back to Navadvīpa with all His disciples for He was to begin the propagation of the holy name of God and distribute love of Godhead to everyone. After His return from Gayā a definite change had come over the Lord. He felt ecstatic symptoms of Love of Godhead increasing in Him day by day. Whoever hears this narration about the Lord going on a pilgrimage to Gayā with devotion and faith, Lord Gauracandra will appear in his heart.

One can associate with Lord Kṛṣṇa simply by hearing His transcendental activities. This association with the Lord is eternal because the Lord never leaves such a pure devotee. I am able to describe some of the transcendental pastimes of Lord Caitanya in this book because my beloved Lord and master, Nityānanda Prabhu, is sitting on the throne in my heart and dictating all this to me. It is only by His mercy that I can write these wonderful transcendental activities of Lord

Caitanya. Independently it would be impossible to write all this. I am just a wooden doll made to dance by the magic spell of a supreme magician, the Supreme Lord Gauracandra. It is He who is making me speak about His transcendental pastimes.

Lord Caitanya's transcendental activities are eternal and limitless, without a beginning and without an end, so it is unfathomable for me, I am simply writing somehow. My position is like that of a bird which flies in the limitless sky, it flies as far as it is capable of flying. Lord Caitanya's pastimes and glories is like a shoreless ocean, one is capable of narrating to that extent to which he has received the Lord's mercy. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.18.23) it has been described, "As birds fly in the sky as far as they are capable of flying, so do the learned devotees describe the transcendental pastimes of the Lord as far as their realization allows."

I offer my fallen obeisances at the feet of all the devotees of the Lord so that I become purified from all my offenses. If anyone desires to cross the ocean of nescience and drown in the ocean of nectarean love of Godhead, then let him take complete shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Śrī Gaurasundara is the Lord of my most beloved Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. This conviction I keep always in my heart. Many people say different things about my Lord Nityānanda—some say that Lord Nityānanda Prabhu is Lord Balarāma; others say that He is the most beloved of Lord Caitanya; others say that He is the master of supreme power; and others say they cannot understand who He really is. Let Him be a *sannyāsī* spiritual master or a highly knowledgeable devotee of the Lord, or let Him have any sort of relationship with Lord Caitanya, let anybody say anything about my Lord as they desire, but I will hold His lotus feet forever in my heart. And as for those sinful wretched agnostics who in spite of everything else criticize my Lord, I will kick them on their heads.

All glories to Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, who is the life and soul of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu! May I receive the eternal shelter of Your lotus feet. You are constantly singing the glories of Lord Caitanya, may I also be able to assist You in Lord Caitanya's glorification. My one and only desire is that I may have Your association birth after birth.

Whoever hears these narrations of Lord Caitanya as described in the *Ādi-khaṇḍa* of this book will certainly receive the full benediction of Śrī Gauracandra. Before leaving Gayā, Nīmāi Paṇḍita went to Īśvara Purī and after begging leave of him, returned to Navadvīpa-dhāma. All the residents of Navadvīpa-dhāma were mad with joy at the Lord's return, like a dead body coming suddenly alive.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana dāsa, humbly offer this song to their lotus feet.

Madhya-khaṇḍa

Chapter One

I worship Their Lordships Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, whose long arms extend down to Their knees, whose beautiful complexions are the radiant yellow of molten gold, and whose elongated eyes are like red lotuses. They are the topmost of the *brāhmaṇas*, the guardians of religious principles for this age, the munificent benefactors of all living entities, and the most compassionate incarnations of Godhead. They inaugurated the congregational chanting of the names of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

O Lord! You are the eternal truth—past, present, and future—and You have appeared as the son of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra. I offer my repeated obeisances unto You along with Your inseparable servitors, Your unalloyed devotees, Your sons, and Your consorts.

All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the crest jewel amongst the *brāhmaṇas*! All glories to the beloved associates of Lord Viśvambhara. All glories to Lord Gauracandra, a stalwart amongst religious preachers! He is extremely sober, and He is the safe bridge to the spiritual sky. All glories to He who possesses incomparable beauty and who is the personification of the congregational chanting of the holy names of God. All glories to Lord Gauracandra, who is the dearest friend, wealth, and life of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu and the sublime object of love of Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Advaita Ācārya Prabhu! He is very dear to Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, and He is the heart of Vakreśvara Paṇḍita and Kāśīśvara. He is the Lord and master of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and other beloved associates. O Lord, kindly look upon the living entities with divine benevolence.

The descriptions recorded in the *Madhya-khaṇḍa* are like streams of nectar. When it pours into the ears it melts the granitelike doubts and atheistic thoughts in the deep recesses of the heart. Please listen attentively with unflinching faith to the narrations of *Madhya-khaṇḍa*, which describes the beginning of congregational chanting of the holy name.

The people of Navadvīpa all offered jubilant and loud welcome to the Lord, who had just returned from Gayā. Friends and

relatives—some in front, some in the middle, and some were left behind as they all rushed to meet Him. Lord Viśvambhara sweetly greeted everyone, and they were overjoyed to see Him. They all accompanied the Lord, leading Him to His house where He began narrating the experiences of His pilgrimage. The Lord said, “Because of all your blessings and good wishes I could visit Gayā and return without any difficulties.”

The Lord spoke very humbly, pleasing everyone with His humility. The senior members touched the Lord's head and blessed Him with a long life. Others touched different parts of His body and chanted mantras for His protection. Others put their hands on His chest and blessed Him to receive the soothing blissful mercy of Lord Govinda. The fortunate mother Śacī forgot her self in the bliss of seeing her son. Lakṣmīdevī glowed with happiness by seeing her Lord's face, and the cloud of loneliness dissipated as the joyous news spread to His in-laws house and touched them with jubilation. The Vaiṣṇavas were especially happy, and some of them ran to see the Lord. After the Lord spoke very humbly to everyone, He bid them farewell and they returned home. He took a few of His intimate disciples and went inside to discuss more confidential topics about His pilgrimage to Gayā.

The Lord said, “My dear friends, I want to describe to you the wonderful places that constantly reminded Me of Lord Kṛṣṇa. As soon as I entered Gayā, I heard the auspicious sounds of chanting, conch shells, and bells. Thousands of *brāhmaṇa* priests were chanting from the *Vedas*. They said, ‘Just see the holy spot where the Lord washed His lotus feet.’ In previous ages when Lord Kṛṣṇa visited Gayā He washed His transcendental lotus feet at that place. Mother Ganges has become glorious and holy by the touch of the waters from the lotus feet of the Lord. Lord Śiva holds that water on his head with the realization that this water is from the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. By the influence of that water which washed the Lord's lotus feet this place of pilgrimage has become known throughout the world as Pādodaka-tīrtha.”

As soon as the Lord repeated the name of Pādodaka-tīrtha incessant streams of tears poured down from His eyes. Ultimately the Lord became extremely restless, and He began to cry profusely while calling out Kṛṣṇa's name. The entire flower garden where they were sitting became inundated with tears of love of God. The Lord sighed deeply while repeating Kṛṣṇa's name, and all the hairs of His body were standing on end. Being unable to control Himself, He began shivering like an autumn leaf.

Śrīmān Paṇḍita and the other devotees present were astounded to see the Lord cry out of intense love for Kṛṣṇa. The devotees surrounding the Lord could not remain unaffected, and tears began freely flowing from their eyes as if mother Ganges had incarnated. They all thought how wonderful that sight was, “We have never seen Him acting like this before. He must have received Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Perhaps He has seen some spiritual vision on the *way to Gayā.”

After a while the Lord regained His external consciousness. He began to speak again, “My dear friends! Please return to your homes today, but I want to see all of you again tomorrow to discuss confidential topics. I want to disclose the deep sadness in My heart. Śrīmān Paṇḍita, you and Sadāśiva Paṇḍita come early tomorrow to Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī's house.”

Everyone returned to their houses and the Lord became engrossed in His own duties. The spirit of love of Godhead had now manifested in the body of the Lord, and He had lost all taste for anything mundane. Mother Śacī could not understand the new transformation that had overcome her son, but nevertheless she was happy to have Him near her. She saw her son crying out Kṛṣṇa's name, and tears of love of Godhead flowed profusely from His eyes. The Lord cried out, “Where is Kṛṣṇa? Where is Kṛṣṇa?” This increased His mood of separation in love of Kṛṣṇa. All such activities of the Lord were incomprehensible to mother Śacī, so in great awe with folded hands she prayed for the shelter of Lord Govinda.

The time had dawned when Lord Caitanya was to reveal His real identity and innumerable universes swayed with waves of joy. As news spread to the devotees that Lord Caitanya had begun the auspicious distribution of love of Godhead, they all ran to meet Him. All the *Vaiṣṇavas visited the Lord, who treated them humbly and spoke with everyone. He requested the Vaiṣṇavas, “Please come and meet Me in Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī's house tomorrow. I want to confidentially open My grief laden heart to you.”

Śrīmān Paṇḍita was extremely happy when he saw this wonderful transformation in the Lord. After finishing their morning duties the devotees joyfully went early in the morning to pick flowers. In Śrīvāsa's house there is a jasmine tree, which was exactly like a desire tree. No matter how many Vaiṣṇavas picked flowers from the tree, the tree was never empty, as an inexhaustible supply of fresh flowers were constantly blossoming. Therefore after rising in the morning, all the devotees gathered there for picking flowers. As Gadādhara, Gopinātha, Rāmāi, and Śrīvāsa were picking flowers, they were enjoying the mellows of *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. Just then Śrīmān Paṇḍita came with a jubilant smile on his face. Everyone greeted him saying, “Why are you so happy today?”

Śrīmān said, “Certainly, there's a reason.”

The devotees said, “So tell us what it is.”

Śrīmān Paṇḍita began, “Listen to the reason. Something most wonderful and impossible has happened. Nimāi Paṇḍita has become a great Vaiṣṇava. When I heard that He returned from Gayā, I went in the evening to meet Him. He spoke to everyone with a very detached mood and did not show the slightest sign of arrogance. Then He took us aside and began

telling us about His pilgrimage and about Lord Kṛṣṇa. As soon as He took the name of Pāḍodaka-tīrtha, His eyes flooded over with tears of love of Godhead. His whole body was overwhelmed with ecstatic symptoms—shivering and hairs standing on end. Then as He cried out ‘O Kṛṣṇa,’ He fell to the ground unconscious with no symptoms of life remaining in His body. After some time He regained consciousness and began chanting Kṛṣṇa's name while crying so intensely in separation from the Lord it appeared as if mother Ganges was flowing there.

“After I saw such an exhibition of sublime love of God, I am convinced that He is not an ordinary personality. When He regained His external senses He simply said, ‘Tomorrow morning meet Me at Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī's house. I will reveal the torment within My heart to you, Sadāśiva Paṇḍita, and Murāri.’ This is the auspicious news and the reason for my joy.”

Śrīmān's words gave much pleasure to all the devotees, and they loudly chanted “Hari bol!” The magnanimous Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura was the first to comment, “May Lord Kṛṣṇa increase our congregation!”

The assembled devotees appreciated Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's mood, and they happily discussed topics on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The joyous sound they made was pleasing to the heart. The devotees blessed everyone saying, “Let it be. Let everyone be blessed to worship the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

In this way the devotees picked flowers and then went to perform their daily worship of the Lord, while Śrīmān Paṇḍita went to the bank of the Ganges to Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī's house.

After hearing the discussion, Gadādhara Paṇḍita also went quickly to Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī's house. Thinking, “Let me go and hear what He says about Kṛṣṇa,” Gadādhara Paṇḍita entered the house and hid himself.

Sadāśiva, Murāri, Śrīmān, Śuklāmbara and other pure devotees all assembled there in Śuklāmbara's house. Just then Lord Viśvambhara, the crest jewel of the *brāhmaṇas* appeared in the assembly. They all greeted each other happily, but the Lord exhibited no external vision.

*As soon as He was in the assembly of Vaiṣṇavas He began reciting different *śloka*s describing the symptoms of pure devotion. He said, “I had found My beloved Lord, but then where did He go?” Saying these words He embraced a pillar and then fell to the ground. By the Lord's ecstatic embrace the pillar broke, and as He began crying out, “Where is Kṛṣṇa?” He again fell down with His hair scattered.

The Lord fell down exclaiming “O Kṛṣṇa!” Affected by the Lord's intense mood of separation all the devotees fell to the ground in ecstasy. Gadādhara Paṇḍita hidden inside the house also fell down unconscious. The devotees lost all sense of direction and identity, nobody knew where he was. They became so overwhelmed with love of Kṛṣṇa that they lost all external consciousness. Jahnavadevī, mother Ganges was amazed at the whole spiritual scene.

After a while Viśvambhara regained consciousness, and He again chanted Lord Kṛṣṇa's name and began crying bitterly. The Lord lamented, “O My beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa, where did You go?” and again He fell to the ground. Śrī Śācinandana continually shed tears out of love for Kṛṣṇa, and all around Him the devotees were also crying. In this ecstatic mood the Lord fell many times to the ground, but no bruises or pain were visible on His transcendental body. Loud *kīrtana* and weeping in love of Kṛṣṇa reverberated throughout Śuklāmbara's entire house, which was thus inundated with the ecstasy of love of Godhead.

After a while Viśvambhara calmed Himself and sat down, but tears of ecstatic love flowed unrestrained from His eyes. He asked, “Who's inside the house?”

Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī replied, “Your beloved Gadādhara Paṇḍita.”

Lord Viśvambhara was greatly pleased to see Gadādhara Paṇḍita enter with his head down and tears flowing from his eyes. The Lord said, “Dear Gadādhara! You are most fortunate because from your childhood you have fixed your mind on Kṛṣṇa. My life has been wasted so far in the useless pursuit of material knowledge. When I finally found the most precious object of love, He disappeared as a result of My misfortune.”*

Saying this, Lord Viśvambhara again fell unconscious to the ground and dust covered His entire worshipable body. Again and again He regained external consciousness and then fell unconscious to the ground, but the grace of Providence His nose and face were unharmed. It became impossible for the Lord to open His eyes as they were filled with tears of love, and the only words He repeated were Kṛṣṇa's name. While crying, He embraced everyone and asked them, “Where is My beloved Kṛṣṇa? My dear brothers, please tell Me quickly.”

The devotees were greatly moved to see His intense pain of separation, and they became speechless. The Lord said, “Please relieve Me from this grief. Bring Me Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja.”

*Saying this, He sighed deeply while continually crying. Then He again fell down, His hair loose and mingled in the dust.

The whole day passed by happily in this way like one moment, finally the Lord bade farewell to all the devotees. After the Lord departed the devotees headed by Gadādhara, Sadāśiva, Śrīmān Paṇḍita, and Śuklāmbhara spoke openly, expressing their surprise. Each one marveled at the Lord, their external senses and body had become numb.

They all joyfully came before the Vaiṣṇava assembly and described in detail everything that had happened. Hearing the news, all the devotees responded by chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and crying in happiness. They could not restrain their amazement and made comments like, “He will reveal God to everyone.”

Someone else said, “When Nīmāi Paṇḍita feels a little better in this condition then He can easily break the heads of atheists.”

Another commented, “I have no doubt that He will reveal Lord Kṛṣṇa’s most confidential pastimes to the world.”

Another commented, “Perhaps because of His association with Īśvara Pūrī He saw Lord Kṛṣṇa in Gayā.”

In this way all the devotees joyfully gave different explanations to different people. The devotees were very happy about Nīmāi Paṇḍita’s condition and they all blessed Him saying, “May He be blessed with the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa.” The devotees were truly very happy, they danced, sang, and cried tears of love with new life.

While the devotees were happily engaged in dancing and singing, the Lord became totally immersed in His mood of ecstatic absorption. When Viśvambhara somewhat regained His external consciousness, He went to the house of Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita and offered His respects to the feet of His teacher. His teacher got up and affectionately embraced Him.

Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita said, “My dear! Your life is truly blessed, for You have liberated both Your mother and father’s families. Your students have all been anxiously awaiting You. They have not opened their books since You left. Even if Lord Brahmā had personally come and told them to read, they would have refused. Now that You have returned, everyone is happy. From tomorrow You begin teaching. Today You may go home.” Then Viśvambhara again offered His obeisances to His teacher before He left, and all the students surrounded the Lord like many stars surrounding the moon.

The Lord then went to the house of Mukunda Saṅjaya and sat in the courtyard of the Durgā temple. Mukunda Saṅjaya’s entire household was overwhelmed with joy. The Lord embraced his son, Puruṣottama Saṅjaya, and drenched him with tears of love. The ladies made auspicious sounds, and the whole household became elated with joy.

Mahāprabhu mercifully glanced at everyone and returned back to His house. He came and sat at the doorway of the Viṣṇu temple and affectionately bade everyone farewell. Whoever came to greet the Lord was unable to comprehend His mood. No one could detect a trace of the Lord’s previous arrogant scholarship, rather they saw that He was remaining completely detached.

Mother Śacī was completely unable to understand her son’s behavior. She therefore prayed to mother Ganges and Lord Viṣṇu for her sons well-being. She prayed, “O Kṛṣṇacandra! You have taken my husband, and You have also taken my son. Now only one son is left with me. O my dear Kṛṣṇa! I am helpless and alone. Just grant me this one favor, let my child Viśvambhara peacefully remain in the house.”

*

Mother Śacī would bring Viṣṇupriyā and make her sit in front of the Lord, and the Lord would stare without noticing her. The Lord continuously recited śloka and cried while exclaiming, “Where is Kṛṣṇa? Where is Kṛṣṇa?” At times when the Lord roared in ecstatic bliss, Viṣṇupriyā ran away in alarm while mother Śacī became fearful.

Being absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the Lord would not sleep at night. He would sometimes stand up, sometimes sit, and sometimes fall to the ground while feeling unbearable separation from Kṛṣṇa. Whenever He saw a nondevotee He would immediately hide His ecstatic symptoms. Then in the early morning He went for His bath in the Ganges.

As soon as the Lord returned from His bath, the students arrived there. But as nothing other than Kṛṣṇa’s name was spoken by the Lord, the students could not understand anything. On the student’s request, the Lord sat down to teach.

The students sat down and chanted the name of Hari as they opened their books. Śrī Śacīnandana was greatly overjoyed on hearing His beloved Lord’s name. The jewel of the twice-born became absorbed, forgetting His external senses, and He mercifully glanced upon everyone. Totally absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, the Lord began explaining all the codes, aphorisms, and commentaries in relation to the holy name Kṛṣṇa.

The Lord said, “The only eternal truth is the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, for Kṛṣṇa is the only worshipable Lord in all the scriptures. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme controller and maintainer, the Lord of the entire creation. Beginning with Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā, everyone is Kṛṣṇa’s servant. Whoever ignores the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa and tries to explain anything wastes his life speaking only falsehood. All Vedic literatures beginning with Vedānta and the *āgamas* explain the value of devotion to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Mundane scholars are bewildered by the illusory potency of the Lord, and they give up the path of devotional service and seek shelter elsewhere.

“Lord Kṛṣṇa is an ocean of mercy, and He is the life and soul of every living entity. Nanda-nandana, the dear son of Nanda Mahārāja, is most affectionate to His surrendered souls. A person may be well versed in all the scriptures, but if he has no attraction for the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, then he follows the path to hell. And if a wretched or abominable person chants Lord Kṛṣṇa's name then he attains the supreme abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa after leaving this material world in spite of all kinds of faults. This is the verdict of all the scriptures, and one who doubts this will simply suffer.

*“If anyone tries to explain the scriptures without having taken shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, then such a degraded person can never know the purport of the scriptures. He pretends to be a teacher of the scriptures yet he does not know the real purport of the scriptures, he is like an ass carrying the load of all the scriptures. Such a soul is truly unfortunate because in spite of his education, he is deprived of the joy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

“Foolish people reject the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who offered liberation to even the demoness Pūtānā, and they meditate on others. After giving up the glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who delivered the demon Aghāsura, what greater pleasure do they find? Miserable living entities do not chant the glories of that Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose name alone can purify the entire universe. Even Lord Brahmā becomes overwhelmed with joy in Lord Kṛṣṇa's festivals, but unfortunate souls disregard this and sing and dance in inauspicious mundane festivals. Intoxicated by wealth, high birth, and education, people can not know the wonders of Kṛṣṇa's holy name, by which Ajāmila was delivered.

“My dear brothers! Please hear Me carefully, for everything I say is the truth. You should all worship the priceless treasure of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Lakṣmīdevī always desires to serve those lotus feet, and Lord Śiva has become a pure devotee just by taking shelter of them. Those same lotus feet are the ultimate source of mother Ganges. Therefore, My brothers, just desire to take shelter of the Lord's lotus feet. Now let's see who in Navadvīpa has the power to refute My explanations before Me.”

Lord Viśvambhara is the Supreme Absolute Truth and the embodiment of transcendental sound vibration, so whatever He speaks becomes perfectly true. The mesmerized students listened to the Lord's words with undivided attention, while the Lord was overwhelmed revealing the Absolute Truth. Naturally every word says that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Absolute Truth, so when the Lord Himself explained everything in this way it is not at all astonishing.

Viśvambhara soon became externally conscious, and, feeling shy, He began to speak. He asked the students, “How were My commentaries today?”

The students replied, “We could not understand anything. You have described Kṛṣṇa as the purport to every word. Who is able to understand Your explanations?”

Viśvambhara laughed and said, “Listen My dear brothers, pack your books and let's go to the Ganges for bath.”

The students put their books away and accompanied Viśvambhara to the Ganges for bath. Sporting in the Ganges water, Lord Viśvambhara looked like the full moon in the middle of the ocean. As Viśvambhara played in the Ganges the most pious people of Nadia would watch. Even Lord Brahmā aspires to see the Lord, who is now playing in the water in the form of a *brāhmaṇa*. Everyone who had come to bathe kept looking at Gauracandra's beautiful face. They all said to each other, “His father and mother are really blessed to have such a son.”

By the Lord's presence Mother Ganges felt increasing delight, and she manifested waves out of ecstasy. She was dancing with joy, she wanted to serve those lotus feet that are desired even by Ananta Śeṣa and all the demigods. So her many thousand waves washed the Lord's lotus feet. Only the *Vedas* know the truth about all such transcendental activities of the Lord and His devotees and in the future someone will come and reveal these wonderful pastimes of the Lord.

After finishing their bath, the Viśvambhara and the students went back to their respective homes. The Lord changed His clothes, washed His feet, and then offered water to the *tulasī* plant. He performed His daily worship of Lord Govinda, and then came in and sat down to take His meal. Mother Śacī brought a plate of wonderful rice adorned with *tulasī-mañjarīs* and set it before the Lord, who offered it to Viśvaksena. Then the Lord of the entire universe began taking His meal. Mother Śacī, the mother of the universe, sat in front of the Lord as He ate, while the chaste Viṣṇupriyā remained hidden inside looking at the Lord.

Mother Śacī asked, “My son, what book did You read today? And who did You have an argument with?”

The Lord replied, “Today we read about the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and the glories of His lotus feet, the abode of all excellences. Kṛṣṇa's name and transcendental qualities are the Absolute Truth. Chanting and hearing about Kṛṣṇa is also the Absolute Truth. Kṛṣṇa's surrendered servants and devotees are also the Absolute Truth. That scripture is the Absolute Truth that explains the process of devotional service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, otherwise such scriptures only lead to atheism. The Vedic scriptures say, ‘That scriptures which fails to establish the process of devotional service to the Supreme Lord Hari is to be rejected, even if Lord Brahmā himself speaks it.’ (Jaimini-bhārata?)”

“If the lowest of mankind, the dog-eater, utters Kṛṣṇa's holy name, then he is not the lowest of mankind, and *abrāhmaṇa* born in a high family is not a *brāhmaṇa* if he does not follow the Vedic principles.”

Lord Viśvambhara continued speaking to His mother just like Lord Kapila had spoken to His mother Devahūti, “Dear mother, listen to the wonderful influence of the process of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and in every respect try to develop attachment to the Supreme Lord. The devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa can never be destroyed, for even death himself is afraid of the Lord's servant. The excruciating pains of birth and death and living in the womb of the mother is never experienced by the Lord's devotees. All such sufferings are unknown to the devotee. Whoever refuses to worship the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, who is the father of every living entity, is a great sinner and enemy of his own father. Birth after birth he remains a resident of hell.

“My dear mother please listen attentively how frightful a living entity suffers if he is not willing to serve the lotus feet of the Lord. Again and again he has to enter into the womb of his mother as a sinful reaction. He is subjected to unbearable suffering in the womb. Everything the mother eats pains him—whether spicy, salty, or sour—but he is unable to do anything. He can not protect himself against the many worms and bacteria that nibble his soft unprotected flesh, and being unable to move, he suffers everything inside the hot and sticky womb. He lives through this nightmare if his fate allows him to. But there are some extremely sinful people who are condemned to die within the womb again and again.

“After remaining seven months within the womb, the living entity begins to gradually understand his position. He remembers his previous birth and promise, and he begins to repent for his mistake. He sighs and prays heedlessly to Lord Kṛṣṇa, ‘O Lord Kṛṣṇa, please save me! You are the life and soul of all living entities. You are the only shelter for the distressed living entities. O Lord, only one who has captured someone can release him. What is the use of putting someone in illusion who is already dead? I have wasted my life chasing after the illusory happiness of children and wealth, and I neglected the worship of Your priceless lotus feet. Those children whom I raised by committing so many sinful activities—their whereabouts are unknown to me. This is the fruit of my karma. Now who will save me from this untold suffering? O Lord, You are my friend, so please save me.

“Now I know that Your lotus feet are the only real shelter. O Lord Kṛṣṇa! I take shelter of Your lotus feet. Please save me. I have forsaken You, who are like a desire tree that fulfills all desires, and become mad chasing after illusory happiness. This condition is a proper punishment. But now that You have punished me, dear Lord, please be merciful. Grant me just this favor, that wherever I may take birth or die, I may never forget You. I do not care for any place where Your glories are not preached, where there are no Vaiṣṇavas, or where Your festivals are not celebrated, even if that place be Indraloka.”

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (5.19.24) says, “An intelligent person does not take interest in a place, even in the topmost planetary system, if the pure river of topics concerning the Supreme Lord's activities does not flow there, if there are no devotees engaged in service on the banks of such a river of piety, or if there are no festivals and *sankīrtana-yajña* to satisfy the Lord, (especially since *sankīrtana-yajña* is recommended in this age).

“O Lord, I prefer to remain suffering in a womb if I can always remember Your lotus feet. O Lord, please bless me that I will never be thrown where I will forget Your lotus feet. O Lord, I have suffered in this abominable position for many millions of lifetimes, simply due to my sinful activities. Let all those miseries and dangers come again and again if I can remember You, for such remembrance is the essence of all Vedic scriptures. O Kṛṣṇa, *please accept me as Your servant, and keep me eternally at Your lotus feet. If You relieve me from this painful condition this one time, then I will never desire anything other than Your lotus feet.’

“In this way the loving entity continually suffers within the womb, yet he considers himself fortunate because he can remember Lord Kṛṣṇa. Due to praying to the Lord in this manner, he does not feel pain in the womb. But when the proper time comes he is unwillingly forced out of the womb. Dear mother, listen carefully to the position of the conditioned living entity. As soon as he enters this world he loses all of his knowledge. *unable to express himself he is drowned in an ocean of suffering.

“The living entities are by constitution the eternal servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but if they turn away from Kṛṣṇa they suffer like this due to Kṛṣṇa's illusory potency. In the course of time, knowledge and intelligence blossom within one, and if he then worships Lord Kṛṣṇa he is truly fortunate. But if he does not worship Kṛṣṇa, then by the influence of bad association he again falls down into the dark well of sin and suffering.”

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.31.32) says, “If therefore, the loving entity again associates with the path of unrighteousness, influenced by sensually minded people engaged in the pursuit of sexual enjoyment and the gratification of the palate, he again goes to hell as before.”

“When one has never worshiped the lotus feet of Lord Govinda, how is it possible for Him to live free of distress and die in peace?”

“If someone worships Kṛṣṇa, he will remember Kṛṣṇa. His life will then become free of distress, and his death will be peaceful. Dear mother, that is why you should worship Kṛṣṇa in the association of devotees. Always think about Kṛṣṇa

and chant His holy name. Activities which are devoid of bhakti produce no result. Such activities result in violence to others.”

In this way the Lord instructed His mother in the mood of Kapila, and Śacīdevī was delighted hearing those instructions. Whether eating, sleeping, or waking, the Lord would not speak about anything except Kṛṣṇa.

When the devotees heard these topics from their relatives, they all started to think of different explanations. They thought, “Has Kṛṣṇa manifest in His body? Is this due to the association of a pure devotee, or is this because of previous purificatory rites?”

In this way everyone had different thoughts, but they were all filled with happiness. As Viśvambhara revealed these pastimes, the devotee's miseries were eradicated and the miscreants were destroyed.

In the mood of a Vaiṣṇava, Lord Viśvambhara always saw the whole world filled with Kṛṣṇa. Day and night He would either hear or chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. That Lord who was previously always busy studying now did not like anything except Kṛṣṇa.

All of the Lord's students would come early in the morning to study, and the Lord of the universe would sit down to teach them. But now the Lord did not speak about anything except Kṛṣṇa.

The students asked, “What is indicated by all the different letters?”

And the Lord would reply, “All letters indicated only Nārāyaṇa.”

The students asked, “How do all the letters become perfected?”

Then the Lord replied, “By Kṛṣṇa's glance.”

The students said, “O Paṇḍita! Please explain properly.”

The Lord then replied, “You should always remember Kṛṣṇa, then you will properly understand My explanations. The process of worshiping Kṛṣṇa is explained in the beginning, middle, and end of Vedic literature.”

Hearing the Lord's explanation, the students began to laugh. Someone said, “I think He is suffering from a disturbance of air.”

The students asked, “How are You explaining like this now?”

And the Lord replied, “My explanations are exactly according to the scriptures. If you don't understand now, then this afternoon I will explain nicely. I will also study now in a solitary place, but this afternoon we should all meet together again.”

After hearing the Lord's instruction the students all packed their bags and left in wonder. They all went to Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita and told him about the Lord's explanations. “Now whatever Nimāi Paṇḍita explains every word related to Kṛṣṇa. Since He has come home from Gayā, He has not explained anything other than Kṛṣṇa. He continually chants Lord Kṛṣṇa's name in great ecstasy. Sometimes He laughs or roars out loud, and sometimes all the hairs of His whole body stand on end. In this way different symptoms manifest in Him. When He sits down to teach, He connects the root of every single word to Kṛṣṇa, all His purports and commentaries describe Kṛṣṇa. This new transformation in Him seems so alien to us. O Paṇḍita, please tell us, what should we do?”

Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita, the crest jewel of teachers, smiled after listening to the students' complaints and told them, “Go home now and return tomorrow morning, I will teach Nimāi a lesson. I will see that He tutors all of you properly from now on. Be here with your books tomorrow morning to attend Nimāi's class.”

Relieved and happy, the students came back the next afternoon to attend Viśvambhara's classes. The Lord touched His master's feet with respect, and Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita blessed Him saying, “May You become highly learned.”

Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita then said, “My dear Viśvambhara, I must tell You something. You know that it is no small matter for a *brāhmaṇa* to be able to teach. It is a question of good fortune. Your grandfather is none other than Śrī Nīlāmbara Cakravartī, and Your father is Śrī Jagannātha Miśra. Both are great scholars. Neither of Your parent's families are illiterate, and You Yourself are a very able scholar with an exceptional faculty to give commentaries. Would You say that one achieves the path of devotion by giving up his education and learning? In that case are Your parents not devotees of the Lord?

“Please consider all these points carefully and continue to study properly, for only through proper education and learning

can one become a Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇa*. How can an illiterate *brāhmaṇa* develop the faculty of discrimination between good and bad, proper and improper? Understanding this point, please continue Your education and chant Kṛṣṇa's name. Teach the scriptures in the proper way, with the proper explanations, and do not try to misconstrue the meanings or that will bring me tremendous anxiety.”

The Lord replied, “By the mercy of your lotus feet, there is no one in Navadvīpa who can defeat Me in argument. Who can refute My arguments and then establish a new and original concept? I will go into town and teach, and I would like to see who has the courage to find faults and mistakes in My commentaries.”

Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita was pleased to hearing this statement. Viśvambhara then offered His obeisances to His guru and left. I offer my obeisances to the feet of Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita, who has the husband of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, as his disciple. What more can Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita aspire for? His disciple is the worshipable Lord of the fourteen worlds.

As Lord Viśvambhara walked down the street surrounded by His students, He looked like the full moon surrounded by so many stars. He whose lotus feet are held by Lakṣmīdevī to her heart, came and sat at a Navadvīpa resident's doorway. There He began His explanations and commentaries—establishing, refuting, and then re-establishing different points.

The Lord said, “In Kali-yuga the so-called scholar who does not know conjugation receives the title of Bhaṭṭācārya. One who does not know word meanings has the audacity to teach *nyāya*, or logic. But none of these scholars can ever challenge Me. Let Me see if anyone can challenge any arguments which I establish or refute!”

Like this, Viśvambhara, the Lord of the universe, boldly challenged everyone, but who is there to take up that challenge? The scholars who came to pay their respects to mother Ganges heard Lord Viśvambhara's bold words in fearful silence, their scholarly pride broken to pieces. Who in Navadvīpa is competent to establish any conclusion before Viśvambhara in debate? The Lord continued to give commentaries as if in a trance. Although four hours of the night had passed, the Lord still did not stop.

By Providence, there happened to be one greatly fortunate *brāhmaṇa* sitting nearby at the doorway of another gentleman's house. His name was Ratnagarbha Ācārya, and he was a close acquaintance of Lord Viśvambhara's father. They were both born in the same village. He had three sons named Kṛṣṇānanda, Jīva Paṇḍita, and Yadunātha Kavicandra. They were always tasting the honey of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Ratnagarbha Ācārya, the best of the *brāhmaṇas*, was very fond of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and he was now respectfully reading from the *Bhāgavatam* (10.23.22).

He read, “The wives of the *yājñika-brāhmaṇas* saw His complexion was dark blue and His garment golden. He was decorated like dramatic dancer with a peacock feather, colored minerals, flower buds, and a garland of forest flowers. He rested one hand on the shoulder of a friend, and He twirled a beautiful lotus flower with the other. Lilies decorated His ears, curling locks of hair beautified His cheeks, and a sweet smile played on His lotuslike face.”

In full satisfaction he devotedly read this verse from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and the sound entered the Lord's ears. Hearing the influence of devotional service, the Lord stopped speaking and fell down unconscious. All the students were amazed at the sight. Then after a moment, Viśvambhara regained His external consciousness and said to Ratnagarbha Ācārya, “Read on, Read on!” The Lord began rolling on the ground in ecstasy while urging, “Read on, Read on!”

As the *brāhmaṇa* continued to read, everyone floated in the ocean of nectarean love of Kṛṣṇa. Unrestrained tears from the Lord's eyes flooded the entire world, and all the ecstatic symptoms like shivering, jubilation, and crying manifested in the Lord's person. Seeing the Lord's ecstatic symptoms, the *brāhmaṇa* was extremely happy and continued to devotedly read the *ślokas* with great pleasure.

The Lord was very satisfied with the *brāhmaṇa*'s devotion, and He warmly embraced him. Ratnagarbha Ācārya was immediately filled with love of God on being embraced by the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. Ratnagarbha grabbed hold of the Lord's lotus feet and began crying. From that moment the *brāhmaṇa* was bound by the ropes of Lord Caitanya's love. Being filled with love of God, Ratnagarbha repeatedly read verses from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and the Lord roared loudly and exclaimed, “Read on, Read on!”

The local people were completely amazed at this sight and they all offered their obeisances to the Lord. Gadādhara Paṇḍita then intervened and told Ratnagarbha, “Don't read any more.” The *brāhmaṇa* stopped reading, and they all sat down surrounding the Lord. When the Lord regained His external consciousness, He asked everyone, “What did you say? What did you say? Did I act restlessly?”

The students replied, “What ability do we have to explain Your activities? All we know is that You are very fortunate.” The Lord's friends and relatives discouraged them and said, “Do not praise Him like this.”

After Viśvambhara came to external consciousness, He accompanied all the students to the bank of the Ganges. The Lord offered His obeisances, sprinkled some water on His head, and sat down with the students on Ganges bank. Śrī Śacinandana enjoyed talking about Kṛṣṇa with the devotees on the bank of the Ganges just as Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoyed various

pastimes with the cowherd boys on the bank of the Yamunā.

After some time Viśvambhara sent everyone home, and then He returned to His own home. The Lord of the universe took His meal and then lay down to rest.

After a good night's sleep the students returned early in the morning with their books to see the Lord. Just then the Lord also came back from His bath in the Ganges, and He sat down with His students and began explaining the books. But other than Kṛṣṇa, no other subject was spoken by the Lord. Every word the Lord explained in reference to Kṛṣṇa and the process of devotional service.

The students inquired, “What is the definition of verbal roots?”

The Lord replied, “It is the energy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. My dear students I will now explain the aphorisms of verbal roots, let me see who can refute My explanation! There have been many kings with beautiful bodies, decorated with golden ornaments, flower garlands, and sandalwood paste. People say they control Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, and Yamarāja, the presiding demigod of religious principles. Let me explain to you what happens when *dhātu*, or life, leaves their body. Where does their physical beauty, their decorations, and their power go? Some of them turn to ashes, and some are buried underneath the earth.

“Lord Kṛṣṇa is present in everybody in the form of His energy *dhātu*, or His life. Living entities love this and they offer their devotion to Him, all these other so-called scholars and teachers are very confused and they do not understand the real meaning of *dhātu*, or verbal roots so all of you now listen attentively. The kingly personality who was for so long worshiped and respected becomes contaminated as soon as life leaves him, and when his body is touched one must take a bath. The son who happily sat on his father's lap must touch fire to the dead father's mouth and burn his body to ashes. Therefore the definition of *dhātu*, or essential substance, is the energy of Lord Kṛṣṇa that is loved by everyone. Now I want to see if there is anyone capable of refuting this explanation.

“O brothers, just develop unflinching faith and devotion in Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose energy is so pure and worshipable. Chant Kṛṣṇa's name, worship Kṛṣṇa, hear the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and meditate day and night on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Simply by offering a little water and *dūrvā* grass at His lotus feet one is freed from the jurisdiction of Yamarāja, the lord of death.

“Just worship He who has given liberation to Aghāsura, Bakāsura, and Pūtana by killing them. At the point of death, Ajāmila cried out his son's name, Nārāyaṇa. But he gave up attachment for his son, remembered Lord Nārāyaṇa, and went to Vaikuṇṭha. Simply take shelter of those supreme lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By serving whose lotus feet, Lord Śiva is naked; for serving whose feet, Lakṣmīdevī is reverential; the glories of whose feet, Lord Ananta Śeṣa is always singing—those lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa you should worship with straw between your teeth.

“As long as there is life within the body and strength in the limbs and mind, take shelter of the devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Kṛṣṇa is your mother, Kṛṣṇa is your father, Kṛṣṇa is your very life and soul. Simply embrace His lotus feet and offer your mind, words, and body completely to Him.”

In the mood of a servant, or devotee, Lord Viśvambhara explained His own glories, unaware that it was already past noon, and still He continued. The students listened as if hypnotized with undivided attention. No one felt like disturbing or making contradictory remarks. One must understand that these students were not ordinary mortals, they are all servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise how could they be personally taught by the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa? After a while, Lord Viśvambhara came out from this trance and looked at everyone's face feeling a little embarrassed. He asked, “How were My explanations on verbal roots?”

The students replied, “You have given the correct meaning. Who is able to refute Your explanations on the word meanings? Even our fathers are not able. Whatever You have explained is all true, but the meanings that You have given do not fulfill the purpose of our studying grammar.”

The Lord said, “Can any of you explain whether My mind disorders are confusing My mind, and instead of explaining the nature of verb roots I do not know whose nature or what I am talking about!”

The students replied, “In every topic You simply described the holy name of Hari. You have described only Lord Kṛṣṇa in every *sūtra*, translation, and purport. Who is qualified to understand this explanation of Yours? The transformation that comes over You when You hear about Kṛṣṇa or His devotional service is so wonderful that we cannot think of You as an ordinary personality.”

The Lord inquired, “What sort of transformation did you see in Me?”

The students replied, “It was marvelous. The different symptoms You displayed like shivering, crying, and hairs standing on end—we have never seen anything like it before. Yesterday in the city when You were explaining the books one *brāhmaṇa* was reciting a *Bhāgavatam* verse. When You heard that verse, You fell down unconscious, and we were amazed

to see that no symptom of life remained in Your body. Then when You came out of Your trance, tears poured out of Your eyes in streams, like the flowing of the Ganges. Finally You began shivering so uncontrollably that even a hundred men could not have held You still. From head to toe, all the hairs of Your body were standing on end, and Your entire golden form was covered with saliva, sweat, and dust.

“Everyone who saw Your condition was struck with wonder and said, ‘This person is the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa.’ Some were saying, ‘He is equal to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Nārada Muni, or Prahlāda Mahārāja in receiving the Supreme Lord’s mercy.’ Everyone together tightly held You and gradually Your external consciousness returned. You do not know any of these details. There is something more to tell You, so please listen attentively.

“All of Your explanations for the last ten days described only the process of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa and the glories of His holy name. We were a little fearful to tell You, but for the last ten days we have not learnt any lessons from our books. Your profound erudition can explain unlimited meanings of words, it is truly amazing, no one can equal that feat.”

The Lord replied, “Ten days without studies! Was it not your duty to tell Me about this?”

The students replied, “Your explanations were very correct, the purport of all scriptures is that Lord Kṛṣṇa is Supreme Absolute Truth. This is the essence of all scriptures, but we were unable to accept this due to our own faults. Whatever You explained about the roots is the real subject to be known, but we have taken no interest due to our misfortune.”

These words greatly pleased the Lord, so He blessed them and said, “My dear students, you have actually spoken the truth. All that I have said is not meant to be spoken anywhere else. I am constantly seeing a little boy with a blackish complexion playing a flute. That is why everywhere I go I always speak about Him. All that I hear is the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and the whole world I see as the abode of Lord Govinda. Therefore it is My request that from today, I shall not teach anymore. Wherever you want to study, I give you freedom to go there without fear. I cannot speak about anything other than Lord Kṛṣṇa. I have now confided in you what my actual condition is.”

After speaking in this way to His students, Mahāprabhu tied His books together with tears in His eyes. The students then spoke up, “We have also decided to follow footsteps. We have already studied everything under You, where will we find a more capable teacher?”

Feeling aggrieved at the impending separation from their teacher, all the students cried as they said, “Whatever explanations we have heard from You, we want to treasure and meditate on in our hearts birth after birth. What is the use of studying further, and who shall we go to? All that we have learnt from You is more than sufficient for us.”

After saying this the students offered respects to the Lord with folded hands and then bound up their books. The students then loudly chanted Lord Hari’s name, and Lord Viśvambhara embraced His students and began to weep. The students all drown in transcendental happiness, and their throats choked up as they wept with their heads bent down.

Śrī Śacīnandana then blessed them saying, “If I have served Lord Kṛṣṇa for even one day, then may all of your desires be fulfilled. All of you please take shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa and fill your mouths with the chanting of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s holy name. Always hear Kṛṣṇa’s name with your ears, and may Kṛṣṇa become your most precious object—your very life and soul. Whatever has been studied so far, that is enough, there is no need to study any further. Now let us all chant Lord Kṛṣṇa’s name together. By Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, may the purport of all the scriptures manifest within you. All of you are My dear friends birth after birth.”

The Lord’s words were like nectar in the student’s ears, and they became extremely happy. I offer my obeisances unto the feet of all those students, who were so fortunate to be personally taught by Lord Caitanya. Know for certain that they are all Lord Kṛṣṇa’s eternal servants. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself personally taught them, so who else could they be? One is freed from material bondage just by seeing that person who has seen these wonderful scholarly pastimes of the Supreme Lord.

What a sinful birth I have taken, that I was excluded from seeing such transcendental pastimes of the Lord. Still I pray for Your mercy, O Lord, that these pastimes of Yours in the mood of a scholar may remain eternally within my heart. Even today in Nadia there are visible signs where the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha taught His students. Lord Caitanya’s transcendental pastimes are eternal—without beginning or end—the Vedas only say that He ‘appears’ and ‘disappears.’

The Lord thus completed His pastimes as a scholar, and He now began manifesting the congregational chanting of the holy names. The students, who were surrounding the Lord, were all crying, and the Lord mercifully said to them, “Now you can fulfill the purpose of your studies by chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.”

The students inquired, “O Lord, how shall we do *kīrtana*?”

Then Śrī Śacīnandana taught them by singing, "(have) *haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ / gopāla govinda rāma śrī madhusūdana*." The Lord clapped His hands and led the students in a beautiful *kīrtana*. The Lord and pioneer of the

sankīrtana movement now began chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa accompanied on all sides by His students. Being completely absorbed in tasting the nectar of His own name, the Lord rolled on the ground in ecstasy. He exclaimed, "Chant! Chant!" and as He repeatedly fell to the ground, the earth seemed to split open each time He crashed.

The residents of Navadvīpa heard the tumultuous noise coming from the Lord's house and rushed to that spot. The neighboring Vaiṣṇavas heard His loud *kīrtana* and quickly came. The Vaiṣṇavas were all astonished to see the Lord's ecstatic trance. They were most satisfied at heart to see that *kīrtana* has now started in Navadvīpa.

Where in this world is such rare devotional service available? Such devotional ecstasy is the perfection of sight. This very same Viśvambhara was the epitome of arrogance, but now He manifested devotional ecstasy which is rarely achieved by devotees like Nārada Muni. If such a vain person can achieve this kind devotion, how can we understand Lord Kṛṣṇa's desire?

After a while Lord Viśvambhara came to His external senses and continually chanted, "Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!" Although external consciousness returned, the Lord spoke nothing about this mundane world, He just embraced all of the Vaiṣṇavas and cried. With combined effort, all the Vaiṣṇavas pacified the Lord and then returned to their homes in great joy. Some of the Lord's students also took to the path of renunciation by joining in the Lord's loving pastimes.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had now begun to manifest Himself, thereby destroying the sufferings of all the devotees.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana Dāsa humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter Two

All glories to Śrī Gauracandra, who is auspicious for the entire universe!. Kindly place Your lotus feet in the core of my heart. All glories to Lord Gaurāṅga and His devotees! If one hears the transcendental pastimes of Lord Śrī Caitanya he surely attains devotional service to the Lord.

The devotees were all astonished by seeing the Lord's ecstatic love. In great satisfaction they all described what they had seen to Advaita Ācārya. Everyone knows that the Lord descended by the influence of Advaita Ācārya's devotional service. Still Advaita Ācārya's glories are not easily understood, for they are sometimes manifest and sometimes hidden.

Advaita was extremely pleased to hear the devotees' descriptions, and overcome with joy, He said, "My dear brothers, listen to what I have to say today. I saw something last night and have some realization. I was feeling aggrieved, and I was fasting because I could not understand one passage of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

"Sometime during the night a person came to Me in My dream and said, 'Wake up Ācārya! Take Your food immediately. I will reveal to You the meaning of the *Bhagavad-gītā* text. But first You must get up and eat, then worship Me. And why are You unhappy after achieving everything? The desired fruit of Your vows has been achieved. All of Your fasting, Your worship, Your crying as You chanted, 'Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!' as well as the vow You made with lifted hands for the advent of the Lord—that Lord has now advented.

"The chanting of Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name will be constantly heard in every house, in every town, and in every country. By Your mercy, everyone will see such devotional service which is rare for even Lord Brahmā. Here in Śrīvāsa's house, the Vaiṣṇavas will experience that which is rarely achieved by even Lord Brahmā. Now I will take Your leave, then You should eat. I will appear to You again sometime later during meal time.'

"When I opened My eyes I saw this Viśvambhara, but within moments He vanished from My sight. I do not understand the mysterious ways of Lord Kṛṣṇa—in what form and through whom He appears I can not understand.

"Viśvambhara's elder brother, Viśvarūpa, used to come to My house and discuss *Bhagavad-gītā*. At that time this Viśvambhara was a most exquisite child, and He would come to My house to call His brother. The little child, Viśvambhara, captivated My entire being with His extraordinary beauty, and I would spontaneously bless Him saying, 'May You develop pure devotion to the Lord.'

"The child is born in an illustrious family as the son of an exalted personality and grandson of Śrī Nīlāmbara Cakravartī. He is a great scholar with excellent qualities, so it is natural that He would become attached to Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is extremely pleasing to hear this news about Him. All of you kindly bless Him that He may develop the highest devotional mood. May the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa be merciful upon everyone and benedict them to become mad with the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy name. If there is any truth to My vision, then in the future everyone will come to this house."

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu roared jubilantly, and all of the devotees joined in, exclaiming, "Jaya! Jaya!" The Supreme

Personality of Godhead descended in the form of His name as everyone chanted, “Hari! Hari!”

Someone said, “Nimāi Paṇḍita has now become a great devotee, so He will propagate the congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord and increase our joy.” The devotees offered their obeisances to Advaita Ācārya Prabhu and left in great ecstasy, chanting the holy name of Lord Hari.

Whenever the Lord met anyone, He would always speak with great affection. When the Lord went for His early morning bath to the Ganges, He met all of the Vaiṣṇavas. When the Lord saw devotees like Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura He would offer His obeisances. Being very pleased with His behavior, the devotees would bless Him saying, “May You develop unflinching devotion to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Always chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's name and hear Kṛṣṇa's glories. Everything becomes auspicious and successful when one worships the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa; but without devotional service to His lotus feet, physical beauty and learning are useless. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme father and the life and soul of everyone. Simply try to develop undeviating love for Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.”

These blessings filled the Lord with joy. Raising His face, He glanced at everyone and said, “Your blessings carry the weight of real truth. Who, other than you devotees, will bless Me with such mercy to receive devotional attachment to the Lord's lotus feet? Elevated devotees like yourselves are capable of granting devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, for He is pleased give mercy on those who serve His devotees. Because you are teaching Me the process of devotional service to the Supreme Lord, I can understand that I must have performed some pious activity. I can achieve the devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa if I can serve all of you.” Saying this, Viśvambhara fell down and caught the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas.

He rendered service to them by wringing someone's wet cloth, handing someone his dhoti, or sometimes He brought *kuśa* grass or mud from the Ganges. Some days He would carry something heavy for someone and bring it to their house. All the Vaiṣṇavas would mildly protest, saying, “O Viśvambhara, why are You doing this?” But the Lord continued to serve the Vaiṣṇavas. In this way the Lord would serve His own servants everyday. After all, what service will Lord Kṛṣṇa not do for His devotee? He even gives up His own *dharma* to serve His devotees.

All the scriptures proclaim that Kṛṣṇa is everyone's dearest friend, therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa never hates anyone. Yet He is willing to break this injunction to favor His pure devotees. The proof is that Lord Kṛṣṇa eliminated Duryodhana's entire family. It is the natural tendency of a pure devotee to serve the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is always trying to please His devotees. By the power of his pure love, the devotee can even sell Lord Kṛṣṇa to others. An example of this statement is Satyabhāmā in Dvārakā.

That same Supreme Personality, Lord Kṛṣṇa, is now living incognito in Navadvīpa as Lord Gaurasundara, Viśvambhara. Yet no one can recognize the Lord and the purpose for which He has accepted this incarnation.

Whoever desires to worship Kṛṣṇa, must serve His all-auspicious devotees. Lord Gauracandra set the example by personally serving the Vaiṣṇavas in order to teach the living entities. Lord Viśvambhara did not feel ashamed to serve His devotees. He did all sorts of menial services for them; carrying things for them and washing their cloth. The Vaiṣṇavas would respectfully catch His hand, requesting Him to refrain from such activities.

The devotees were very impressed with the Lord's humility, and with all good intentions they blessed Him saying, “Worship Kṛṣṇa, remember Kṛṣṇa, and always hear the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. May Lord Kṛṣṇa be everyone's dearest treasure of life. Go on chanting Kṛṣṇa's name, and become Kṛṣṇa's servant. May only Lord Kṛṣṇa manifest within Your heart, and by Your association may we be freed from all of our sufferings. By Your grace, may all of the wretched fools who laughed at the *kīrtana* drown in the nectarean flood of love of Godhead. As You have defeated the entire world with Your śāstric knowledge, You must finish off the fallen atheists in the same way. By Your mercy, may we be overwhelmed with happiness through chanting Kṛṣṇa's name and dancing in ecstasy.”

All the devotees placed their hands on the Lord's body and blessed Him. Then they revealed to Him the sorrows in their hearts, “Alas! In Navadvīpa all the scholars and teachers speak endlessly on various subjects, but when it comes to explaining the process of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, they remain silent. There are many big, big *sannyāsīs*, *tapasvīs*, and *jñānīs* living in Navadvīpa, yet not one of them is heard chanting Kṛṣṇa's name or glorifying Lord Kṛṣṇa. Rather, they are always simply engaged in blasphemy. Their sinful audience accepts whatever they hear from them, so they treat us worse than dirt or grass in the street.

“Dear Viśvambhara! Chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name cannot be heard anywhere, so we are all burning in the fire of distress. Lord Kṛṣṇa is now pleased with us, therefore He has inspired You to take up the path of devotion. Now we know for certain that You will destroy the atheists. May You live forever chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, and may the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa be revealed by You.”

The Lord respectfully accepted the blessings of His devotees, for devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is attained by the Vaiṣṇavas' blessings. After hearing the devotees' distress, Lord Viśvambhara considered revealing Himself very soon.

The Lord replied, “You are all very dear to the Lord, whatever you say must certainly happen. My life is truly blessed by

your encouraging words. I know that when you glorify the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and chant His holy name then there is no one who can stop you, not even death! What can the sinful atheists do to you? Just go on happily chanting the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra. The Supreme Lord cannot bear to see His devotees suffer, therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa appears in different incarnations to protect His devotees. I can now understand that you will bring Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra and make Navadvīpa as blissful as Vaikuṇṭha. The whole world will be delivered by your mercy, for all of you will induce Kṛṣṇa to incarnate. Please allow Me the favor that I may always be your humble servant. Never deprive Me of this blessing.”

Lord Viśvambhara then touched the feet of all the Vaiṣṇavas, and in return the devotees profusely blessed Him. Finishing their bath in the Ganges, the Vaiṣṇavas dispersed and returned to their respective houses.

The Lord also returned home feeling joyful within, but as He contemplated the devotees' suffering He felt increasing anger towards the atheists. He roared angrily, repeating, “I shall destroy them! I am Him, I am Him!” Sometimes the Lord laughed, sometimes He cried, sometimes He fell unconscious, and sometimes He ran after Viṣṇupriyā to beat her. In this way the Lord manifested the mood of destroying miscreants, but mother Śacī could not understand and thought He had some strange disease.

Mother Śacī felt nothing but affection for her son, so she discussed Viśvambhara's behavior with everyone she met, “Providence has already taken away my husband and son, so all I have left is this young boy. Now His actions perplex me, I do not know what to think of Him. Sometimes He laughs, sometimes He cries, and at other times He falls down unconscious. Often He speaks to Himself, and sometimes He yells out loud saying, 'Break the heads of those atheists!' Sometimes He climbs to the top of a tree and with closed eyes He sometimes falls down to the ground. Sometimes His grinding teeth make a grating noise. Sometimes He claps His hands on His body, then falling down, He rolls on the ground, not saying a word.”

Ordinary people had not seen symptoms of ecstatic love of Godhead, so they thought the Lord had some disease, a sort of wind disorder. They suggested that He should be bound up. After hearing from mother Śacī about the Lord's condition, whoever came to see Him simply laughed and ran away, thinking He was suffering from some wind disorder.

Mother Śacī became flustered and ran after the people to pacify them. Some of the people told her, “He is definitely suffering from some wind disorder.”

Others said, “You are just an ignorant *brāhmaṇa*'s wife! Why are you asking about Him again? It is apparent that He is suffering from some wind disorder. Tie His feet and keep Him inside the house. Give Him green coconut water to drink until His airs have subsided.”

Some others suggested, “What will such simple medicine do? You must give Him *śiva-ghee* to relieve Him from this attack of wind disorder. Apply the ghee on His head and bathe Him until He comes to His normal sense.”

Śacīdevī, the noble-minded mother of the entire universe, followed whatever she heard from the people. Śacīmātā became fraught with apprehension and simply took shelter of Lord Govinda with her body, mind, and words. She sent people to the house of Śrīvāsa and various other devotees, requesting them to come there.

One day Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita came to visit the Lord, and Viśvambhara immediately got up and greeted Him with respect. Upon seeing a pure devotee of the Lord, Viśvambhara's ecstatic emotions increased. As Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita was circumambulating *tulasīdevī*, the Lord manifested ecstatic symptoms: crying, shaking, shivering, horripilating, and then falling down unconscious on the ground. After a while, when external consciousness returned to the Lord, He began crying profusely and shaking uncontrollably. To Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita all these manifestations of the Lord were wonderful. He thought to himself, “These are the symptoms of the highest spiritual ecstasy of love of Godhead. Foolish persons misunderstand and think this is due to a wind disorder.”

When the Lord could speak, He said to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, “Oh, it is you Paṇḍita! What do you make of My condition? Some people are suggesting that I should be kept bound up because I suffer from some terrible wind disease. What is your opinion?”

Smiling, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita replied, “Nice wind, I would also like to be attacked by the same wind that is causing this disorder in You. Actually, I see signs of great spiritual ecstasy of love of Godhead in You. You have been favored by Kṛṣṇa's mercy.”

The Lord was very happy to hear this from Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and He embraced him affectionately. He said, “Everyone is saying that this is a wind disorder, but now you have given Me great hope. For this I am grateful and forever indebted to you. If you had also said that I was suffering from some wind disorder then certainly I would have jumped into the Ganges.”

Śrīvāsa replied, “Your love for the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa has reached such ecstatic heights that it is desirable by even Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and sages such as Saunaka. Let us all come together and glorify Kṛṣṇa's holy name without caring

about the criticisms of the atheists and sinners.”

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said to mother Śacī, “Give up your sorrow. I tell you these symptoms are not due to wind disorder, they are due to love for Kṛṣṇa. Ordinary people cannot understand such things. Even though you may see some wonderful and ecstatic pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, such activities and topics are far beyond the intellectual capacity of ignorant and materialistic nondevotees, so such subjects should not be discussed in their presence.

After dispelling mother Śacī’s ideas that Viśvambhara was suffering from wind disorder, Śrīvāsa returned home. Mother Śacī, however, was not completely free from despondency, for she was always afraid that her son would leave home at any moment.

Such were the wonderful activities of Lord Viśvambhara. Who can understand these transcendental pastimes, unless the Lord Himself revealed them?

One day the Lord and Gadādhara Paṇḍita visited the house of Advaita Ācārya Prabhu. Entering His house, they saw that the Ācārya was busy offering water and *tulasī* to the Lord. With raised hands He was calling out, “Hari! Hari!” sometimes laughing and sometimes crying, completely oblivious of Himself. He roared loudly like a mad lion, and seeing His anger it appeared as if Lord Rudra had incarnated.

When Lord Viśvambhara saw Advaita Ācārya Prabhu, He fell down unconscious. Due to pure devotional service Advaita Ācārya Prabhu could see that Viśvambhara was His most worshipable Lord. He thought to Himself, “Today I have captured You, You are a thief. How will You escape from Me today? All this time You have been hiding Your real identity from us all, but now somehow You have come here. You cannot always cheat Me. I know who You are, and now I will cheat the cheater.”

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu made all arrangements to worship the Lord, and reveal to the world the supreme absolute position of Lord Viśvambhara, who so far had very cunningly hidden His true supreme spiritual identity. He brought all the different paraphernalia for worshipping the Lord. He offered incense, flowers, and lamp to the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya while chanting again and again,
namo brahmaṇya-devāya / go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca <R>jagad-dhitāya kṛṣṇāya / govindāya namo namaḥ
“My Lord, You are the well-wisher of the cows and the *brāhmaṇas*, and You are the well-wisher of the entire human society and world.”

Recognizing His Lord and master, Advaita Prabhu wept as He repeatedly chanted this verse and fell at the Lord’s lotus feet. He washed Lord Caitanya’s lotus feet with His tears and then stood before the Lord’s lotus feet with folded hands.

A little amused, Gadādhara Paṇḍita bit his tongue and said to Advaita Prabhu, “O Gosvāmī, it does not befit You to behave like this with someone so much younger than Yourself, a mere lad.”

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu slightly laughed at Gadādhara Paṇḍita’s words and replied, “O Gadādhara Paṇḍita! How long will you see Him as a mere lad?”

Gadādhara Paṇḍita was startled and said, “Is He an incarnation of the Supreme Lord?”

After some time Lord Viśvambhara regained His external consciousness and saw that Advaita Ācārya was worshipping Him, absorbed in an ecstatic trance. Lord Viśvambhara tried to hide His identity by offering prayers to Advaita Ācārya with folded hands. He offered His obeisances, took the dust of Advaita’s feet, and then surrendering His life to Advaita Prabhu.

“Please be merciful to Me. Know for certain that I belong to You. Seeing You today is a blessing for Me, for if You are merciful I will be able to chant the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. You can free Me from material bondage because Your heart is the permanent residence of Lord Kṛṣṇa.” The Supreme Lord is most expert in glorifying His devotees, and this wonderful exchange of love and affection between the devotee and the Lord is spontaneous.

Śrī Advaita said to Himself, “All this is real (bravo?), today I have out-cheated the biggest cheat.” The smiling Advaita Ācārya replied, “My dear Viśvambhara, to Me You are superior to everyone. Please remain here and discuss the wonderful pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa so that I may be always able to see You. All the Vaiṣṇavas desire to see You and chant the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa with You.”

Hearing Advaita Ācārya’s words, the Lord most happily accepted His sentiment and then returned to His house. Advaita Ācārya Prabhu was now convinced that His dear Lord had appeared, but still He went to Śāntipura to test Him. He thought, “If He is truly the Supreme Lord and I am truly His humble servant, then He will surely bind Me and bring Me to His side.”

Who is capable of understanding the mind of Śrī Advaita Ācārya by whose potency Lord Caitanya appeared in this world. One who has no faith in these narrations will definitely fall down without delay.

The Supreme Lord Viṣvambhara daily performed *saṅkīrtana* with all the Vaiṣṇavas. They were all very happy to have the Lord amongst them, but none of them could actually recognize Him as the Supreme Person. Seeing the Lord was always absorbed in ecstatic trance, the Vaiṣṇavas became full of doubt. Other than Ananta Śeṣa, who is able to describe the Lord's ecstatic trances?

When the Lord was in ecstasy, He trembled so much that hundreds of people could not hold Him still. Streams of tears flowed unchecked from His eyes like hundreds of rivers. The hairs on His body standing on end made Him resemble a ripe, golden jackfruit. From time to time He would break into loud laughter. At other times He would fall to the ground unconscious for a few hours, then when He regained consciousness He spoke nothing except Lord Kṛṣṇa's name.

The loud roaring sound that He sometimes made seemed to burst the eardrums of the nondevotees, but by the same sound the devotees, having received the Lord's mercy, crossed the ocean of material existence. His body would at times become stiff like a pillar and at other times soft like butter. The devotees who saw these wonderful transformations in the Lord no longer thought of Him as an ordinary human being.

Someone said, "He is definitely a partial incarnation of the Supreme Lord."

Someone said, "Kṛṣṇa has manifest in His body."

Someone else said, "Maybe He is Śukadeva Gosvāmī, or Prahlāda Mahārāja, or even Nārada Muni."

Another said, "He is here to remove all our troubles."

The wives of the devotees also remarked, "Lord Kṛṣṇa has again taken birth."

Another lady said, "I think that He is an incarnation of God."

In this way, different people offered different opinions about the Lord. When the Lord finally regained His external consciousness, He embraced everyone. It is impossible for me to describe how He pitifully cried for Kṛṣṇa saying, *amūny adhanyāni dināntarāṇi hare tvad-ālokanam antareṇa anātha-bandho karuṇaika-sindho hā hanta hā hanta katham nayāmi* "O My Lord! O Supreme Personality of Godhead, O friend of the helpless! You are the only ocean of mercy! Alas! Because I have not met You, My inauspicious days and nights have become unbearable. I don't know how I shall pass the time."

At other times He cried out, releasing heavy sighs, "Where can I find My Lord who is always playing the flute?" Then gradually becoming still, the Lord revealed the pain in His heart saying, "Please be merciful and hear My pitiful condition. There is no end to My sorrows. Although I have found the Lord of My life, My dear Kṛṣṇa, now I have lost Him."

The devotees were all satisfied to hear these confidential words, and they respectfully sat around the Lord, who continued, "While returning from Gayā I came to a village named Kānāi Nāṭaśālā. There I saw a young boy of exquisite beauty. He had a glowing dark complexion, the color of a *tamāla* tree. His curly hair was decorated with wild flowers, and He wore a beautiful crown with a peacock feather stuck in it. All His jewelry and gems shined brightly like the sun.

The fine beauty of the flute He held in His hand captivated one's heart, and His lotus feet were adorned with enchanting ankle bells. His arms, which resembled blue pillars, were covered with sparkling gems. His chest was decorated with the Kaustubha jeweled necklace and the mark of Śrīvatsa. How will I describe to you the beauty of His golden yellow silken dhoti, His dangling fish earrings, and His lotus petal eyes? Smiling sweetly, He approached Me and embraced Me, and then suddenly ran away, fearing what I do not know."

Who can understand these intimate topics spoken by Lord Gaurasundara without His blessings? The Lord could proceed only so far with His narrations and then fell down unconscious on the ground, crying out, "O Kṛṣṇa!"

The devotees present there quickly caught hold of the Lord while loudly chanting, "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa." They pacified the Lord and removed the dust from His body.

The Lord seemed to become a little calm, and then again He became restless and He wept saying, "Where is My beloved Kṛṣṇa? Where is Kṛṣṇa?" Finally Lord Gaurasundara was able to control Himself, and then He manifested a condition of extreme humility.

As the Lord spoke on devotional topics the devotees' hearts were filled with satisfaction. They said, "We are all feeling fortunate and blessed to have Your association. Who cares for the opulence of Vaikuṇṭha when You are here? A moment's association with You gives anyone the fruit of devotional service. We are all Your dependents, so kindly lead us in chanting the glories of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. We have been burned by the caustic words of the atheists, let Your tears of love of Godhead cool us forever."

The Lord was very happy to hear these words from the Vaiṣṇavas. He consoled them and then returned home walking like a mad lion. Although He returned home, He never behaved like a mundane family man. He was always immersed in love of Kṛṣṇa. So many tears of ecstasy flowed like streams, it seemed that the Ganges which appeared from His lotus feet was now emanating from His eyes!

“Where is Kṛṣṇa? Where is Kṛṣṇa?” This was all He said. He had only one answer to anyone's inquiry. Whenever He saw a Vaiṣṇava, He would rush to him asking, “Where is My beloved Kṛṣṇa? Where is my beloved Kṛṣṇa?” Crying out like this, He broke down weeping, and the devotees tried to calm Him down.

One day Gadādhara happily came to see the Lord with a betel leaf in his hand. As soon as the Lord saw Gadādhara, He asked, “Where is that blackish boy who is dressed in yellow garments?”

Everyone's heart was bursting by seeing the Lord's distress. No one was able to say anything to pacify Him. Gadādhara Paṇḍita respectfully replied, “Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally resides within Your heart.”

When the Lord heard that Kṛṣṇa was within His heart, He began to pierce His chest with His nails. Gadādhara Paṇḍita immediately caught hold of the Lord's hands and calmed Him down by pacifying Him in various ways. As mother Śacī watched, Gadādhara said, “Kṛṣṇa will come just now, be peaceful.”

Mother Śacī was very satisfied with Gadādhara, she thought, “I have never seen anyone so intelligent as this young boy. Even I feel afraid to comfort Nimāi, and this young lad has so nicely pacified Him.”

She said to Gadādhara Paṇḍita, “Dear boy, stay here always, do not leave Nimāi's company and go anywhere else.”

Mother Śacī was awestruck by the Lord's ecstatic devotional trances. She no longer saw Nimāi as merely her young son. “He is not an ordinary mortal,” she thought. “How can an ordinary human being to shed tears like gushing cascades! I do not know which extraordinary personality has come here.” Mother Śacī was therefore afraid to come in front of the Lord.

In the evening all the Vaiṣṇavas slowly assembled in Lord Caitanya's house. Śrī Mukunda Mahāśaya began reciting verses relating to devotional service. The pious Mukunda had such a sweet voice that as soon as the Lord heard him recite, He went into an ecstatic trance. The Lord loudly exclaimed, “Hari bol!” and losing His balance He fell in different directions, making it difficult for the devotees to hold Him. All the ecstatic symptoms such as fear, laughter, trembling, shivering, sweating, hairs standing on end, and roaring all manifest simultaneously in the Lord. Seeing this wonderful display, the devotees began singing in joy, and therefore the Lord's ecstatic absorption continued unchecked. The whole night passed as if it were a moment. Then when the early morning came, the Lord came out of His trance.

In this way, day and night the son of Śacī was totally absorbed in the nectar of chanting the holy name in His house. Caitanya Mahāprabhu had begun to manifest His *saṅkīrtana* pastimes, which by seeing all of the devotees' sufferings were destroyed. Śrī Śacinandana loudly chanted, “Hari bol! Hari bol!” repeatedly waking the atheists out of their sleep.

Being deprived of the happiness of sleep, the atheists became enraged and revealed their minds by saying so many things. Someone said, “Have these people become mad?”

Someone said, “The whole night I could not even sleep.”

Another commented, “All their screaming and shouting will enrage the Supreme Lord, and that will cause their complete destruction.”

Another said, “They avoid philosophical knowledge, so they behave arrogantly.”

Another said, “Who knows who they are glorifying? Behind all this mischief is that *brāhmaṇa* Śrīvāsa. He and his three brothers get together and scream, 'Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!' like madmen, just to fill their bellies. Does not one earn piety by chanting in his mind? Is it only by chanting so loudly that one gets benefit?”

“O brother, we're in danger. The whole country will be ruined because of this Śrīvāsa. Today I heard in the king's court that they will send two boats with government men to capture anyone who performs *skīrtana* in Nadia. The king has heard the tumultuous kīrtana in Nadia and he has ordered to arrest these people. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, however, will run away and escape, and we will have to suffer the entire brunt of this. I warned all of you earlier to throw Śrīvāsa's house into the river. But you did not act because you thought I was joking. But now it is too late, the danger has come upon us.”

Another said, “What do we care? If the government men come here we will just capture Śrīvāsa and hand him over to them.”

In this manner, news spread throughout Nadia, “The king’s boats are coming to arrest the Vaiṣṇavas.”

The Vaiṣṇavas also heard this news, and by remembering Lord Govinda all their fears were dissolved. They said, “Whatever the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇacandra wants will happen, and it is for the best. As long as He is there, then what fear do we have from these wretched people?”

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita was very liberal, so whatever he heard he believed. The fact that Śrīvāsa was apprehensive at heart about the Muslim government was known to Lord Gauracandra.

The devotees were still not aware that the Supreme Lord had incarnated amongst them. Now Śrī Śācinandana began to manifest Himself. Lord Viśvambhara fearlessly roamed about. His transcendental beauty was unmatched within the entire creation.

His body was smeared with fragrant sandalwood paste, His lips were reddish like the early morning sun, and His eyes were like a blooming lotus flower. His curly hair beautified His moonlike face, and the sacred thread on His shoulders was most attractive. He was dressed in fine clothes, and He was chewing on paṇ as He went to walk on the bank of the Ganges.

When the pious people saw the Lord, they became very joyful; but the atheistic people felt morose. “He must have heard about the danger,” they said, “yet He shows no sign of fear. He strolls about as though He is a prince.”

Another person said, “Listen brother! I understand all this. Just wait and see. What you see is just another trick to escape.”

Fearlessly, Lord Viśvambhara looked in every direction, observing the scenic beauty of the swift flowing Ganges and her banks. He saw a herd of cows grazing on the banks. Some of them went to the river to drink water, and few young ones jumped about with raised tails. Some of them were butting each other, while others just lay around chewing their cud. This sight immediately agitated the Lord. He forgot Himself, and began emitting loud sounds like roaring. He kept saying, “I am Him, I am Him.” In this condition the Lord ran to Śrīvāsa’s house and shouted, “What are you doing Śrīvāsa?”

Śrīvāsa was engaged in worshiping Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva behind closed doors. The Lord kicked the door and called out, “Who are you worshipping? Who are you meditating on? Just see the person whom you are worshipping! He is standing before you!”

Śrīvāsa’s meditation broke, and he looked all around. He saw Viśvambhara sitting in *vīrāsana* with four arms holding the conch, disc, club, and lotus. The Lord was roaring like a mad lion. He was slapping His left thigh while roaring loudly. Śrīvāsa’s body trembled, and he sat awestruck. He was unable to speak.

The Lord called out, “O Śrīvāsa! All this time you did not know who I am. Due to your loud *saṅkīrtana* and Advaita’s loud calling, I left Vaiṣṇava and came to this world with My family. Now you are living completely complacent without recognizing Me, and Advaita has left Me behind and gone back to Śāntipura. I have come to protect the pious and punish the miscreants. There is no need for you to worry, just chant prayers to Me.”

Seeing the Lord before him, Śrīvāsa’s eyes filled with tears of love. All his fears were destroyed by the Lord’s assuring words. Currents of joy surged through his body, and he stood up with folded hands and offered prayers to the Lord. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita was a great devotee. Having received the Lord’s order, he began to offer appropriate prayers to Him. He recited from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.1) a prayer offered by Lord Brahmā after his illusion was dispelled.

“My dear Lord, You are the eternally worshipable Supreme Personality of Godhead, therefore I worship You, the son of Mahārāja Nanda. Your complexion is blackish like the monsoon cloud, and the color of Your cloth is yellow like a flash of lightning. The beauty of Your face is enhanced by *guñja* earrings and a peacock feather on Your head, and Your feet are soft like the petals of the lotus. Wearing garlands of forest flowers and leaves, and equipped with herding stick, buffalo horn, and flute, You stand beautifully with a morsel of food in Your hand.”

“I worship the lotus feet of Lord Viśvambhara, whose complexion is like a new monsoon cloud and who wears a yellow dress. I offer my obeisances at the lotus feet of the son of mother Śacī, whose ornaments consist of new *guñjā* seeds and a peacock feather. My obeisances unto the lotus feet of Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita’s student, who is decorated with a flower garland and holds a preparation of yogurt rice in His hand. I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra’s son, the beauty of whose face defeats millions of full moons. I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of You, whose ornaments are the buffalo horn, cane, and flute. I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of You, who have been declared by the *Vedas* as the son of Mahārāja Nanda.”

Thus Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita prayed like Brahmā did unto the Lord’s lotus feet. He freely spoke whatever words of glorification came to his mouth. He continued, “You are Viṣṇu. You are Kṛṣṇa. You are the Lord of all sacrifices. The holiest of rivers, the Ganges emanates from Your lotus feet. You are the life of Janakī, Lord Rāmacandra, and You are Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva.

Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva are like bumblebees at Your lotus feet. You are goal of *Vedānta* study, and You are the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa. You appeared as Lord Vāmana to trick Bali Mahārāja. You are Lord Hayagrīva, and You are the soul of the universe. You are Lord Jagannātha, the moon of Nīlācala, and You are the ultimate cause of all causes. Who is not defeated by Your illusory energy? Even Lakṣmīdevī does not know You, although she is Your constant companion. Lord Balarāma, who serves You in every respect—as a friend, companion, and brother—is also subjected to Your illusory potency. So, what to speak of others?

“You have placed me in this illusory family life, which is a dark well of forgetfulness. My human birth has been wasted because I could not recognize You. In various ways You have deluded me, My Lord, going to the extent of carrying my clothes and baskets so I was unable to recognize You. O Lord of my heart, please listen. I do not fear for those things, for now I have met You Lord. Today all my miseries have been vanquished. Today my life's most fortunate day has appeared. Today my life and endeavors have all become successful. Today my good fortune has risen in my heart. Today my forefathers have been delivered. Today this house of mine has been sanctified. Today my eyes have become unlimitedly fortunate, for I see He whose lotus feet are worshiped by Rāmādevī, the goddess of fortune.”

After offering these prayers, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita fell into ecstatic trance. He raised his arms as he cried and sighed deeply. After seeing Gauracandra's wonderful manifestation, the most fortunate Śrīvāsa then rolled on the ground in ecstasy. Currents of joy ran through his body, and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, the best of the *brāhmaṇas*, merged in an ocean of happiness.

The Lord smiled after hearing Śrīvāsa's prayers. Being merciful to Śrīvāsa, the Lord said, "Bring your wife, children, and whoever else is in the house and let them see My form," the Lord said. "Along with your wife, worship My feet and ask for any boon that your heart desires.”

Following the Lord's instructions, Śrīvāsa went into his house and gathered all his family members and quickly returned to the Lord's presence. Whatever flowers Śrīvāsa had collected for the worship of Lord Viṣṇu he now offered to the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya. With fragrant scents, flowers, incense, and lamp Śrīvāsa, along with his wife, brothers, other relatives, servants, and maidservants, offered worship at the lotus feet of the Lord. They fell down and earnestly prayed, pleading for the Lord's mercy.

Śrīvāsa was very dear to the Lord, therefore the Lord blessed him, as well as everyone present, by placing His lotus feet on their heads. Smiling, He said, “May your attachment and attraction for Me increase.”

The Lord spoke loudly like a roaring lion, and addressing Śrīvāsa said, “O Śrīvāsa, are you afraid of something? I have heard that the king's boat has been sent to capture you. Whatever living entities there are throughout the unlimited universes, I direct their activities according to My sweet will. The king can only order your capture if I, being situated in his heart, prompt him to do so. Yet, for some reason, if he acts independently and gives the order to capture you, then I will do the following: I will be the first to step into the boat and present Myself before the king. On seeing Me do you think that he will still remain sitting on the throne? I will delude him and take control of him.

“If the king evades this move of mine, then I have another alternative. I will tell the king, ‘O king, listen so you can know what is true and what is false. Call all of your religious heads and judges to come to the court. Collect all of your elephants, horses, animals, and birds, etc. Whatever you have, bring them to your place. Then order all of your Kazi priests to read from your scriptures and inspire every listener to such a state of spiritual emotion that they begin to cry.’

“If they fail to do so, then I will reveal My true identity to the king. Then I will say, ‘O king, on the instructions of these same Kazi priests, whose spiritual powers we have already witnessed, you want to forbid the congregational chanting of the holy name of God. Now you shall see My power to the full satisfaction of your eyes. I will capture a mad elephant and bring him here, along with other elephants, horses, deer, and other animals, and make them all cry in ecstasy and chant Kṛṣṇa's name.’

“I will make the king and all his men cry and chant Kṛṣṇa's name. I know that you don't believe that it is possible, but I will show you right now and you can see for yourself.”

The Lord saw a small girl before Him. Her name was Nārāyaṇī, and she was the young daughter of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's brother. Her glories are discussed by the Vaiṣṇavas till today as, “Nārāyaṇī, the recipient of Lord Caitanya's remnants.”

Lord Gauracandra, the Supreme Lord and Supersoul within everyone's heart, ordered the little girl, “Nārāyaṇī! Chant Kṛṣṇa's name and cry in ecstasy.”

The four-year-old girl became agitated with ecstatic spiritual emotions. She lost her external sense and cried out, “O Kṛṣṇa!” She began to weep, losing all perception of the external world. Tears streamed down her body and fell to the ground such that the whole place was filled with Nārāyaṇī's tears.

Smiling, Lord Viśvambhara asked Śrīvāsa, “Are your fears pacified now?”

Śrīvāsa, the great orator who is well versed in the scriptural conclusions, threw up both of his hands and said, “My Lord, when you exhibit Your terrible form as all-devouring time and annihilate this entire material creation, I have no fear by the strength of Your holy name. So now that You are here in my house, what fear do I have?”

Saying this, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita went into ecstatic trance. Along with all the assembled relatives, brothers, wife, and servants, he saw the Lord manifest Himself. He whom even the personified *Vedas* are eager to see was now being seen by Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's servants and maidservants. How can I possibly describe the magnanimous nature of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita? A little dust from his lotus feet can purify the entire creation.

Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in Vasudeva's house and all of His pastimes were performed in Nanda Mahārāja's house. Similarly, Lord Caitanya appeared in Śrī Jagannātha Miśra's house, but all His pastimes were performed in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita was loved by all the Vaiṣṇavas, just by going to his house they experienced great joy. He whom the *Vedas* realize through chanting His glories was seen by Śrīvāsa's servants and maidservants. From this we can understand that serving a pure devotee is the best process of attaining the supreme goal, because by the mercy of a Vaiṣṇava one can certainly meet the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Viśvambhara ordered Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, “Do not speak about this incident to anyone.”

When the Lord regained His external consciousness He felt very ashamed of Himself, and after comforting Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita He returned to His own house. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, along with his wife, daughter-in-law, brothers, servants, and maidservants were all immersed in jubilation.

Whoever reads Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's prayer to the Lord will immediately be elevated to the position of eternal servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Balarāma, my beloved Lord and master, has spoken to me from within my heart as the Supersoul, and so, on His order, I am writing these wonderful activities of Lord Caitanya. I pray to the lotus feet of all the Vaiṣṇavas that they bless me so that I may attain the service of Lord Balarāma, my Lord and master, birth after birth. Just as Narasimha and Yadusimha are different names for the same person, in the same way the only difference between Nityānanda and Baladeva is the name. Lord Balarāma is very dear to Lord Caitanyacandra, and in His present incarnation I glorify Him by the name Avadhūtacandra.

Dear brothers! Please hear the subject matter of Madhya-khaṇḍa with full attention. This portion describes how the Lord performed His *kīrtana* pastimes for one year. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter Three Meeting with Nityānanda Prabhu

All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the Supreme Lord of all living entities! He is the beloved Lord of Nityānanda Prabhu and Gadādhara Paṇḍita. All glories to the Lord, who is controlled by all the pure devotees beginning with Advaita Ācārya Prabhu! Please deliver this wretched person by giving me Your devotional service.

In this way Lord Gaurasundara with His associates floated in the ecstasy of devotional service in Navadvīpa. Lord Caitanya's devotees were as dear to Him as His very life. Catching hold of them, He would cry as He chanted Kṛṣṇa's name. Seeing the Lord's ecstatic love, all the devotees gathered around Him and cried in love of God.

What to speak of the devotees, even dry wood and stone melted and fell to the ground in the presence of the Lord's ecstatic manifestations. Leaving their wealth, children, and house, the devotees remained day and night with the Lord, chanting Kṛṣṇa's name.

Lord Gauracandra became totally absorbed in love of Kṛṣṇa. He exhibited different devotional moods corresponding to the topics He heard. In the devotional mellow of servitude, He would cry for hours as if mother Ganges had descended through His eyes. Whenever the Lord laughed, He continued for several hours; and when He fell unconscious, He remained without breathing for several hours. At times He remembered His own identity and, proudly sitting, He would laugh and exclaim, “I am Him, I am Him! Where is that old man Nāḍā, Advaita Ācārya, the one who brought Me here? I will fulfill His desire and distribute love of Godhead to each and every home.”

The next moment the Lord cried out, “O Kṛṣṇa, O My beloved Lord!” While weeping, He would tie His feet with His hair. Then He repeated the verses from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* where Akrūra came to take Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā. He fell to the ground like a stick offering His obeisances, as if He were Akrūra. Absorbed in Akrūra's mood, the Lord lost all external consciousness and said, “O Nanda, let us take Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā to see the king's *Dhanur-yajña* festival.” In this way, Lord Caitanya exhibited so many ecstatic moods. This gave unlimited joy to all of the devotees

present there.

One day the Lord heard a verse in the mood of Lord Varāha, the boar incarnation. Roaring, He rushed to Murāri Gupta's house. Lord Caitanya had a special love for Murāri Gupta, just as Lord Rāmacandra had for Hanumān.

When Śrī Śacinandana arrived at Murāri Gupta's house, Murāri offered obeisances to the Lord's lotus feet with great respect. The Lord hurried past him shouting, “Śūkara! Śūkara!” Murāri Gupta was astounded and looked all around. The Lord entered the temple room of Lord Viṣṇu and saw a beautiful water pot standing in the corner. At that moment the Lord took the form and mood of Varāha and lifted the water pot with His tusks. Manifesting four legs, the Lord roared loudly like a boar and ordered, “Murāri, offer prayers to Me!”

Murāri was stunned by the amazing sight. What could he say? No words came to his mouth. The Lord then said, “Speak up Murāri. Speak, without fear. For all these days you didn't know that I was here.”

Trembling, Murāri humbly prayed, “O Lord! Only You know how to glorify Yourself. Lord Ananta Śeṣa holds unlimited universes on just one of His hoods,. He has manifested a thousand mouths to glorify You, yet He cannot find the limits to Your glories. Who is more capable than Ananta Śeṣa to glorify You? The entire material universe follows the instructions of the *Vedas*, yet the *Vedas* are also not knowing all truths about You. O Lord! Whatever unlimited planets we see or hear about in this material creation, all enter within the pores of Your transcendental body. You, however, remain eternally blissful. How is it possible for the limited Vedic literature to describe the pastimes which You perform at that time. Therefore, O Lord, only You know Yourself fully. Others can know You only if You reveal Yourself to them through Your causeless mercy. What qualification do I have to offer prayers and glorify You?” Saying this, Murāri Gupta cried as he fell flat offering obeisances to the Lord.

Lord Varāha was pleased with Murāri Gupta's words. Then expressing anger at the Vedic literatures, He replied, “The *Vedas* have the audacity to say that I have no hands, no legs, no mouth, and no eyes! While teaching the *Vedas* in Kāśī, that rascal Prakaśānanda tries to mutilate My transcendental form. He explains the *Vedas*, but he does not accept My transcendental form. As a result his whole body was attacked by leprosy, but he could not understand why.

“I am the Lord of all sacrifices, the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu. There are no imperfections in My transcendental form. Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva are always engaged in glorifying My supreme transcendental position and nature. A mere touch of My body can purify everything. Then how can that rascal proclaim that My form is false? Carefully hear the essence of all opinion Murāri Gupta. I will tell you that which is not manifest even in the *Vedas*. I accepted the incarnation of a boar to lift the material world out of the waters of nescience, know Me to be the ultimate goal of the *Vedas*. The purpose of My present incarnation is to propagate the congregational chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. In this incarnation, as in other incarnations, I will annihilate the miscreants for the protection and pleasure of My devotees. I cannot tolerate My devotees being threatened and tortured. I will even kill My own son to protect My beloved devotees. This is not a lie Murāri!

“Listen attentively. In My boar incarnation, when I lifted the earth, mother earth became impregnated by My touch. She gave birth to My son, named Naraka, who was very strong and powerful. I gave My son all religious instructions. He became a very powerful king and dutifully protected the demigods, *brāhmaṇas*, spiritual masters, and devotees. However, the hand of destiny changed everything. Due to the influence and bad association of Banāsura, he became a criminal and was cruel to the devotees. Any aggression or violence towards My devotees is totally intolerable to Me, so I killed My son to protect My devotees. I am revealing all these confidential matters to you because you have been serving Me for many births.” Murāri Gupta was overwhelmed by the Lord's presence and narration, and he wept with joy.

All glories to Śrī Gauracandra and Śrī Murāri Gupta! All glories to Lord Varāhadeva, the protector of His devotees!

In this way Lord Caitanya went to the homes of all His devotees, and by His causeless mercy revealed His real supreme identity to them. The devotees and servants recognized their Supreme Lord and their hearts were filled with ecstatic bliss. They now became fearless and did not care for the atheists. They went everywhere, in all public places, and chanted Kṛṣṇa's name loudly. Day and night the devotees spent their time with the Lord chanting and singing Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name. Only Lord Nityānanda Prabhu was missing, and this saddened Lord Gauracandra. Lord Viśvambhara was constantly thinking about Lord Nityānanda. His separation became unbearable to the Lord. Lord Viśvambhara knew Lord Nityānanda to be the Supreme Lord, Ananta Vāsudeva. I shall take this time to describe some transcendental facts about Lord Nityānanda's birth, activities and so on.

The Supreme Lord Nityānanda Prabhu was born in the village of Ekacakra. Lord Nityānanda, who is Lord Haladhara, or Balarāma, worshiped Lord Maudeśvara, Lord Śiva, in the form of His *linga*. This temple is situated close to the Lord's birthplace. Lord Nityānanda's parents were extremely pious. His father, Hādāi Paṇḍita, was a very learned *brāhmaṇa*, very compassionate and detached from material life. His mother, Śrīmatī Padmāvatī, was a very pious and chaste lady. She was a great devotee, and the universal mother. Lord Nityānanda Rāya was the eldest son of the family. Everyone was captivated by His good looks. I have already described in detail His childhood pastimes in the earlier portion of this book, so for now, I will give only indications, otherwise the book will become voluminous.

Lord Nityānanda spent some years performing His childhood pastimes in the house of Hāḍāi Paṇḍita. Then the Lord decided to leave home, but He could not sever the bonds of affection of His mother and did not want to see her suffer. The parents could not live for a moment without seeing Lord Nityānanda. Even a moment out of His sight seemed like a millennium to His mother and father. Hāḍāi Paṇḍita never went anywhere without his son. When Hāḍāi Paṇḍita went about doing his work, like going to the fields, attending to the pilgrims, or going marketing, Lord Nityānanda would always accompany him. By chance, if the Lord fell behind Hāḍāi Paṇḍita, His father would look frantically and frequently behind him to see whether the Lord was following him or not. The parents often embraced and fondled Him, and the Lord's soft body, which was like butter, would melt with the bodies of His parents. Lord Nityānanda became more dear to Hāḍāi Paṇḍita than his own life. The Supreme Lord is the Supersoul, therefore He knew all the desires of His father, thus He remained in the house to make His father happy.

One day, by divine arrangement, a *sannyāsī* with a 'Godlike' appearance visited Lord Nityānanda's house. Hāḍāi Paṇḍita welcomed him and looked after him very nicely with great pleasure. Lord Nityānanda's father spent the whole night with the *sannyāsī* talking about Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes. As he was preparing to leave, early the next morning, the *sannyāsī* asked Nityānanda's father, "I have one request."

Hāḍāi Paṇḍita replied, "Whatever you desire you may have."

The *sannyāsī* said, "I am on a pilgrimage tour, but I do not have a good *brāhmaṇa* as a companion. Give me your eldest son for a few days to be my companion. I will protect and look after Him with my life, and your son will also be able to learn about the many places of pilgrimage we visit."

The *sannyāsī*'s words greatly perturbed Hāḍāi Paṇḍita, who was a pure and pious *brāhmaṇa*. Fraught with worries, he became weak and thought, "The *sannyāsī* has begged for my very life, and I feel that if I refuse then I will be ruined. Great personalities previously have offered even their lives to fulfill the desire of a sage or a renunciate. In the *Purāṇas* we read that Lord Rāmacandra was more dear to His father, Daśaratha, than his own self. Once the sage Viśvāmītra begged Daśaratha to allow his son to come with him. It was very painful for Daśaratha to depart from his son, Lord Rāmacandra, yet he did not refuse. I feel myself to be in the same predicament. O Lord Kṛṣṇa, please guide me and protect me in this dilemma! By divine arrangement I have to take the position of Daśaratha and my son has to take the position of Lord Rāmacandra, otherwise why is this happening to my son? And why does He have an air of detachment about Him?"

Hāḍāi Paṇḍita went inside to consult his wife. The chaste Padmāvatī, the universal mother, heard everything from Hāḍāi Paṇḍita and said, "Whatever you decide, my Lord, is my decision too."

Hāḍāi Paṇḍita returned to the *sannyāsī*, and put his son in his custody. He stood there crestfallen with his head hanging down, and Lord Nityānanda left with the *sannyāsī*. In this way Lord Nityānanda was able to leave His house.

As soon as Lord Nityānanda left, Hāḍāi Paṇḍita crumbled to the ground unconscious. He wept bitterly in separation from his beloved son and Lord. His piteous cries could even melt a heart of stone. Overwhelmed with intense love in separation from the Lord, Hāḍāi Paṇḍita appeared to be in a state of total shock; he went about like a statue.

The people said, "Hāḍāi Paṇḍita has become mad." For three months Hāḍāi Paṇḍita stopped eating. But unlike ordinary human beings, he did not die or become emaciated; he remained alive only because of his attachment for the Supreme Lord.

In this context a person may question why the Lord left His house where He was so beloved? The correct answer to that question is that Lord Viṣṇu and His devotees possess unlimited potencies, hence their activities are inconceivable. Lord Kapila, saturated in transcendental knowledge, left His home and widowed mother for the sake of saving the entire creation. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī walked out of his home and left his father, who was none other than the great Vaiṣṇava Śrīla Vyāsadeva, never once looking back. Even a wonderful and affectionate mother like Śacī had to lose her son, who became the crest jewel of the *sannyāsīs*, and left her alone. Renunciation on the spiritual platform is not like ordinary renunciation. Who can understand the meaning of this? The Lord performs such pastimes for the liberation of all living entities; such is the unparalleled mercy of the Lord. The moving story of how King Daśaratha was separated from His dearest son Lord Rāmacandra when He went to the forest, would bring tears to the eyes of even a meat-eater.

After leaving His home, Lord Nityānanda travelled, carefree and happy, to many places of pilgrimage. He visited Gayā, Kāśī, Prayāga, Mathurā, Dvārakā, Badarikāśrama, etc. He visited the birthplace of Lord Buddha, and from there He went to the cave of Vyāsadeva. In the South He visited the temple of Lord Ranganātha and the tip of India where Lord Rāmacandra built the bridge to cross to Śrī Lanka. Then He went to the Malaya Hills. He travelled fearlessly through lonely forests. He also visited Gomatī, Gandhakī, Sarayu, Kāverī, Ayodhya, Dandhakāranya, Trimalla, Venkaṭanātha, Saptā Godhāvarī. In Kanyaka Nagar He visited the temple of Lord Śiva. Then He visited Revā, Māhiṣmatī, Malla-tīrtha, and Haridvāra.

His travels finally brought Him to Mathurā. He visited Gokula, the place where He had appeared in His previous incarnation as Lord Balarāma. He roared with ecstatic emotion, but no one could recognize Him as the original Lord

Ananta Śeṣa. In Vṛndāvana He felt like a young boy, playing with the sand of Vṛndāvana and rolling on the ground. This feeling was constantly with Him. He did not even feel like eating, He just wanted to roll and play in the dust of Vṛndāvana. No one could understand the inner mood of Lord Nityānanda; He simply maintained Himself on the nectar of loving exchanges with Kṛṣṇa. On some rare occasions He drank a little milk, and even then it appeared as if someone offered it to Him unsolicited. (akward?)

While Lord Nityānanda was living in this manner in Vṛndāvana, Lord Gauracandra manifested Himself in Navadvīpa. Lord Caitanya was constantly engaged in the congregational chanting of the holy name in great ecstasy, but He felt sad because of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu's absence. Lord Nityānanda was waiting in Vṛndāvana for Lord Caitanya to reveal His *saṅkīrtana* pastimes. As soon as He heard that Lord Caitanya had begun His *saṅkīrtana* movement, He immediately came to Navadvīpa and stayed in the house of Śrī Nandana Ācārya.

Nandana Ācārya was a very elevated devotee, and he was happy to have Lord Nityānanda Prabhu staying in his house. He saw that the Lord was very effulgent like the brilliant sun. The Lord had a large body and was dressed in the clothes of a traveling renunciate. He was always grave and equipoised. Day and night He chanted Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name. He is unequalled in the three worlds, nondifferent from Lord Caitanya. Absorbed within Himself, He often roared loudly like a lion, for He is the direct manifestation of Lord Balarāma. His beautiful, glowing face could have easily defeated a thousand shining full moons. A captivating smile played sweetly on His exquisite lips. So white and radiant were His teeth that if a pearl were held next to them the pearl would look like a faded and discarded piece of glass. His long, languid eyes stole the pinkish tinge of the early rising sun. His arms were long and reached down to His knees, and He possessed a robust chest and broad shoulders. His lotus feet were soft, but (and?) His gait was graceful. He spoke to everyone with kind words which severed the bonds of material attachment within everyone's heart.

Lord Nityānanda's arrival to Navadvīpa was welcomed by all the devotees with shouts of joy. Who can describe the unlimited qualities of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, who had the potency to break the *saṅnyāsa* stick of Lord Caitanya? Lord Nityānanda is so merciful that anyone who chants His name becomes purified. Even a gross materialist, or an ignorant or fallen person can cross over the ocean of material nescience if he simply chants Lord Nityānanda's name. His holy name is capable of purifying the entire material creation. Nandana Ācārya Prabhu was more than happy to have Lord Nityānanda Prabhu stay in his house, and he looked after Him with great care.

Whoever hears Lord Nityānanda's pastimes of coming to Navadvīpa will be blessed with love of God. Lord Viśvambhara heard of Lord Nityānanda's arrival in Navadvīpa, and He felt great joy within. Earlier Lord Caitanya had given indications of Lord Nityānanda's arrival to the Vaiṣṇavas, but they could not understand its import. The Lord had told them, "A great personality will come to Navadvīpa within a few days."

Lord Gauracandra worshiped Lord Viṣṇu in His temple, and then quickly went to meet all the devotees. He told them, "Last night I had a wonderful dream: A chariot came and stood in front of My door. The chariot's flag had a palm leaf drawn on it. This chariot was meant to carry one from this temporary material existence to absolute reality. The passenger of that chariot was a colossal figure, He carried a plough on His large shoulders, He was moving about as if He were restless. In His left hand He carried a renunciate's water pot which was wrapped over by cane reeds. On top He wore a blue cloth, and His lower dress was also blue. A beautiful earring pierced His left ear lobe. His whole appearance and demeanor gave Me the impression that He was Lord Balarāma. Then speaking in (Hindi??) He repeated a question at least ten or twenty times saying, 'Does this house not belong to Nimāi Paṇḍita?'

"Never before had I seen such a formidable looking mendicant. I felt great respect for this person and I asked, 'I see that You are a great personality. Who are You?' Smiling, He replied, 'I am Your brother. Tomorrow We shall get to know each other.' His words increased My delight, and I began to feel that He and I were the same person."

In the middle of the narration the Lord went into an ecstatic trance, and entering into the mood of Lord Balarāma, He began to roar and shout loudly, "Bring Me wine! Bring Me wine!" His thundering voice seemed to burst the eardrums.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said, "Listen to me, my dear Lord. The wine that You want is not to be found anywhere, but You and others will have it only if You distribute it!"

The devotees, a little afraid and trembling, stayed at a distance from the Lord. The Vaiṣṇavas thought to themselves, "There must be a reason for all this."

With reddened eyes the Lord recited small lyrical poems and ballads. Smiling, He softly and rhythmically swayed His body like Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, Balarāma. After a while the Lord returned back to His normal self.

Then Murāri Gupta, the beloved devotee and friend of Lord Rāmacandra, began to explain the inner meaning of the Lord's dream, "My feeling is that a great personality has come to Navadvīpa. I had told You earlier that we would soon meet a great personality." The Lord then said to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, "Go and find out where this great personality is."

The two great spiritual stalwarts left on the order of Lord Caitanya and roamed about Navadvīpa, searching. On the way they discussed, “Maybe Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, Lord Balarāma, has come Himself.” They went about looking everywhere with great happiness, but could not find a single trace of the person they were looking for. After three hours of intensive searching, they returned back. They humbly submitted their report to the Lord, “We could not find Him anywhere. We looked everywhere. We went to Vaiṣṇavas’ houses, spoke to *san̥nyāsīs*, went to the householders, even to the houses of the atheists and Māyāvādīs; but we were unsuccessful. We looked in every house in Navadvīpa. The only houses we did not see were the ones on the outskirts of Navadvīpa.” Lord Gauracandra smiled, indicating that Lord Nityānanda was a very mysterious personality.

In the Lord's present incarnation as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya some people only want to glorify Lord Caitanya, but refuse to glorify Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Such a grievous sin is similar to worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, but not respecting Lord Śiva or Śaṅkara. Such an abominable person will surely be condemned to eternal hellish sufferings. Lord Nityānanda's incarnation is very mysterious and confidential, it is impossible for anyone to see Him, unless and until Lord Caitanya Himself reveals this secret. Although the living entity is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa and it is His constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, he has eternally forfeited this opportunity to engage in Lord Kṛṣṇa's and Lord Caitanya's devotional service.

Unalloyed devotees such as Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and Haridāsa Ṭhākura are fully realized in such esoteric understandings, yet for some mysterious reason, they could not find Nityānanda Prabhu. Then Lord Caitanya, laughing mildly said, “Come with Me and let us go find Him.”

All the devotees became very jubilant and chanted, “All glories to Kṛṣṇa!” and they accompanied the Lord. The Lord took all the Vaiṣṇavas and went directly to the house of Nandana Ācārya. Everything was already known to the omniscient Supreme Lord, Śrī Gauracandra. Inside the house they saw a great personality, effulgent like a million suns. Without proper spiritual vision one cannot see Lord Nityānanda. A sweet smile played on His lips and He was totally absorbed in meditation on Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The Lord saw before Him a towering spiritual stalwart, and Lord Viśvambhara, along with all the devotees, offered their obeisances to Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. They stood up respectfully and kept standing without speaking a word. Lord Viśvambhara stood at the head of all the Vaiṣṇavas. Lord Nityānanda saw Lord Viśvambhara and recognized Him as the beloved Lord of His heart.

Lord Viśvambhara was looking so beautiful, even more beautiful than Cupid Himself. A fragrant flower garland hung around His neck, His face was decorated with sandalwood paste, and He wore fine clothes.

What is glittering gold next to the Lord's aura? The full moon has lost interest in her own beauty and she yearns to see the glowing face of the Lord. How enchanting They look--Nityānanda and Lord Gaurāṅga--as They roam about Navadvīpa with the devotees chanting the holy name of God! What is the luster and value of pearls next to the Lord's teeth? One is sure to lose his mind at the sight of the Lord's beautiful cascading black hair. All other lotuses look faded and artificial next to the pinkish, graceful lotus eyes of the Lord. His long hands extend down to His knees, and the thin line of His *brāhmaṇa* thread hangs loosely across His broad and expansive chest. A thin and perfect *tilaka* decorates His broad forehead. Without any jewelry or ornaments, every limb of His beautiful body looks exquisite and captivating. Whence goes the brilliance of millions of precious gems compared to His dazzling nails? What use do I have for ambrosia when I see the sweet smile playing on my Lord's lips?

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter Four Nityānanda and Caitanya

All glories to Lord Gauracandra, the life and soul of all the living entities! May I always remember His lotus feet.

Within His heart Lord Nityānanda was certain that this Lord Viśvambhara who stood before Him was none other than His beloved Supreme Lord. Overwhelmed with bliss, Lord Nityānanda Prabhu was unable to move, He stared unblinking at the beautiful face of the Lord. With His tongue He wanted to taste the Lord's beauty and drink it with His eyes; He wanted to embrace Him with His hands and smell His fragrance with His nose. To everyone's amazement, Lord Nityānanda stood speechless, completely enchanted by the Lord's beauty.

Lord Gauracandra is the Supersoul in everyone's heart, therefore He knew Lord Nityānanda's heart. Thus, He was planning a means by which to reveal Himself to Lord Nityānanda. The Lord indicated to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita to recite a verse from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīvāsa understood and immediately recited a *śloka* from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.21.5) describing the beauty of Kṛṣṇa, “Wearing a peacock-feather ornament upon His head, blue *karnikāra* flowers on His ears, a yellow garment as brilliant as gold, and the Vaijayanti garland, Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibited His transcendental form as the best of dancers as He

entered the forest of Vṛndāvana, beautifying it with the marks of His footprints. He filled the holes of His flute with the nectar of His lips, and the cowherd boys sang His glories.”

As soon as Nityānanda Prabhu heard this verse He fell down unconscious. While Lord Nityānanda lay in ecstatic bliss, Lord Caitanya advised Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, “Read on, read on.”

After sometime Lord Nityānanda Prabhu regained His external consciousness and began crying tears of joy. The more He heard the verses the more it increased His mad love for Kṛṣṇa. His ecstatic roaring filled the universe and pierced through the covering of this material world. Lord Nityānanda jumped down, crashing to the ground, and everyone thought that the bones of His body were smashed. Seeing this, the Vaiṣṇavas became very afraid and loudly uttered, “Kṛṣṇa, please save Him! Kṛṣṇa, please save Him!”

Lord Nityānanda rolled on the ground, His body covered with tears of love. Long and frequent sighs escaped His mouth as He looked deep into Lord Viśvambhara's face. Lord Nityānanda felt great ecstasy, and often He laughed out loud. Sometimes He jumped and danced, sometimes He wrestled, and other times He hung His head quietly.

Lord Gauracandra and all the devotees began to cry in joy, seeing such total absorption and madness in love of Kṛṣṇa. It became impossible for the Vaiṣṇavas to hold Nityānanda Prabhu still. When the devotees failed, Lord Viśvambhara held Nityānanda Prabhu in an embrace. As soon as Lord Nityānanda was embraced by Caitanya He immediately became still. The Lord who He was totally surrendered to, now embraced Him; so Nityānanda Prabhu allowed Himself to be held without endeavor. Lord Caitanya flooded Lord Nityānanda with ecstatic tears of love. Lord Nityānanda Prabhu was afflicted by the arrow of ecstatic love of God; and Lord Caitanya held Him just as Lord Rāmacandra had held Lakṣmaṇa when He lay unconscious, drained of all strength. Both Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya wept, overwhelmed with joy. The intensity of love between Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu can be properly described only by the example of the loving relationship between Lord Rāmacandra and Lakṣmaṇa.

When Lord Nityānanda came out of His ecstatic trance, all the devotees began loudly chanting Lord Hari's name. Viśvambhara was embracing Nityānanda Prabhu, and Gadādhara Paṇḍita smiled, thinking how Their Lordship's roles had changed. He thought, “Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, as Ananta Śeṣa, renders service to Lord Viśvambhara by becoming the bed on which Lord Nārāyaṇa always rests. But today His pride as a servitor has been broken, and He lies in Lord Viśvambhara's embrace.”

Gadādhara Paṇḍita was well aware of Lord Nityānanda's potencies; and the Supreme Lord Nityānanda Prabhu knew the innermost thoughts of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. All the devotees were jubilant on meeting Lord Nityānanda, and their minds were steeped in thoughts of Him.

The ecstasy that Lord Viśvambhara and Lord Nityānanda experienced in meeting each other was impossible to be expressed through words, but it found expression in the continuous tears of joy from Their eyes that drenched the earth. Lord Viśvambhara said, “This is the most glorious day in My life. Today I have seen the embodiment of loving devotion to the Supreme Lord, which is the essence of all the four *Vedas*. Such intense ecstasy can only be manifest by the Supreme Lord Himself. Those fortunate souls who were able to see His loving devotional symptoms will never be rejected by Lord Kṛṣṇa. Now, I understand that You, Lord Nityānanda, are the full-fledged manifestation of the Lord's energy. You are nondifferent from Him. The living entities can get loving devotional service at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa simply by worshipping You. You purify the entire cosmic manifestation; and Your transcendental nature is inconceivable, incomprehensible, and esoteric. You are the personification of the highest ecstatic love of God. Even a moment's association with You can dissolve millions and millions of sins. I can understand that Lord Kṛṣṇa intends to purify and redeem Me by giving Me Your association. It is my great fortune that I was able to see Your lotus feet. And I know that if I worship Your lotus feet, then I will surely receive love of Kṛṣṇa.”

Unaware of the passing of time, Lord Gaurasundara was totally absorbed in glorifying Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya had endless exchanges, but they were very confidential, so They conversed in signs. The Lord then asked Nityānanda Prabhu, “I am hesitant to ask You which direction You came from.”

Lord Nityānanda was always absorbed, and He spoke like an innocent, restless child. He understood that Lord Caitanya had descended to this material world; thus when He replied, He did so with folded hands and great humility. He had felt very ashamed and shy when Lord Viśvambhara was glorifying Him, and so through gestures, words and indications He explained everything in detail.

Lord Nityānanda Prabhu said, “I extensively toured all places of pilgrimage, but I could see only the place and not Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. I asked some good people why their altars were standing empty. 'I do not see Him in His own place,' I said. 'Where is Kṛṣṇa? Where did He go?'

They all replied, 'Kṛṣṇa has gone to Gauḍadeśa, Bengal. He was in Gayā recently, and not so long ago He returned back to Bengal.' When I came to Nadia I was greeted by jubilant chanting of the Lord's holy name, and someone told me that Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had appeared here. I heard that in Nadia even the most wretched

fallen souls can get liberation. Thus being such an abominable wretch, I have come here.”

Lord Viśvambhara replied, “We are most fortunate that a devotee such as Yourself is amongst us now; and we are very grateful to the Lord that today we have seen Your ecstatic tears of love of God.”

Murāri Gupta smiled and said, “The confidential discussions between Lord Nityānanda and Lord Viśvambhara are incomprehensible to us.”

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said, “How can we understand all this? Their intimate exchanges are like Lord Hari's with Lord Śiva, as they worshiped each other and increased the amazement of everyone.”

Gadādhara Paṇḍita said, “You are quite right, Paṇḍita. They seem to be exactly like Lord Rāmacandra and Lakṣmaṇa.”

Another Vaiṣṇava said, “They look as if They are two Cupids.” Someone else said, “They are Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

Someone else said, “I don't have much knowledge, but from what I have seen it appears that Lord Kṛṣṇa has taken Lord Ananta Śeṣa in His arms.”

Someone else commented, “They are like two friends. Their loving affectionate exchange is just like the relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna.”

Some others were saying, “They have such intimate association with each other that we cannot understand it; and they are talking only in signs.” Thus, the devotees expressed their joy at having Lord Nityānanda amongst them, giving their different opinions.

Lord Nityānanda Prabhu serves Lord Caitanya in every way—sometimes as a friend, sometimes as His umbrella, His bed, or as His carrier. All these services can be rendered by Lord Nityānanda alone. He serves Lord Caitanya according to His own sweet desires. Others can also become eligible to serve the Lord, but only by the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu. Lord Nityānanda Prabhu's glories are unlimited; no one can fully know Him. Even Lord Śeṣa who is a great yogi, a pure devotee, and Himself a controller in this material energy, cannot fully fathom the limits of Lord Nityānanda's transcendental nature. If one criticizes or offends Lord Nityānanda Prabhu without knowing about all of His wonderful attributes, then although He is constitutionally an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, he becomes forever rejected from the path of devotional service.

Lord Nityānanda is the object of Lord Caitanya's complete love, and it is my heart's desire that the same Lord Nityānanda reside in my heart as my most beloved Lord and Master. By His grace I have developed attachment and attraction for Lord Caitanya. It is by His order that I write these wonderful pastimes of Lord Caitanya. Just as Raghunātha and Yadunātha are different names for the same person, in the same way the only difference between Nityānanda and Baladeva is the name.

One who desires to cross over this ocean of nescience and drown in the nectarean waters of love of Godhead, must take shelter of the lotus feet of Nityānanda. Whoever sings and glorifies this wonderful pastime will be blessed by Lord Viśvambhara, along with his entire family. Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the most beloved object of everyone's love. The name of Lord Viśvambhara is extremely rare and precious. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I, Vṇḍāvana dāsa, humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter Five Descriptions of Vyāsa-pūjā

All glories to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Caitanya, who is also praised by the name of Murāri! He is the constantly glowing lamp of Navadvīpa. He is like the fearless lion come to slay the elephant-like atheists. He has taken the knotted thread in order to exemplify the need of chanting a specific number of times the Lord's holy name, which are His own names. All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the Supreme Lord of all living entities and the Lord and master of Lord Nityānanda and Gadādhara Paṇḍita! All glories to the Lord, for He is subjugated by the love of pure devotees like Advaita Ācārya Prabhu and others! O Lord, please engage the conditioned living entities in the eternal loving service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and release them from the bondage of material existence.

In this manner all the devotees passed their time in great joy, discussing topics of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. All the assembled Vaiṣṇavas were very elevated souls and unalloyed devotees of the Lord. They became totally immersed in the nectar of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Lord Nityānanda Prabhu was extremely joyful, and He kept looking around at the Vaiṣṇavas. It was a scene of extreme ecstasy, and tears of happiness cascaded down everyone's eyes.

Seeing this ecstasy, Lord Viśvambhara spoke to Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, “Listen, My dear Nityānanda Gosvāmī, where shall Your Vyāsa-pūjā be performed? Tomorrow there is a full moon, and it is on this day that Śrīla Vyāsadeva is

worshiped. So You may choose anyone, and make arrangements with him.”

Nityānanda Prabhu could understand Lord Viśvambhara's mind, so He took Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita by his hand and smiling, said, “Listen Viśvambhara, I will have My Vyāsa-pūjā in this *brāhmaṇa*'s house.”

Lord Viśvambhara then spoke to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, “Now you have a heavy responsibility over your head.” Śrīvāsa replied, “No my Lord, this is no botheration, by Your grace everything is in this house.” The paraphernalia required like clothes, grains, *brāhmaṇa* thread, ghee, etc., are all available here. I have only to get the book which gives the procedure for performing a Vyāsa-pūjā ceremony. And then tomorrow, by my great fortune, I shall witness a Vyāsa-pūjā.” Lord Viśvambhara was very pleased with Śrīvāsa's reply, and all the devotees were jubilant.

Lord Viśvambhara said, “Listen Nityānanda Gosai, let us all make preparations to go to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house.” Lord Nityānanda very much appreciated Lord Viśvambhara's words, and immediately proceeded to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house. The Lord and Nityānanda Prabhu, accompanied by Their associates, looked exactly like Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in Gokula, as They went about accompanied by Their friends.

As they entered Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house, the devotees felt a current of joy run through their bodies. The Lord ordered the doors to be closed, allowing only friends and relatives to be inside. Then on the signal from Lord Viśvambhara, they began singing *bhajan*s and *kirtan*s, and gradually the external world faded away into oblivion. The chanting was ecstatic and befitting the occasion of Vyāsa-pūjā. The two Lords began to dance ecstatically, surrounded by the devotees who were singing. The bond of love and affection exists eternally between Lord Nityānanda and Lord Viśvambhara, and now as they danced together each one was immersed in thoughts of the other. The devotees were experiencing extraordinary joy; some began to roar loudly, some fell unconscious, and others could not restrain the flow of joyful tears. The two Supreme Lords were experiencing all the symptoms of ecstasy like shivering, paling, jubilation, crying and falling unconscious. Who can describe all the ecstatic symptoms that They manifested? The two Lords danced, lost in Their ecstasy, and often They would embrace each other, crying. In the mood of brotherly love, They tried to catch each other's feet, but because both were wary and cunning, They could not succeed. They were overwhelmed in happiness, and they rolled on the ground forgetting Their absolute supreme position. Such are Their wonderful pastimes. The world of phenomena was forgotten and Their clothes fell from Their body. They could not sit still, and even though the Vaiṣṇavas tried to hold Them down, they were unsuccessful. How is it possible for the Vaiṣṇavas to hold on to the personality Who holds the entire universe?

The two Supreme Lords were lost in the nectar of chanting and dancing. Lord Gaurasundara kept repeating, “Chant! Chant!”, drenching His whole body with tears of happiness. The Lord, having found that personality whose association He always desired, His eternal brother Lord Nityānanda, was floating on an ocean of eternal endless ecstasy. Lord Viśvambhara's dancing was so enchanting, sometimes He would touch His head with His feet. When Lord Nityānanda Prabhu danced it seemed there was an earthquake. Thus, the two Supreme Lords danced in ecstasy. Who can describe that scene of great jubilation?

In the mood of Lord Balarāma, Lord Viśvambhara then sat on the seat of Lord Viṣṇu. Like Lord Balarāma, He was expressing madness, and repeatedly cried out, “Bring Me wine. Bring Me wine!”

The Lord said to Nityānanda Prabhu, “Immediately bring Me a plough.” At the Lord's request, Lord Nityānanda stretched out His hands and Lord Gauracandra received it in His hand. Some saw the two Lords go through these motions empty-handed, while others saw Lord Nityānanda give a plough to Lord Caitanya.

Only by the Lord's mercy can one understand His supreme position. Such confidential pastimes and topics of the Lord as displayed by Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are known to a very limited few.

Receiving the plough from Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, Lord Caitanya now began to ask for wine, acting agitated and mad. Most of the devotees could not understand this mood of Lord Caitanya. They looked at each other's faces in bewilderment, wondering why the Lord was asking for wine. Trying to think logically, they finally brought a pot of Ganges water to the Lord. The Lord distributed the Ganges water to everyone and drank much of it Himself, thinking this to be real wine.

All around, the devotees began to chant hymns about Lord Balarāma, and Lord Viśvambhara kept repeating, “Nāḍā”, the name by which He would call Advaita Ācārya Prabhu. The Lord continuously called out, “Nāḍā”, and His head kept dropping as if drunk; but nobody could understand the inner meaning of the word Nāḍā. They asked, “Lord who is Nāḍā?” The Lord replied, “On whose loud beckoning I am here, the personality you call Advaita Ācārya Prabhu is Nāḍā to Me in My present incarnation. Nāḍā has brought Me down from the Vaikuṇṭha planets, but He is enjoying peacefully with Haridāsa Ṭhākura. In this incarnation I shall propagate congregational chanting of the holy name in every house. Those who are intoxicated with material knowledge, wealth, family, austerity, etc., are naturally offensive to My pure devotees. To such wretched and fallen people I will not give the gift of loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord, but to the residents of Navadvīpa Māyāpur I shall bestow that supreme gift of love of God which is most desirable even by Lord Brahmā.” The devotees were overjoyed on hearing the Lord, and the Lord gradually became tranquil and still.

The Lord asked the devotees, "Were My speech and actions uncontrolled?" The devotees replied, "No, nothing inconsistent." The Lord embraced everyone with great love and affection, and said, "Please always forgive My offensive nature." All the devotees began to laugh. "Surely", they thought, "the Lord was joking."

Unable to control His ecstasy, Nityānanda Prabhu began to roll on the ground. Lord Nityānanda was totally immersed in the nectar of love of Godhead. Sometimes He laughed; sometimes He cried. And sometimes He opened His clothes and stood naked, being in the mood of a young boy, and His body manifested this mood. His stick fell in one direction, and His water pot and clothes in another. That great and tranquil personality, Lord Nityānanda, was now restless and uncontrollable. Lord Viśvambhara had to hold Him still. Lord Caitanya's words acted on Nityānanda Prabhu just as a guard acts on a mad elephant. Lord Nityānanda Prabhu became still. The Lord said, "Be calm, and if You want, tomorrow You can have the Vyāsa-pūjā." Then the Lord left for His home.

All the devotees returned to their respective homes, and Lord Nityānanda remained in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house. Late in the night, overcome with ecstasy, Lord Nityānanda began roaring like a lion. He broke His stick and water pot. Who can fathom the activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead? Who knew why Lord Nityānanda broke His stick and water pot?

Early next morning Rāmāi Paṇḍita saw the broken stick and water pot. He was amazed and perplexed. He went quickly to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and reported this matter to him. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said, "Go to Lord Viśvambhara."

When Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu heard from Rāmāi Paṇḍita the activities of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, He immediately came to the house of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. There, He found Lord Nityānanda in a trance and laughing constantly. Lord Viśvambhara took the broken stick and led Lord Nityānanda Prabhu to the Ganges. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and the other Vaiṣṇavas accompanied Their Lordships to the Ganges for a bath, and there Lord Viśvambhara threw the stick into the river. Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, still in a trance, was restless and did not heed anyone's advice; so Caitanya Mahāprabhu loudly chastised Him, which pacified Him a little. A crocodile was swimming down the river, and on seeing it, Lord Nityānanda jumped in to catch it. Immediately Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and Gadādhara Paṇḍita raised an alarm. Fearlessly, He continued swimming toward midstream. Only Lord Caitanya's words could hold Him still and bring Him back.

Lord Viśvambhara cried out to Lord Nityānanda, "Come immediately and let us proceed with the worship of Vyāsadeva. Obeying Lord Viśvambhara, He came out of the water and accompanied the Lord back to His house.

Soon after, all the devotees assembled and began chanting the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita was the preceptor for the rules of worship for the Vyāsa-pūjā, and by receiving instructions from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he executed them. A continuous, sweet *kīrtana* converted Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house into the spiritual world of Vaikuṇṭha. Well versed in all scriptures, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita performed the ceremony according to the strict injunctions of the scripture. He gave Nityānanda Prabhu a garland of fragrant flowers and said, "O Nityānanda Prabhu, please take this garland and offer Your prayers and obeisances to Śrīla Vyāsadeva. The scriptures instruct that Śrīla Vyāsadeva should be garlanded when He is being worshiped, and if Śrīla Vyāsadeva is satisfied then all our desires will be fulfilled."

The more Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita spoke, the more Lord Nityānanda continued repeating, "Yes, yes." But He did not pay any heed to his words. He held the garland and muttered something softly underneath his breath which nobody could hear, and just looked all around.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita went to Lord Caitanya and reported this matter, "Your Śrīpāda does not want to worship Śrīla Vyāsadeva." The Lord immediately came to the presence of Lord Nityānanda and said, "Nityānanda, please listen to Me. Offer the garland to Śrīla Vyāsadeva and worship Him." Lord Nityānanda saw that Caitanya was there and He immediately placed the garland on the Lord's head. The fragrant flower garland on the Lord's curly hair made a beautiful sight.

At that very moment Lord Caitanya revealed His six-handed form to Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. The Lord held in His hands the conchshell, disc, mace, lotus, and plough. Seeing this, Lord Nityānanda Prabhu immediately went into an ecstatic trance and fell unconscious. All the devotees became very afraid and started praying, "Protect Him, Kṛṣṇa! Protect Him, Kṛṣṇa!" while Lord Caitanya clapped His hands loudly on His four arms and continued to roar loudly.

Lord Caitanya then bent down to lift Lord Nityānanda up from the ground saying, "Nityānanda please get up and steady Your mind. Listen to the chanting of the holy name. The reason You descended to this material world is to propagate the chanting of the holy name, and now You have perfectly succeeded in this mission. What more do You want? You are the absolute proprietor of the treasure house of love of Godhead, and the embodiment of sublime devotional love. No one can receive love of God unless and until You distribute it; therefore please get up and look around You. You are surrounded by Your own beloved associates; You may distribute it to anyone You want to. If anyone nurtures even the slightest dislike for You then, although He may worship Me, I will never recognize him as dear to Me."

Lord Caitanya's words brought Him out of His trance, and seeing the Lord's six handed form, He went into a state of great ecstasy. Lord Nityānanda Prabhu is nondifferent from Lord Ananta Śeṣa, in whose heart Lord Gauracandra is an

eternal resident. Without a doubt, Lord Nityānanda Prabhu is Lord Balarāma. The Supreme Personality of Godhead has appeared as Lord Gauracandra, the source of all incarnations; therefore it is not surprising that He should manifest His six-armed form. In His incarnation as Lord Rāmacandra He offered oblations to His departed father. At that time His father, King Daśaratha, appeared in person to receive the oblations. If this can be considered to be wonderful, then the Lord's six-armed form is also wonderful. But all of this is natural for the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa because His pastimes are extraordinary and supramundane.

Lord Nityānanda Prabhu's natural propensity is to serve Lord Gauracandra, and He is never distracted from this service even for a moment. Just like Lakṣmaṇa served Lord Rāmacandra constantly with His mind, body, and heart; similarly, Lord Nityānanda Prabhu constantly engages in Lord Gauracandra's loving devotional service. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Lord of every living entity. He is unlimited, and the source of everything. Yet He enters the material realm and causes the creation, maintenance and annihilation of the material world. According to the verdict of the *Vedas*, He is the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Controller, yet He remains unaffected by the phenomena of material nature.

In spite of His supreme Lordship over everything, Anantadeva, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, is eternally engaged in rendering loving devotional service to Lord Gauracandra. In every millennium and in every incarnation, He accepts that His natural mood is to serve His Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. As Lakṣmaṇa, He became the younger brother of Lord Rāmacandra and served Him constantly. He neglected eating, drinking, sleeping, and other such activities to constantly serve the lotus feet of Lord Rāmacandra; yet He felt unable to satisfy His intense desire to serve.

As Lord Balarāma He was the elder brother of Lord Kṛṣṇa; yet He could not forsake His attitude of serving the Lord deep within His self. He always referred to Kṛṣṇa as Lord, and He was always in the mood of rendering loving devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Such is the wonderful nature of Lord Nityānanda, Ananta Śeṣa. Only the most foolish rascals will see a difference between Lord Nityānanda Prabhu and Lord Balarāma. One who disrespects a devotee who is fully surrendered to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu commits a great offense at the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu Himself.

Śrī Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune, is so elevated that Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva offer praise and worship to her, yet she is naturally inclined to serve the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa. Lord Balarāma, Śeṣa, is the omnipotent Supreme Personality of Godhead, yet His natural inclination is to serve the Supreme Lord. Therefore, Lord Gauracandra feels most satisfied when He can describe the glories and wonderful devotional attitude of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. It is the nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Gauracandra, to be subservient to the loving devotional attitude of His devotees. Therefore the Lord specifically likes to glorify His own surrendered devotees.

There is special significance to hearing the Supreme Lord glorify His own devotees. The Lord and His devotees like to glorify each other, and in this way increase their attachment for one another. I have faithfully presented that which has been propounded in the Vedic literatures and *Purāṇas* about the relationship between the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu and His devotees.

Lord Nityānanda has only one thought in His mind, “Lord Caitanya is My Lord in every respect, and I am His devoted servant. Whoever considers Me to be the servant of My Lord and master Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, becomes very dear to Me and receives My shelter.”

For the pleasure of Lord Nityānanda I have described this pastime of His seeing the six-armed form of Lord Caitanya. Lord Nityānanda always sees the transcendental pastimes of Lord Caitanya within His heart, and Lord Caitanya always exhibits His transcendental pastimes in Lord Nityānanda's heart; yet still, the Lord externally manifests His pastimes according to His incarnations. Although Lord Nityānanda is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He always serves Lord Gauracandra. Who can understand such ecstatic topics?

The *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* have revealed these philosophical matters. The Vedic literature is actually a compilation of all the wonderful activities of the Supreme Lord, and it is the foremost objective of the Vedic literature to propagate the pastimes of the Lord. However, it is not possible to comprehend these spiritual matters without engaging in pure devotional service of the Lord. There are only a few who, by the mercy of Lord Gauracandra, have realized the truth.

The devotees of the Lord are eternally pure and realized souls. Sometimes there are differences of opinion amongst them which might appear like an argument, but in fact it is an amazing relationship between devotees. Foolish rascals who do not understand this exchange, praise one Vaiṣṇava and denounce the other. Such a mentality will lead to destruction of faith and knowledge.

In the *Nārāḍīya Purāṇa* it says, “When a foolish wretch worships the lotus feet of a *brāhmaṇa* and then strikes him on the head, he will be sure to go to hell. Similarly, when someone worships the Deity of Lord Viṣṇu, but disrespects or disregards Lord Viṣṇu residing in everyone's heart, he also goes to hell.”

What to speak of committing offense and violence to a Vaiṣṇava! If someone offends or tortures even an ordinary living entity yet worships Lord Viṣṇu, the Lord of every living entity, then all his worship is worthless, and he suffers great pain. It is verified that to worship Lord Viṣṇu on one hand, and be ignorant about Lord Viṣṇu being the Supersoul in

everyone's heart on the other, is like touching a *brāhmaṇa*'s feet for blessings with one hand, and beating him on the head with the other. Such foolish persons do not know what is most beneficial for themselves.

To criticize a Vaiṣṇava is a thousand times more sinful than offending an ordinary living entity. The person who faithfully worships the Deities, but has no love and respect for the devotees, also does not possess any compassion for the ignorant and fallen conditioned souls. He accepts one incarnation of the Supreme Lord and worships Him, while he rejects another. He treats Lord Kṛṣṇa differently from Lord Rāmacandra, seeing a difference between Them. He does not show any respect or devotion for Lord Balarāma or Lord Śiva. Such persons are described in the scriptures as the weakest devotees.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.47) it is stated that a person who has surrendered to a spiritual master and received initiation, who has left the association of nondevotees, and who worships the Deity of the Supreme Lord according to the *Pañcarātra* injunctions, but who does not worship the devotees due to lack of proper understanding of the different categories of devotees, is known as a neophyte, or *kaniṣṭha* devotee, not a pure devotee. I have just briefly mentioned the symptoms of a neophyte devotee incidentally in the course of discussion.

Seeing the six-handed form of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Lord Nityānanda was totally overwhelmed. Whoever hears this wonderful pastime of Lord Nityānanda is immediately released from material bondage. When Lord Nityānanda came out of His ecstatic trance, He began to cry profusely, tears flowing from His eyes like rivers. Lord Caitanya then said to everyone, “The Vyāsa-pūjā worship has been completed. Now begin *kīrtana*.”

The devotees were jubilant when they received Lord Caitanya's orders, and immediately began to loudly chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental name. The brothers, Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya, danced like two mad men, having severed all contact to this phenomenal world. The Vyāsa-pūjā was celebrated with great joy and singing, and the Vaiṣṇavas became even more inspired and jubilant. Some danced, some sang, while others rolled on the ground catching each other's feet.

Lord Caitanya's mother, Śācimātā, everyone's worshipable mother, sat alone and watched the transcendental merry making. Each time she saw Lord Nityānanda and Lord Viśvambhara she thought to herself, “Both of Them are my sons.”

The celebration of the Vyāsa-pūjā was very ecstatic. It is only possible for Lord Śeṣa Himself to fully describe it. I am able to give only indications about the wonderful activities of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I know that one advances spiritually if one glorifies the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa in any manner.

The day passed into night, and the devotees went on celebrating the Vyāsa-pūjā, dancing with Lord Viśvambhara. The Vaiṣṇavas were mad with ecstatic joy, and they wept crying out, “O Kṛṣṇa! O Kṛṣṇa!” In this way the Lord propagated the process of loving devotional service to Himself.

After the *kīrtana* the Lord sat down with all His devotees. He spoke to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita saying, “Quickly bring the Vyāsa-pūjā offerings.” Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita arranged for all the *prasāda* to be brought in, and Lord Viśvambhara Himself distributed the *prasāda* to all the devotees. The devotees were in bliss to be personally served by the Supreme Lord Gauracandra. The Lord called everyone from inside the house and gave them *prasāda* with His own hands. Receiving *prasāda* directly from the Lord is extremely fortunate for great personalities like Brahmā; but now, even the servants and maidservants of the house were receiving that great spiritual treasure. Who can describe the glories of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, in whose house such spiritual activities occurred? Thus, the Supreme Lord performed wonderful pastimes in Navadvīpa, but not everyone was aware of them.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul. I, Vṇḍāvana Dāsa, humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter Six Meeting with Śrī Advaita Prabhu

All glories to the moonlike Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the fully independent Supreme Person, who is always engaged in eternal transcendental pastimes! He is the master of the universe, the supreme controller of all controllers, the life and soul of every living entity, and the direct manifestation of transcendence. Please mercifully place Your lotus feet in my heart.

All glories to all the intimate servants and dear devotees of Lord Gauracandra. All glories to their ecstatic dancing.

All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the supreme benefactor of the universe, the life of Śrī Paramānanda Purī, and the dear most object of Svartūpa Dāmodara.

All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the beloved master of Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana, Jagadīśa, and Gopīnātha. O Lord of Darpana, Govinda, please bless the entire universe by Your merciful glance.

Lord Gauracandra performed His pastimes of congregational chanting with Lord Nityānanda. Hear now in this chapter as I describe Advaita Ācārya Prabhu's arrival.

One day Lord Caitanya, exhibiting the mood of the Supreme Lord, ordered the younger brother of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita; "Rāmāi go to Advaita Ācārya's house and inform Him of My appearance. Tell Him that the person He has worshiped for so long, the person He wept for, the person He fasted for, that same Lord has now appeared. He has come to distribute knowledge of loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord, thus he must come immediately to meet Him. Also tell Him about Lord Nityānanda Prabhu's arrival, but do it secretly and explain to Him everything you have seen. Tell Him to come immediately, along with His wife, and bring all the paraphernalia for My worship."

Happy to be entrusted with these orders, Rāmāi started for Advaita Ācārya's house, absorbed in remembrance of the Supreme Lord. Although he did not know the way he felt very joyful, his only treasure was Lord Caitanya's instructions. Somehow, by divine guidance, he arrived at Advaita Ācārya's house. Offering his obeisance to Advaita Ācārya Prabhu he was overcome with great joy and could not speak.

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu already knew everything that was happening in Navadvīpa. He could perceive this because He was on the pure devotional platform. He spoke to Rāmāi Paṇḍita sweetly saying, "I know you have instructions to take Me to Navadvīpa." Rāmāi Paṇḍita folded his hands in respect and said, "You already know everything, so please come quickly with me."

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu was in a completely blissful state of mind, transcendental to all bodily sensations. Who is able to fathom the transcendental nature of Advaita Ācārya Prabhu? He is all important yet he speaks as if ignorant.

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu then questioned Rāmāi Paṇḍita, "In which scripture is it mentioned that the Supreme Lord Hari will descend to Navadvīpa in a human form for the redemption of the fallen conditioned souls? O Rāmāi, your elder brother, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, knows about My standard of devotion, renunciation and self realization."

Rāmāi Paṇḍita was well aware of Advaita Ācārya Prabhu's spiritual powers thus he remained quiet, smiling within. Advaita Ācārya Prabhu's transcendental pastimes are unlimited, they are a source of great joy to the pious, while they remain incomprehensible to sinful persons.

Again Advaita Ācārya Prabhu inquired, "O Rāmāi, please tell me why you have come so suddenly?"

When Rāmāi Paṇḍita felt that Advaita Ācārya had calmed down, he began to cry while delivering Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message: "That Supreme Personality for whom You have wept so profusely, for whom You have performed continuous worship, and for whom You have accepted vows of fasting and austerity, that Supreme Personality has now appeared to distribute love of Godhead, and He has instructed You to come to Him immediately. Please bring Your wife with You, as well as all the proper paraphernalia for His worship. Lord Nityānanda Prabhu has also appeared, He is nondifferent from Lord Caitanya and He is Your life and soul. You already know everything, what more do I need to say. If I am fortunate enough then I will be able to see all of You together."

When Rāmāi Paṇḍita delivered this message Advaita Ācārya Prabhu swooned in ecstasy, lifting His hands He began to cry. Suddenly, to everyone's amazement, He fell unconscious. Shortly after He regained His external consciousness, roaring loudly He repeated, "I have brought, I have brought My Lord. The Lord has left His supreme abode in the Vaikuṇṭha planets and appeared here in answer to My prayers." Saying this, He fell to the ground weeping.

Hearing the news of the Lord's advent the chaste wife of Advaita Ācārya Prabhu, Śrī Sītādevī, who is respected as the mother of the entire universe, began to weep joyfully. Although Advaita Ācārya's son, Acyutānanda, was only a young boy he also cried incessantly. Advaita Ācārya's house was transformed into an abode of love of Kṛṣṇa as mother and son, surrounded by their friends and relatives, wept together joyfully.

Engrossed in thoughts of the Supreme Lord Advaita Ācārya Prabhu tried to control Himself, but He was unable to remain still, His body swayed in slow motion, and He inquired from Rāmāi, "What did the Lord say to Me?" Rāmāi replied, "To come immediately." Advaita Ācārya said, "Listen Rāmāi Paṇḍita, if He is actually My worshipable Supreme Lord then let Him appear before Me to speak the truth. If He can exhibit His supreme opulence and place His lotus feet on My head, then I will know that He is the Lord of My heart."

Rāmāi Paṇḍita replied, "O Lord, what power do I possess to speak, if I am blessed then I can see with these eyes the Supreme Lord's pastimes, the Lord's desire is Your desire and He has incarnated because of You."

Satisfied with Rāmāi's reply Advaita Ācārya began preparing for the journey. "Get ready immediately", He told His wife, "Collect the different paraphernalia for worship and let us proceed."

Sītādevī was a chaste and dedicated woman, she had full knowledge of the truth about Lord Caitanya's pastimes and

appearance. She collected incense, garlands, scented oils, cloves, sweet condensed milk, yogurt, cream, butter, camphor, betel leaf and nut for worship.

Advaita Ācārya then left with His wife and Rāmāi Paṇḍita. He reminded Rāmāi Paṇḍita, “Do not tell the Lord that I have come, I want to find out what the Lord replies. I will hide in Nandana Ācārya Prabhu's house.”

Lord Viśvambhara is the Supersoul residing in everyone's heart, thus He immediately knew Advaita Ācārya's plans. Understanding that Advaita Ācārya Prabhu had arrived in Navadvīpa, He proceeded to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house. By the arrangement of the Lord all of the devotees met there.

Seeing that the Lord was in a contemplative mood the devotees remained quiet and apprehensive. The Lord suddenly rose up roaring like a lion He went to sit on the seat of Lord Viṣṇu which was placed on the altar. He began shouting, “Nāḍā has come, Nāḍā has come. I know Nāḍā wants to test whether I am the actual Supreme Lord, the Supersoul within everyone's heart.”

Nityānanda Prabhu understood all of Lord Caitanya's moods, therefore He picked up the umbrella and held it over the Lord's head. Gadādhara Paṇḍita, who was also perceptive to the Lord's moods, offered Him camphor and pan leaf. All of the devotees followed and worshiped the Lord with various ingredients. Some offered prayers to the Lord, while others rendered different services.

Amidst all these activities Rāmāi Paṇḍita returned. Before Rāmāi could speak the Lord said, “Nāḍā has sent you to test Me.” The Lord shook His head gently and said, “Nāḍā has come. Although Nāḍā knows Me well, He always tries to test Me. He is here in Navadvīpa at Nanda Ācārya's house and He has sent you here to test Me. Go quickly and bring Him here immediately.”

Rāmāi happily went back to Advaita Ācārya Prabhu and narrated everything in detail to Him. Advaita Ācārya felt extremely blissful hearing the incidents that took place and He came to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house considering His plans to be successful. Advaita Ācārya wanted the whole earth to know that Lord Caitanya was the Supersoul and the all-potent Supreme Personality of Godhead, now the Lord Himself had propagated this supremacy.

Advaita Ācārya and His wife approached the Lord offering repeated obeisances from a great distance while chanting hymns in praise of the Lord. Advaita Ācārya Prabhu was now fully content (convinced) that He was seeing the fearless lotus feet of His beloved Lord, the most beautiful personality in the entire creation. The beauty of millions upon millions of Cupids seemed pale and ordinary next to the Lord's beauty. His golden complexion was effulgent, and His blissful face was beaming like millions of glowing full moons. The Lord looked down upon Advaita Ācārya with great affection. Golden pillars were no match against the graceful and powerful arms of the Lord and the ornaments that decorated His arms paled any gems. His breast was marked with the Śrīvatsa mark and the great kosa (kustubha) jewel hung loosely from His neck. From His ears dangled fish shaped earrings and around His neck swung the Vaijayanti garland. His unlimited mighty power and brilliance outshone a million suns. Rāma, the goddess of fortune, always serves His lotus feet, and Ananta Śeṣa holds the umbrella over His head. One is put to quandary to discern which are the Lord's nails and which are brilliant gems. He played the flute in a most exquisite position, bent in three places and a charming smile played on His lips.

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu saw everything shining all around the Lord. The Lord, His devotees, and the beautiful ornaments that decorated the Lord's transcendental form shone brilliantly. He also saw the four-headed Lord Brahmā, the five-headed Lord Śiva and the six-headed Lord Kṛtīkeya offering Him obeisances, while Nārada Muni and Śukadeva Gosvāmī recited prayers reverently. An extremely beautiful lady, who looked like mother Ganges, was offering the Lord obeisances seated on a chariot. All around the demigods were offering eulogies and prayers to the Lord. Turning around He saw that hundreds and hundreds of demigods were flat on the ground offering their obeisances and repeating Lord Kṛṣṇa's name.

Seeing these wonderful sights, Advaita Ācārya Prabhu lifted Himself up from His prostrated position, overcome with awe and reverence. Huge many hooded serpents stood with their hoods raised high offering hymns and prayers to the Lord. In another direction He saw many chariots, horses, elephants, and swans—the carriers of the demigods. Innumerable wives of the demigods stood around with tears in their eyes offering praise to the Lord and chanting Lord Kṛṣṇa's name. There was not an empty space left either in the sky or on land. In another direction all the great sages offered chaste prayers to the Lord. Totally overwhelmed Advaita Ācārya and His wife stood there speechless.

Lord Viśvambhara, the all-merciful Supreme Godhead, looked at Advaita Ācārya Prabhu and said, “I have descended to this earth because of Your vow and Your repeated devotional service and worship. I was resting on the ocean of milk and Your roaring woke Me up. You are so merciful that You could bear the sufferings of humanity, and so You have brought Me here to alleviate their sufferings. All these demigods, sages, devotees, and associates that surround Me have appeared in answer to Your prayers. You have arranged for all living entities to see those great devotees whom even Lord Brahmā is constantly thinking about.”

Hearing these wonderful words from the Lord's mouth Advaita Ācārya lifted His hands and wept along with His wife.

"Today My life has become successful," He said, "All My dreams and desires have been fulfilled. Seeing Your lotus feet My birth and all My activities have gained meaning. It is by unlimited good fortune that I am able to see, in person, that personality whom even the Vedic literature has never seen, yet describes Him with mere words. O Lord I am incapable of anything, everything is made up of Your mercy, who else but You can liberate the living entities.?" Tears rolled down Advaita Ācārya's face as He spoke.

"Now perform My worship," the Lord said. Having received this instruction Advaita Ācārya Prabhu began to worship the Lord's lotus feet with great ecstasy. First He washed His feet with scented waters and then covered them with highly scented oil. He dipped the *tulasī-mañjarī* into the sandalwood paste and placed it on the Lord's lotus feet. Then He began to offer worship with flowers, scents, incense, frankincense, and lamps, as tears of love flowed unrestricted from His eyes. He then offered the lamp with five flames while chanting prayers, after which everyone jubilantly glorified the Lord. He continued to worship the Lord strictly according to the injunctions of the scriptures, offering sixteen types of paraphernalia, as well as flower garlands, clothes, and ornaments. He then glorified the Lord with the verse: "O My Lord, You are the well wisher of the cows and the *brāhmaṇas* and You are the well wisher of the entire human society and world."

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu offered His worship with this verse and then began to recite verses from the scriptures in praise of the Supreme Lord: "All glories, all glories to the Lord of everyone's heart Lord Viśvambhara! All glories to Lord Gauracandra, the ocean of mercy. All glories to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the source of all incarnations. He comes to prove that His devotees are always right. All glories to He who feels great joy beholding the exquisite beauty of Lakṣmīdevī. All glories to the Lord, who is decorated with the mark of Śrīvatsa and the Kaustuba gem. All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, who has propagated the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*, Hare Kṛṣṇa. All glories to Him, for He manifests the pastimes of a pure devotee just to teach the living entities the process of devotional service and surrender unto Him. All glories to Lord Mahāprabhu, who lies on the bed of Ananta Śeṣa. All glories, all glories to the only supreme shelter of all living entities.

"O My Lord, You are Lord Viṣṇu, You are Kṛṣṇa, and You are Nārāyaṇa. You are eternal, and You appeared as Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha and Vāmana. In every millennium You protect and maintain the Vedic principles. You are Lord Rāmacandra, the life of Jānakī, and the destroyer of all the demons. You gave a boon to the *caṇḍāla* Guha, and You liberated mother Ahalyā. You appeared as Lord Nṛsimhadeva just to protect Your beloved devotee Prahlaḍa Mahārāja, and in that incarnation You slew his father Hiranyakasipu. You are the most precious jewel of the *Vedas*, and the best of the *brāhmaṇas*. You appeared in Nīlācala in Your deity form to receive the worship of the living entities.

"The four *Vedas* search after You, but You have mercifully appeared here and hidden Yourself from the *Vedas*. O Lord, You are most expert in hiding Yourself, but Your pure devotees are as expert in finding You out and exposing You. You have advented to propagate the congregational chanting of the holy name of God, this is unprecedented in the entire creation, there is no parallel to You.

"The nectar from Your two lotus feet satiates and intoxicates Lord Śiva and Pārvatī. Rāmā, the goddess of fortune, constantly serves Your lotus feet with great attention, and great sages sing incessantly in praise of Your lotus feet. Lord Brahmā worships You with great awe and reverence, and all the *śrutis*, *smṛtis*, and *Purāṇas* glorify Your lotus feet. As Lord Vāmana You covered the entire universe up to Satyaloka with Your lotus feet, and Bali Mahārāja surrendered his life and soul, laying his head at Your feet. The holy Ganges emanates from Your lotus feet, and Lord Śiva feels greatly fortunate to hold her waters on his head."

Advaita Ācārya's intelligence was a million times greater than Bṛhaspati's, thus He was fully aware of Lord Caitanya's absolute and transcendental position. Drenched in His own tears, Advaita Ācārya Prabhu glorified the Lord and fell prostrate before Him seeking shelter under His lotus feet.

Lord Gaurāṅga is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul residing in every living entities heart. He lifted His lotus feet and placed them on Advaita Ācārya Prabhu's head. Seeing this all the devotees began to glorify the Lord with jubilant sounds of victory, they swooned with joy and filled the air with sounds of the Lord's holy name, "Hari! Hari!" The devotees lost control of themselves, some of them rolled on the ground, many of them slapped each other boisterously, while others embraced, and some just cried out loudly. Advaita Ācārya and His wife felt that all their desires were fulfilled because Lord Caitanya had placed His lotus feet on His head.

Lord Caitanya instructed to Advaita Ācārya Prabhu, "O Nāḍa! See My glories and dance." Advaita Ācārya Prabhu happily began dancing with great devotion. Someone started a sweet melodious *kīrtana*, and Advaita Ācārya Prabhu continued dancing ecstatically in front of Lord Caitanya. At times He danced unrestrained and at other times He danced gracefully with delicate movements. At times He felt very humble and moved about holding a straw in His teeth. Sometimes He spun around jumping in the air and then falling to the ground He rolled back and forth. At other times He would breath deeply and quickly and fall unconscious with ecstasy. A variety of devotional moods overtook Him as He danced ecstatically, spontaneously reciprocating with the mood of the *kīrtana*. Finally He came and sat down in the mood of a servant of the Lord. It is impossible to communicate this inconceivable and transcendental pastime.

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu ran to Lord Caitanya's side, seeing Lord Nityānanda He buckled His eyebrows, and Nityānanda Prabhu began to laugh. Advaita Ācārya Prabhu replied laughing, "It is wonderful that You are here, Nitāi, for a long time I have had no trace of You. Now if You want to go anywhere then I will tie You up."

Lord Nityānanda laughed at Advaita Ācārya Prabhu's demeanor. Though now They appeared in two different forms, in the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa They are the same Personality. I have already discussed previously how Nityānanda Prabhu served Lord Caitanya in various ways, with great pleasure. For this purpose He expanded Himself in many forms. In some forms He described the glories of the Lord, in other forms He meditated within His heart on the Lord, sometimes He manifested Himself as the Lord's umbrella and bed, while in another form He would sweetly sing the holy name of the Lord. Only the most fortunate can understand that in this incarnation Lord Nityānanda Prabhu and Lord Advaita Ācārya Prabhu are nondifferent. In the course of Their pastimes whatever arguments or differences They had between Themselves are all the inconceivable and transcendental behavior of the Supreme Lord. The manner in which They served Lord Caitanya with great ecstasy is similar to the mood of service of Lord Ananta Śeṣa and Lord Śiva. Those ignorant persons who do not understand the purport of Their quarrels and take sides, criticizing one and praising the other, are destined to perish.

The dancing of Advaita Ācārya Prabhu mesmerized all the devotees and filled their hearts with ecstatic joy. when Lord Caitanya instructed Advaita Ācārya Prabhu to stop dancing He immediately sat down accepting the Lord's instructions with utmost respect. Lord Caitanya then garlanded Advaita Ācārya Prabhu with a garland from His own neck, smiling He said, "Ask for a boon Advaita Ācārya."

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu remained quiet, yet Lord Viśvambhara insisted on His asking for a boon. Advaita Ācārya replied, "What more of a boon can I ask for? What I wanted I already have received. Because You personally watched My dancing, My heart's desire has been fulfilled. What more could I ask for My Lord? I have seen You in person, that is all that matters. You know everything, You have seen everything with Your transcendental treasures.(?) You know what I want and what I do not want."

Inclining His head to one side Lord Viśvambhara said, "I have appeared because of You. I will propagate the chanting of the holy name in every home so that the entire universe may dance and sing My glories. I promise that I will distribute love of Godhead to everyone. That devotional service which is worshiped and meditated upon by Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and by Me will now be given freely."

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu said, "If You distribute love of Godhead, then give it also to the women, the *śūdras*, the fallen, and the ignorant people. And those sinful persons who have become intoxicated with material learning, wealth, family, etc., and subsequently do not respect Your devotees, or the process of devotional service to You, let them burn in the fire of hell. Let everyone else, including the *caṇḍālas*, dance in ecstasy, chanting Your holy name."

Appreciating the words of Advaita Ācārya the Lord roared loudly, "Everything You have said is true. Let the entire world bear witness to Your mercy upon the ignorant and fallen conditioned souls."

While the lowborn *caṇḍālas* danced in ecstasy, chanting the Lord's name, the *brāhmaṇa* scholars like Bhaṭṭas, Miśras, Cakravartīs, and others could only criticize Lord Caitanya. These atheistic scholars vigilantly studied the scriptures and felt very proud, thinking that they had mastered them, which actually destroyed their proper intelligence and understanding of the *Vedas*. These people criticized Lord Nityānanda without understanding His transcendental pastimes, thus inviting their own doom.

I have described in this chapter how the entire universe received love of Godhead by the mercy of Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu. The esoteric discussions between Lord Caitanya, Lord Nityānanda, and Advaita Ācārya Prabhu are all known to Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning. She appears in the mouth of all the pure devotees of the Lord and sings the unlimited glories and pastimes of the Lord.

I offer my obeisances at the lotus feet of all the Vaiṣṇavas so that I may be cleansed of all sins and offenses. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana Dāsa humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter Seven

Meeting of Gadādhara Paṇḍita with Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi

Lord Caitanya, the ocean of all transcendental qualities by the arrangement of Providence, is the most gracefully dancer. He is like the *cintāmaṇi* gem which fulfills everyone's desire. The rare gem of devotional service unto His lotus feet has been given to me. All glories to Lord Gaurasundara, the life and soul of every living entity! All glories to Lord Gaurasundara, the most beloved object of Lord Nityānanda and Advaita Ācārya Prabhu! All glories to He who is the life of Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, Śrīgarbha, and Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi! May that Supreme Lord Gauracandra, who is the Lord and master of Jagadīśa and Gopīnātha, be glorified, along with all His dear devotees.

Lord Gauracandra continued to perform His ecstatic pastimes with Lord Nityānanda Prabhu in Navadvīpa. All the Vaiṣṇavas accompanied Śrīla Advaita Ācārya Prabhu who led them in a grand, ecstatic dancing and chanting of the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Nityānanda Prabhu remained in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house and constantly exhibited the mood of a young boy. When He sat down to eat He would not feed Himself, but acted like a young boy, thus Mālinī, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's wife, would have to feed Him.

Now hear the story of Vidyānidhi Prabhu's arrival in Navadvīpa. Puṇḍarīka was a very dear associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By the Lord's arrangement he appeared in the village of Caṭṭagrāma in East Bengal, and purified that land. The Lord Himself appeared in Navadvīpa, and when He could not find Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi there He sighed heavily, feeling separation from him.

One day after ecstatic dancing the Lord sat down and exclaimed, "O My father Puṇḍarīka," and began to cry. "O Puṇḍarīka, O My father, when will I be able to see you again?" Such was the extent of the Lord's affection for Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. In this way Lord Gauracandra revealed His intimate associates by performing such wonderful pastimes.

All the devotees surrounding the Lord were unable to comprehend the import of the name He continued to repeat and reason for the tears which flowed from His eyes. They conjectured that Puṇḍarīka naturally implied Kṛṣṇa, and Vidyānidhi could have many different explanations, but no one could understand that this person was a very confidential associate of the Lord. When the Lord finally came out of trance the devotees asked Him, "For which associate of Yours are You weeping my Lord? Please reveal to us who he is, when he was born, and what he does. Tell us, Lord, so that we may have the good fortune to know him."

The Lord replied, "You are certainly fortunate because you desire to hear about him. His activities and character are most wonderful. The whole world can be purified simply by hearing his name. His ecstatic appearance is almost like an ordinary man, therefore no one can recognize Him as a pure devotee of the Lord. This highly learned *brāhmaṇa* was born in Caṭṭagrāma, He strictly executed the prescribed religious principles and was respected by everyone, He always floats in the ocean of nectar of love of Kṛṣṇa, and his body constantly displays various ecstatic symptoms such as crying and jubilation. He never went for ablutions to the Ganges to cleanse himself of his sins like everyone else, nor did he enter her waters, he also avoided touching her with his feet. Rather he came to see and pay his respects to her everyday in the evening after the teeming crowds had all gone. He could not bear to see mother Ganges disrespected and utilized by people who spat into her, cleaned their mouth with her waters, and washed their hair and dirty clothes in her, thus he preferred to come to her in the evenings when there was no one around.

"Another wonderful characteristic of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi is that he always drank Ganges water before worshipping the Lord, then he performed all his daily prescribed religious duties. This was meant to give a lesson to all the puffed up scholars about the greatness of mother Ganges.

"He is presently in Caṭṭagrāma, but he is soon coming to Navadvīpa where he also has a house. None of you will be able to recognize him, as on first sight one would be inclined to think he was an ordinary materialistic person. I am very anxious to see him, so all of you must endeavor and pray to bring him here very quickly."

Talking about Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi threw the Lord into an ecstatic trance and He began to weep saying, "O My father, Puṇḍarīka." The Lord lamented loudly, for only He could understand the extent of the greatness of such a pure Vaiṣṇava, and through His mercy only can that wonderful and unique position of a pure devotee be revealed.

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself attracts a living entity there is no way that one cannot respond, thus Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi suddenly desired to go to Navadvīpa. He made arrangements and came to Navadvīpa with many disciples. In Navadvīpa he remained incognito and all the ordinary men considered him to be a lavish materialist, attached to a life of comfort and self enjoyment.

With the exception of Mukunda, no one amongst the Vaiṣṇava's knew about Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi's arrival in Navadvīpa. Śrī Mukunda was a Ayurvedic, *brāhmaṇa* doctor who was born in Caṭṭagrāma, thus he knew about the wonderful Vaiṣṇava qualities of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. When Mukunda found out that he was in Navadvīpa, he was so overwhelmed that it was difficult for him to control himself. Mukunda, however, did not reveal Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi's identity to anyone. Therefore in the eyes of the ordinary people Puṇḍarīka remained a materialistic sense enjoyer. Only Mukunda and his brother Vāsudeva Datta knew about the intensity of Puṇḍarīka's love for God.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Mukunda were very dear friends and always kept in each other's company. Mukunda thus told Gadādhara Paṇḍita, "Listen carefully Gadādhara, a very great devotee has come to Navadvīpa. You have been hankering for the association of pure Vaiṣṇavas and today your desire will be fulfilled. I will take you to see a wonderful Vaiṣṇava, in return for this I simply want you to think of me as your dear servant."

The excited and happy Gadādhara Paṇḍita called out the name of Kṛṣṇa as they proceeded towards the great Vaiṣṇava's

residence. Arriving there they found Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi sitting comfortably. Gadādhara offered his obeisances and was respectfully seated.

Vidyānidhi inquired from Mukunda, “What is his name and which village does he come from? I can see that his body is effulgent due to rendering devotional service to the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, both his form and demeanor are extremely wonderful.”

“His name is Śrī Gadādhara,” Mukunda replied, “and he is very fortunate because from early childhood he has been totally detached from family life. His external, material identity is that he is the son of the *brāhmaṇa* Śrī Madhva Miśra. Because he is totally absorbed in devotional service he only associates with Vaiṣṇava's, and he is extremely dear to all the devotees. When he heard about you he was anxious to meet you.”

After hearing the wonderful qualities of Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Vidyānidhi was very pleased to meet him. That great personality, Śrī Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, sat like a prince. His beautiful bed was made of wood, covered with intricate brass and a reddish stone inlay work. Above were three tiers of ornamental overhangings, made of glittering brocade strips. He was seated on a soft mattress covered with clean expensive sheets and silk pillows were placed under his back. On either side of him many small and large water pots sat within his reach, as well as a nice shining brass plate with betel pan neatly prepared on it. Two large ornate mirrors hung on either side of him which he continually glanced into while smiling with lips reddened from chewing pan. He wore a sandalwood paste tilaka mark on his forehead and his face was decorated with dots made from a mixture of sandalwood and perfume. As for his hair, it was well groomed and shining with delicately perfumed hair oil. Two persons stood behind him fanning him gently with long peacock feathers and in front of him was a nicely prepared hammock. Because he followed a life of pure devotional service, he looked as charming as Cupid himself. Those who did not know him would consider him to be a prince as everything about him and around him gave the impression that he was a man of easy and comfortable life given to pleasure.

When Gadādhara Paṇḍita saw these luxurious items and a general atmosphere of materialistic life he became suspicious. Since Gadādhara was a fully renounced soul from his early childhood, naturally some doubts regarding the character of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi entered his heart. He thought, “What sort of a Vaiṣṇava is he, surrounded by so much finery and lavish living? Hearing about his devotional mood I developed great respect for this person, but now on seeing him it is slowly giving way to doubt and suspicion.”

Mukunda understood the mind and heart of Gadādhara Paṇḍita, thus he took upon himself to reveal the true nature of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. By the special mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Gadādhara Paṇḍita was allowed to perceive everything, nothing remained unknown to him.

In a very sweet voice Mukunda began to sing a verse from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* describing the glories of devotional service:

the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.2.23)

aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ

jighāṁsayāpāyad apy asādhvī

lebhe gatim dhātry-ucitāṁ tato 'nyam

kaṁ vā dayālum śaraṇaṁ vrajema

"Alas how shall I take shelter of one more merciful than He who granted the position of a mother to the she-demon Pūtānā, although she was unfaithful and she prepared deadly poison to be sucked from her breast?"

the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.6.35)

pūtānā loka-bāla-ghnī / rākṣasī rudhirāśanā

jighāṁsayāpi haraye / stanam dattvāpa sad-gatim

“Pūtānā was always hankering for the blood of human children, and with that desire she came to kill Kṛṣṇa, but because she offered her breast to the Lord, she attained the greatest achievement.”

As soon as these words concerning devotional service entered his ears, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi began to weep, tears of ecstatic love welled up in his eyes, rolling down his face profusely like streams of the Ganges. Simultaneously all the symptoms of ecstasy manifested on his person. He wept, trembled, rolled, horripilated, roared, and finally fell into an unconscious state of ecstasy. Then suddenly regaining consciousness he said in a loud voice, “Speak, speak,” and again fell down to the ground.

Agitated with spiritual emotions he kicked everything that was near him and all the luxurious paraphernalia went crashing to the ground. The shining brass pots of water, the container of betel pan, pillows, bed sheets, everything became a confused mass. He began tearing his fine clothes, and his well groomed hair went haywire as he wept and rolled in the dust. He cried out, “O Kṛṣṇa, My Lord, My soul, My very life, You have made me hard hearted like a stone.” He lamented loudly, piteously crying out, “I have been deprived of the Lord's association in His most merciful incarnation.” He rolled around and crashed down to the ground. Everyone was afraid he might break his bones. He trembled so violently that three persons could not hold him down. He kicked everything that was in his way, as his disciples stood by helplessly, unable to control him. In this way the storm of ecstatic love continued until it finally abated and he fell into an unconscious state of bliss. He lay down without breathing, totally submerged in an ocean of spiritual ecstasy.

Amazed at what he witnessed Gadādhara Paṇḍita began to worry thinking, “What inauspiciousness has overcome me to make me think in such an offensive manner about this great personality.”

He embraced Mukunda, being extremely pleased with him. Drenching him with tears of love he said, “Mukunda you have acted like a true friend, you have shown me a pure and unalloyed devotee of the Lord. It would be difficult to find another pure Vaiṣṇava like him anywhere in this entire creation. One can become totally purified simply by observing his devotional attitude.

“Today, because you are right next to me I have been able to avoid a great catastrophe. When I saw all the luxurious paraphernalia surrounding Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi I was convinced that he was a materialistic Vaiṣṇava given to the pleasures of life. You could read my mind and being a great magnanimous soul you revealed to me the unlimited extent of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi's love of for God, yet today I have been offensive and the extent of my offense can only be mitigated by your mercy. You must be merciful to me and purify my heart.

“All these devotees who have taken to the process of surrender through devotional service to the Lord have all accepted the shelter of a guide under whose instructions they act. Yet I do not have such an instructor, so I have decided to take shelter of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi and follow devotional service under his guidance. I know that I can counteract all my offenses to him by becoming his disciple.”

Thus Gadādhara Paṇḍita revealed to Mukunda his desire to become a disciple of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. Mukunda was extremely pleased with the decision and patted him on the back saying, “Very good, very good.”

Śrī Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi was in a state of ecstatic coma for six hours, gradually he returned to his normal state and sat down quietly. It was impossible for Gadādhara Paṇḍita to control the tears of joy which rolled profusely down his face, wetting his entire body. When Śrī Vidyānidhi saw this he embraced Gadādhara Paṇḍita, holding him to his heart. Overwhelmed by Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi's ecstatic devotion, Gadādhara was unable to sleep.(?)

Mukunda spoke up, revealing Gadādhara Paṇḍita's mind, “Doubt arose in Gadādhara's mind when he first saw your extravagant appearance and surroundings, but now he is repentant and wants to accept initiation from you. He is a renounced devotee of the Lord. Although he is young, he is mature in spiritual realization, and comes from the very good family of Madhva Miśra. From early childhood he has always been very attached to the Supreme Lord. I think it is a very good match—a very elevated spiritual master like Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi having an equally able disciple like Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Please consider these points and choose an auspicious day to initiate him with your *dikṣa-mantra*.”

Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi smiled and said, “Be assured that I will do as you say, for by the Lord's mercy I have had the great fortune to meet a person who is like a precious gem. The result of many lifetimes of pious activities is that one may find a disciple such as him. The forthcoming twelfth day of the waxing moon is very auspicious, come here to meet me and your plan will become successful.” Overjoyed, Gadādhara Paṇḍita offered his obeisances and took leave of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi.

Mukunda and Gadādhara went straight to meet Lord Gauracandra, who happily received the news of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi's arrival.

During the night, without being seen by anyone, Puṇḍarīka left all his associates behind and came to the place of Lord Gauracandra. As soon as he saw the Lord he fell down like a rod, offering his obeisances to the Lord. Overwhelmed with ecstatic trance he lay on the ground experiencing waves of joy. Shortly afterwards he regained external consciousness and roared loudly, then despising(?) himself he began to weep saying, “O my dear Kṛṣṇa, You are my Lord and father. I am a great offender, please punish this wretch. O Lord You have liberated everyone in the world, only I have been deprived of such good fortune.”

Hearing his lamentation all the assembled Vaiṣṇavas, who knew Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi to be a great and elevated Vaiṣṇava, felt pained and began to cry.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Caitanya, is especially inclined to His pure devotees, therefore upon seeing His beloved devotee, He got up and embraced him. Crying the Lord said, “O My father Puṇḍarīka, finally I am able to see you today.” The Vaiṣṇavas were overjoyed to have the association of such an elevated devotee as Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi and their eyes filled with tears. So wonderful was this scene that no pen could possibly describe it.

Lord Gaurasundara held Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi in a loving embrace, wetting him with His tears. Understanding how dear Puṇḍarīka was to the Lord, the devotees immediately felt affection, respect and a sense of closeness with him. The Lord continued to hold Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi closely as if He wanted to merge His body into his. For sometime the Lord was unable to move. Remaining like a statue He held Vidyānidhi in His close embrace. When the Lord came out of trance He began to chant the name of Hari, and said, “Today Lord Kṛṣṇa has been very merciful to me, He has fulfilled all My desires. I have met a person of My heart's desire.”

Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi greeted all the Vaiṣṇavas fondly and they began to chant the holy name together. The Lord then introduced Puṇḍarīka saying, “His name is Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, the Lord has specially created him to distribute love of Godhead.”

Hearing this, the devotees happily responded by lifting their arms and chanting "Hari, Hari." The Lord said, “Today is a special day, a wonderful thing has happened, I woke up from sleep and My eyes beheld the ocean of love of Godhead directly in person.”

All this went on while Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi was absorbed within himself in an ecstatic trance, totally unaware of his immediate external surroundings. Suddenly he became aware of the devotees around him and he immediately offered obeisances to the Lord, properly recognizing Him for the first time since their meeting. Then he offered his obeisances to Advaita Ācārya Prabhu and exchanged obeisances with all the other Vaiṣṇavas. It was a glorious scene, as all the devotees floated on waves of ecstasy, thrilled to have met Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi who himself is an ocean of love of Godhead. Only an extremely pious and fortunate person is able to describe this marvelous scene.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita took Lord Viśvambhara's permission to accept initiation from Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. Gadādhara said, “I could not understand the uncommon behavior of this great personality and so I became disrespectful. Therefore in order to cleanse myself of this sin I want to become his disciple, for certainly as my spiritual master he will exonerate me.”

Appreciating Gadādhara Paṇḍita's mood, the Lord said, “Yes, perform it quickly.” Thus Gadādhara Paṇḍita formerly accepted initiation from Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, the ocean of ecstatic loving devotion.

What ability do I have to speak about the wonderful qualities of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, for he was such an elevated Vaiṣṇava that even Gadādhara Paṇḍita was his disciple. I have just narrated in short this wonderful pastime of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, as I was hankering for this opportunity with the hope that I will be able to have his initiation.(?) Both the spiritual master and the disciple are competent and are dearly beloved of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.(?) Whoever hears of this meeting between Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi will gradually experience the highest ecstasies of love of Godhead. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana Dāsa offer my humble song at their lotus feet.

Chapter Eight

Description of Śrī Caitanya's Display of Opulences

All glories to the beloved Lord Gaurasundara, who is most dear to everyone, especially Lord Nityānanda and Advaita Ācārya Prabhu! He is the life and soul of Śrī Jagannātha Paṇḍita and Śrī Gadādhara, and the most precious treasure of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. All glories to Lord Caitanya for He is the Lord and master of Jagadīśa and Gopīnātha! All glories to the associates of Lord Caitanya!

Lord Caitanya continued to perform wonderful pastimes in Navadvīpa along with Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Assisting in Their pastimes Advaita Ācārya Prabhu, as well as all the other Vaiṣṇavas, performed grand *kīrtana*, dancing ecstatically while constantly chanting of the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

While Nityānanda Prabhu remained in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house He manifested the mood of a young boy. He would not even eat by Himself and had to be fed by mother Mālinī, who felt like a mother to Him.

One day Lord Caitanya began to discuss topics regarding Kṛṣṇa consciousness with Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. Wanting to test Śrīvāsa He asked, “Why do keep and maintain this Avadhūta in your house? You don't even know anything about Him, who He is, where He comes from or what is His family background is. I warn you that you are being too lenient and kind to Him. If you want to maintain the good reputation of your family in society then you should immediately turn this Avadhūta out of Your house.”

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita smiled and said, “O Lord, it is not proper for You to test me in this way. I know that Lord Nityānanda is Your expansion. You are the Supreme Lord and there is no difference between Yourself and Lord Nityānanda. I am Your servant and anyone who serves You becomes my master. Even if Lord Nityānanda were a meat-eating drunkard and due to my association with Him I lost my reputation, wealth and everything, still, I tell You truly that I would never think of anything else other than serving His and Your lotus feet.

Hearing Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita speaking in this manner the Lord stood up and roared loudly with great joy, “What have I just heard from you Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita? You have so much faith and love for Nityānanda Prabhu? You have understood the truth about My dearmost confidential associate. This has pleased Me so much that I grant you this boon: Even if there comes a time when Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune, is forced to wander about with a begging bowl, still your house will never know the chills of penury. Everyone in Your house, including your pet dogs and cats, will find complete shelter in My devotional service. Therefore I leave Lord Nityānanda Prabhu in your care so that you may look after Him and serve Him

properly.” Saying this, the Lord returned home.

Lord Nityānanda spent His time roaming about Navadvīpa. Sometimes He went to the Ganges to take a swim and happily allowed the currents to carry Him away. At other times He played with the young boys acting like a little child Himself. He would visit the houses of Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita and Murāri Gupta, and then run to Lord Caitanya's house where mother Śacī showered Him with affection. Absorbed in the mood of a young boy Lord Nityānanda would try to catch mother Śacī's feet and she always tried to escape from Him.

One night mother Śacī had a dream which she later related to Lord Viśvambhara in confidence. "Late in the night I dreamed I saw You and Nityānanda. You were two five year old boys, running about playing and fighting. I saw both of You enter the Deity room and then come out with the deity of Lord Balarāma in Your hand, and the deity of Kṛṣṇa in Nityānanda's hand. The four of You then began to fight with each other.

Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa were angry and said to You, 'Hey, You cheaters, You impostors, get out of here. This house and this room belongs to Us, and everything else here like the sweets, curds and milk are all Ours.'

Nityānanda replied, 'Those days of stealing butter and curd for You to eat are now gone. You are no longer cowherd boys. Now You have become young *brāhmaṇas* so give up Your possessiveness about all these sweets, yogurt and milk now. If You do not listen to Our sweet persuasion then We will convince you with a beating. Who is going to tolerate Your plundering and mischief.'

Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, 'We will catch hold of both of You imposters and tie You up and leave you here. If by chance You go against the wishes of Kṛṣṇa, no one will blame Us for this.'(?)

Lord Nityānanda Prabhu then replied, 'Who is afraid of Your Kṛṣṇa? My Lord and Master is Lord Viśvambhara.'

The four of them fought with each other in this way, snatching the sweets and food from each others hands and mouths and eating it. Nityānanda called out to me saying, 'Mother, bring My food I am very hungry'. Thereafter I woke up, but I cannot understand anything of this dream, therefore I am telling You."

Hearing the description of mother Śacī's dream Lord Viśvambhara smiled and spoke to her tenderly. "That was a nice dream you had mother, but do not tell this to everyone. Our Deities are actually living and are very potent. Your dream has increased and strengthened My devotion and faith in Them. It is interesting that you dreamt about this, as I have been observing something strange which I did not reveal before because I was feeling ashamed. I noticed that the foodstuff which your daughter-in-law cooked and offered to Their Lordships, Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa, would remain half eaten after the offering was over. I was suspicious of my wife, but now everything has become clear.

Viṣṇupriyā, Śrī Lakṣmīdevī, the mother of the universe, heard the details of mother Śacī's dream from the inner quarters and smiled at her husband's words.

Lord Viśvambhara said, "Mother let me go and bring Nityānanda here right away and you can feed him." Happy to hear this, Śacīmātā quickly began to prepare for cooking.

Lord Viśvambhara went to Nityānanda Prabhu and extended an invitation to Him, along with a warning; "Today, we are making a special offering to the Deities so please do not misbehave."

Nityānanda Prabhu caught hold of His ears and cried, "Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu, only mad people misbehave. You think that I will misbehave because You think everyone is like Yourself." Joking in this way they proceeded towards Viśvambhara's house, absorbed in talks of Kṛṣṇa.

Entering the house They were given water to wash Their feet and then sat down to eat next to each other, surrounded by Gadādhara Paṇḍita and other friends. Sitting together in this way Nityānanda and Viśvambhara looked exactly like Lord Rāmacandra and Lakṣmaṇa sitting in Their mother's house. The mood was the same and Their affection for each other was the same, as They were the same persons.

Mother Śacī was very happy and excitedly hurried to serve out three full plates of *prasāda* for the two of Them. When she returned she found two young boys of five in the place where Viśvambhara and Nityānanda had been sitting. One of the boys had a blackish complexion and the other was very fair. Both of Them were exquisitely beautiful and without any clothing. One of Them had four arms which held the conch shell, disc, mace and lotus. His breast was marked with the Śrīvatsa, the glistening kosa(kaustubha?) jewel hung from His neck, and beautiful fish-shaped earrings dangled from His ears. The other boy held the plough and the pestle. She also saw her daughter-in-law, Viṣṇupriyā, situated on the breast of one of the young children. No sooner had she seen this wonderful sight then it vanished.

Mother Śacī stood still stunned with ecstasy and tears rolled down her face drenching her clothes. All the foodstuff scattered as mother Śacī fell to the ground and lay unconscious.

Lord Viśvambhara rushed to wash His hands and mouth then quickly ran to rescue His mother. Lifting her up He said, “Mother! Mother! Please get up! Calm down. Get control of yourself. Why did you suddenly fall to the ground?”

Mother Śacī slowly regained consciousness and quickly tied her loosened hair. Without uttering a word she went inside her room and began weeping. She was overwhelmed with ecstatic love for God and nothing else mattered to her. Her breath came in great sighs and her body trembled from head to toe.

Meanwhile the servant, Īśāna, cleaned the eating room. He collected the remnants of food that had scattered on the floor and ate it all. Īśāna is truly extremely fortunate, for everyday he performed such wonderful activities yet he remained like a servant, thus no one knew that he was actually perceiving the highest transcendental truth.

Lord Gauracandra, along with His devotees, continued to perform congregational chanting of the holy name in Navadvīpa. Although the Lord's eternal associates had appeared in different parts of Bengal, gradually they began to come to Navadvīpa. There they soon found out that the Supreme Lord had appeared. Allaying the fears of the devotees and filling their hearts with bliss, Lord Viśvambhara manifested Himself before them as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The Lord's devotees are as dear to Him as His own heart, thus that Supreme Personality who is intensely sought after through the Vedic literature, mixed freely with His devotees, embracing all of them so lovingly that each one of them felt as if he were the most prominent of the Lord's associates.

The Lord regularly visited His disciples in their homes, where he would exhibit to them His four-handed form. Sometimes He went to Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita's house or to Murāri Gupta's house, and at other times He visited Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's. But all the while the Lord's constant companion was Nityānanda Prabhu, whom He could not bear to be separated from. Lord Nityānanda was always engrossed in the playful mood of a young boy, and Viśvambhara wholeheartedly reciprocated with Him in the same spirit.

According to their particular faith, various devotees saw Lord Caitanya appear before them in different incarnations: Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Vāmana, Nṛsiṃha, etc.

Some days the Lord was absorbed in the mood of the *gopī*'s and wept continuously, oblivious to the passage of time. Other days He felt like Uddhava, or Akrūra, while at other times He felt like Lord Balarāma and demanded that wine be brought to Him. Sometimes He was filled with the emotions of Lord Brahmā and began chanting hymns, falling on the ground. Another time, feeling like Prahlāda Mahārāja, He offered prayers to the Supreme Lord. In this way Lord Caitanya floated on various waves of devotional ecstasy.

Observing the happiness of her son, mother Śacī was extremely happy, yet one dreadful thought continuously interrupted her cheerful mood: “What if my son leaves home?” Brushing such unpleasant thoughts aside she said, “Dear son, go and take Your bath in the Ganges.”

“Mother, please chant the holy name, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma.” In every conversation with His mother, the Lord simply replied with one word—Kṛṣṇa.

These superexcellent transcendental pastimes of the Lord's are all inconceivable, they cannot be understood by any amount of material calculation.

One day a wandering devotee of Lord Śiva passed by singing the glories of his Lord, while dancing blissfully round and round. Hearing the singing of the Śaivite, Śrī Caitanya suddenly appeared in the form of Lord Śiva, with great matted locks of hair piled on His head. Jumping up on the singer's shoulders He shouted loudly, “I am Śaṅkara, I am Śaṅkara.” The people watched in amazement as the Lord sat perched on the devotee's shoulder. Playing on a horn and a small hand tabor, the Lord encouraged the Śaivite to continue singing.

That day that fortunate devotee received the full benefit of purely glorifying his Lord Śiva, purely without offenses. Supreme Lord Gaurasundara sat on his shoulders. The Lord regained His composure and, after climbing down, He personally offered alms to the singer. The singer devotee left feeling extremely grateful and satisfied. The devotee servants of Lord Gaurāṅga, shouted Lord Hari's name in illusion feeling a surge of devotional ecstasy in the Lord's company.

The Lord said, “You My brothers, please hear the essential teachings of all scriptures. Why should we waste our mights in useless activities. Let us make a firm resolution from today to spend the nights engaged in the most auspicious activity-- chanting the Lord's name. By performing congregational chanting of the holy name all of us will drown in divine deluge as if the flood of devotional ecstasy is gushing like Gaṅgādevī. Let the whole world be delivered by hearing the holy name; in that way you will become everyone's spiritual life giver and beloved treasure.”

The Lord's words breathed great joy to all the Vaiṣṇava hearts, Lord Caitanya had begun His *kīrtana* pastimes. Every night the Lord met the devotees in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house and performed *kīrtana*; some days He would also meet in

Candraśekhara's house. These *kīrtana* meetings would be attended by so many devotees, the Lord's dear servants, that all their names cannot possibly be remembered. Lord Nityānanda was there with Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Advaita Ācārya, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi, Murāri, Hirāṇya, Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita, Vanamālī Paṇḍita, Vijaya Dāsa, Nandana Ācārya, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, Buddhimanta Khān, Nārāyaṇa, Kāśīśvara, Vāsudeva, Rāma, Garuḍa Paṇḍita, Govinda Datta, Govindānanda, Gopīnātha, Jagadīśa, Śrīmān Sena, Śrīdhara, Sadāśiva, Vakreśvara, Śrīgarbha, Śuklāmbara, Brahmānanda, Puruṣottama, Sañjaya and others. The Lord was always surrounded only by such devotees who accompanied Him in *kīrtana* and dancing. The Lord's ecstatic thunderous roars and loud *kīrtana* rented the very limits of the material world.

These *kīrtana* agitated the envious atheists. They clapped their thighs and jumped up pouring out streams of profanity, "All this loud howling and wild dancing after a good wine bout as soon as it gets to be night time, is robbing us of our entire night's precious sleep. These impostors entice women to them with their hypnotic enchantments and enjoy them the whole night. These atheists are consumed in their own fire of hate, and the Lord, Śacīnandana, dances in graceful ebullience.

As soon as the *kīrtana* begins the Lord comes in trance, becomes oblivious of the phenomenal world. Dancing He falls to the ground with such force that the earth quakes and cracks in places. The devotees look at Him mummified in fear. As the Lord's tender body contacts the hard surface, Śacīmātā closes her eyes silently praying to Lord Govinda, Kṛṣṇa for is protection. Śacīmātā knows that Nimāi is in spiritual trance, yet due to her intense love for the Lord she experienced great agony. She did not know what action to take so she earnestly prayed to the Lord. "O Lord Kṛṣṇa, please grant me this wish, that I may not know when Nimāi hurls Himself to the ground, please grant me this mercy Kṛṣṇa. Although for Nimāi there is no pain but actual blissfulness, I will be happy to remain unaware of all this." Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Lord knew Śacīmātā's wishes, so accordingly He infused in her divine ecstasy. As long as Lord Caitanya performed *kīrtana* and dancing mother Śacī entered a state of spiritual exhilaration and became heedless of this material world.

All the time now the Lord spent in *kīrtana* and ecstatic dancing surrounded by His followers. Some days the devotees would collect in the Lord's house and begin loud *saṅkīrtana* while the Lord immersed Himself in dancing. At times the Lord exhibited His mood as the omnipotent Supreme Controller, then at other times He wept in humility saying, "I am Your servant." Dear reader's hear these narrations about the Lord's transcendental ecstasies very attentively for there is no one who can dance so gracefully as Lord Caitanya in the entire creation. And likewise the beautiful and exuberant singing of His associates that accompany His dancing is also incomparable.

On the Lord's day—Ekādaśī, Dvādaśī, or Viṣṇu-tattva appearances—Lord Caitanya assembled all the devotees in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house from early dawn and began mesmerizing everyone with jubilant dancing. In the house of that most fortunate soul, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita a melodious tumult of the holy names of Govinda and Gopāla went up in the atmosphere. Different *kīrtana* groups emerged from out of the assembled devotees. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita headed one group, Mukunda another and Govinda yet another. They all sang and the Lord danced. Nityānanda Prabhu, that great spiritual stalwart circumambulated the dancing Lord while Advaita Ācārya Prabhu stealthily lifted the dust from the ground where the Lord danced and put in on his head. Gadādhara Paṇḍita and others experienced divine exhilaration and looked at the Lord with tearful eyes.

Hear some of the descriptions of how they performed *kīrtanas* to accompany the Lord's magnificent dancing. They sang often in "Bhatigari Raga." The directions resounded with the singing of the holy name, "Govinda", and Mahāprabhu accompanied it lost in His scintillating body movements. They sang, "Hari O Rāma, Hari O Rāma."

Lord Caitanya would begin to weep during *kīrtanas*, it continued minimum for an hour; His long tresses tossed about on the ground and He made no attempt to tie them. Only hearts of stone can remain unmoved by the sight; the devotees fell swooning to the ground trying to reach out to the Lord. And when He began laughing, He broke out in carefree effervescent mirth infecting everyone with ecstatic joy for hours. Lord Caitanya being surcharged with the mood of servitorship became unaware of His own divinity. Jubilantly He repeated, "I am victorious, I am victorious," and all the devotees chorused the same.

At intervals the Lord sang out so loudly it sounded as if the entire universe would split open. Sometimes He became heavier than our earth, impossible for anyone to hold Him; and again He lost so much weight, in a moment He was lighter than cotton wool and being carried around the house jubilantly by devotees on their shoulders. The Lord frequently went into ecstatic trances on the least of provocation putting the devotees in anxiety and they chanted, "Hari" loudly into His ears to awaken Him. Then sometimes His entire body shivered uncontrolled, His teeth chattering like a little boy out on a winter morning. Next moment He was drenched in cold sweat like mother Ganges was flowing out of His pores. His body would suddenly become burning hot, drying up all the cooling sandal paste applied to His person. He released gigantic sighs throwing asunder the devotees from His front and then He rushed at the devotees to catch their feet and all the Vaiṣṇavas tried to escape the Lord.

The Lord liked to sit and rest back against Lord Nityānanda lifting His lotus feet He looked smiling at the devotees. The devotees immediately comprehended the impact of this pastime and they ran to loot the priceless treasure of the dust of the Lord's lotus feet. Advaita Ācārya said, "O You thief, now we have crushed Your pride." Lord Caitanya blissfully rolled

on the ground and allowed the devotees to glorify Kṛṣṇa.

When Lord Caitanya danced vigorously the earth quaked and the devotees looked around in apprehension, but when He danced with graceful postures He looked like the divine Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja. He roared sometimes with the roar of ten million lions but He carefully protected the devotees' ears from drums. Often He would be seen by some moving on air little above the ground, yet not everyone could see. He stared at devotees with eyes turned bright red due to feelings of extreme ecstasy, they were shocked at first but fled away laughing. Viśvambhara became restless with ecstasy and danced, lost in Himself. He caught some one's feet and sometimes even clambered on His head. He would drape around someone's neck and weep and next moment climbed on to his shoulders. Again overcome by the youthful mood He became restless and made sounds of musical instruments with His mouth like a playful lad. He would shake His foot and laugh continuously and then get down and crawl on all fours feeling like a baby.

At times Viśvambhara entered into the mood of Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa, and stood for hours in the *tribhaṅga* position (the body bent in three places). He meditated for sometime and then played the flute melodiously, and He looked just like Kṛṣṇa, the moon of Vṛndāvana. When He came out of this mood He again felt like the Lord's servitor and wept, with utmost humility He begged everyone wanting to serve their feet.

The Lord sometimes bent His body like a wheel, His feet touching the head, and remained like this for long hours. He expressed all His ecstatic moods in wondrous ways, dancing exquisitely immersed in the bliss of chanting His own names. Now His body trembled as He frequently made roaring sounds and now became unquiet fell crashing to the ground. A dancing resplendent golden figure suddenly they see Him multi colored; they see double images of Him. Lord Caitanya exhibited such extraordinary displays of ecstatic emotion under the total influence of His mood of a Vaiṣṇava devotee. He often repeated unspeakable words, shouting before the Vaiṣṇava He respected as a "Prabhu" is now caught by his hair by the Lord and the Lord calls out, "This fellow is My servant." The Vaiṣṇava whose feet He tried to catch previously in humility, He now stands on His breath. The devotees all around were so captivated and moved by the Lord's ecstatic symptoms that they put their hands around each other's necks and cried.

The entire group of assembled Vaiṣṇavas look so radiant, their bodies decorated with sandalwood *tilaka* and *tulasi-mālā*; and blissfully tasted the nectar of chanting Lord Kṛṣṇa's name. The sounds of their voices, *mṛdaṅgas*, conch shells, and *kartalas* mingled to a melodious uproar. As this auspicious sound of the holy name spread and filled the azure vaults evil and misfortune disappeared in every direction. How extraordinary is that Supreme master that the entire universe becomes cleansed of sin simply by the dancing of His disciples. And the Master Kṛṣṇa Himself dances to the accompaniment of His own holy name, how can the Purāṇas ever explain this supernatural phenomena?

Surrounded by His devotees, Lord Caitanya danced and loudly chanting the auspicious name of Lord Hari. Lord Śiva becomes so spiritually surcharged with bliss at the sound of the Lord's name that once He begins to dance and taste the nectar, he loses track of his person and clothes. That very name of Lord transformed Vālmiki to an embodiment of knowledge and renunciation. The same holy name offered Ajāmila supreme liberation. hearing His name the shackles of material existence are broken, that self same Supreme Lord has now appeared in Kali-yuga and is dancing to His own name. Nārada Muni and Śukadeva Gosvāmī roam the universe singing His name and Ananta Śeṣa Prabhu with a thousand mouths glorifies His name. Whose name is the best means for atonement from my sin, that same Supreme Personality dances only to be seen by the most fortunate souls. I am so fallen and wretched that I was not born then to see this marvelous festival of *san kīrtana* and dance.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva's son, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, praised Kali-yuga in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* because he knew about the future advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. That same Lord now danced immersed within His joyful self and enchanting all with the rhythmic patting of His feet. The Vaijayanti garland around His neck swung wildly echoing the Lord's ecstatic dancing mood. He tore the garland and threw the shreds at His devotees' feet; He gave up His joy rides on Garuḍa's shoulder; He forgot His form which holds a conch shell, disc, mace, and lotus; and He gave up His bed of Ananta Śeṣa. In His pastimes as Gaurasundara He rolled on the dust and wept overcome with the ecstatic mood of servitorship to the Supreme Lord. Gone was His mood of Lord and master and gone were the pleasures of the Vaikuṇṭha planets. The ecstasy of being the Lord's servant overshadowed all other pleasures.

The Lord is the supreme subject of all pleasures, yet disregarding the pleasure of Lakṣmīdevī's company and exquisite face, He preferred to leave His hands and face in the ecstasy of the *kīrtana* and drown in an ocean of acute separation from His beloved Kṛṣṇa. The Supreme Lord who is diligently served by elevated personalities like Lord Śiva and Nārada Muni they have given up their wealth, position for this, that same Lord Gaurāṅga has neglected His Supreme Absolute Lordship and with utmost humility, taking straw in His mouth is begging and praying for devotional service. And if any wretched soul, in spite of the Lord's unprecedented novel example disregards devotional service to the Supreme Lord, he is unfortunate enough to throw away the nectar and drink poison. These are again those who read and propagate the teachings of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and establish themselves as Lord and master, without appreciating the extraordinary beauty of devotional service, all their activities are lowly and futile. They do not know the essential truth in the *Vedas* yet they deliver dissertations on the scriptures, to equally agnostic audience. They are truly like the mules carrying the burden some load of useless learning. The *Vedas* and *Bhāgavatam* have unequivocally elucidated the elevated position of devotional servitorship to the Supreme. Even Lakṣmīdevī, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and others carefully cultivate this priceless

process.

Those who do not have complete faith in Lord Caitanya's words are most unfortunate and are forever disassociated from His mercy.

It was so divinely enchanting to see Lord Gaurasundara dance surrounded by all His associates singing sweet melodious *kīrtanas*. Advaita Ācārya unable to control His ecstasy often went into a trance and covered His entire body with straw, and holding one in His mouth in humility with some on His head He danced vigorously, His eyebrows drawn close together. The assembled devotees were astounded by Advaita Ācārya's ecstatic symptoms, while Nityānanda Prabhu and Gadādhara Paṇḍita were shaking with laughter. Lord Gaurasundara the dear life of every soul, continued His sublime dance, frequently overcome by endless ecstatic emotions.

Lord Gaurasundara exhibited such extraordinary symptoms of ecstasy that are not even mentioned in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, nor has anyone heard about them from anywhere else. Sometimes His body became stiff like a statue, and no one could possibly move or bend Him. Then again His body became soft as cream, as if He had no bones in the body. Other times He looked at least twice His normal size and again sometimes He looked thinner and smaller than usual. Sometimes He moved drowsily about like a drunkard, suddenly breaking out into a joyous boisterous laughter shaking His entire frame.

Seeing the assembled Vaiṣṇavas surrounding Him, Lord Gaurasundara enraptured in spiritual emotions started calling each with their previous names. He looked around and shouted out to the individual names like, "Haladhara, Śiva, Śuka, Nārada, Prahlāda, Ramā (Lakṣmī), Aja (Brahmā), Uddhava. In this way the Lord skillfully revealed different devotees previous identities in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. All the devotees marvelled, filling their eyes with the enchanting dance of Lord Gaurasundara in the mood of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The crowd at Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's residence drawn by the delightful *kīrtana* was overflowing and over anxious to see Śrī Gaurasundara. Those who arrived early were in the house and could see everything, others remained outside. The Lord instructed that the doors should be closed. The people of Nadia were impatient, creating a loud commotion to get inside. They cried out, "We want to see the *kīrtana*! Open the doors immediately." The Vaiṣṇavas inside were unaware of any happenings, their complete attention captivated by the *kīrtana*.

Amongst those who were not allowed inside were some atheistic and envious persons making various comments. They said, "They are a bunch of beggars, afraid and feeling ashamed they might be recognized by others, so they closed the doors." "You are right, it is only due to the pangs of hunger that they scream nonstop for hours." "Actually they closed the doors because they do not want us to catch them drinking wine all night," "Nimāi Paṇḍita was good and normal, we do not know why God changed His mentality." "I think this is a consequence of His past life." "In fact, this is happening because of bad association, ever since Nimāi lost His father He has no one to discipline Him, Nimāi has since long given up His studies, grammar is such a subject if you lose touch of it for even a month you forget it, His mind is now idle, we know all their excuses. We know the real reason for their closed door activities. In the night they chant mystical incantations casting spells on women and bring them here. Together they eat and drink all sorts of things and decorate themselves with fragrant flowers and perfumes and engage in various illicit recreation, so they lock their doors to avoid public censure. Tomorrow I shall definitely have them arrested and taken away bound up like common criminals. All this howling and shouting, 'Hari, Hari' was never heard in these parts, now this *kīrtana* has stolen the sleep and peace of common people. All material prosperity is now forever gone and instead we will have famine. The rains will stop due to their reprobate activities and no grains will grow and we will all starve. But let us wait outside a few days, because this madness cannot go on for too long, we shall see that Śrīvāsa or Advaita or that Avadhūta Nityānanda does." In this manner the godless persons raved and threatened, but the Vaiṣṇavas were immersed in joyous ocean of *kīrtana* and they did not pay attention to their words.

Outside the tirade continued, "It is not a *brāhmaṇas* duty to sing and dance, that is for the low class man. Sad that a educated *brāhmaṇa* should set such a bad example." Just looking at them even a upright *brāhmaṇa* loses all his good qualities. No one should as much as see their dancing and *kīrtana* even out of curiosity. Look what happened to Nimāi, He was intelligent, now He is mad, dancing and singing with them and they are steadily increasing in number. What is their use of calling out to God, without any self realization. God resided within you, why reject the wealth in your own house and search for it elsewhere in the forest." Then someone quite unexpectedly said, "no use criticizing others, better to just go home and mind our own business." Another voice supported him saying, "We cannot get inside to see the *kīrtana* due to our own misfortune from our previous life. How can we criticize those who are fortunate to be inside, participating in the *kīrtana*? They are very pious."

"He must also belong to their group," the atheists cried out, and pressed aggressively towards him. "What is the great loss if we do not see their *kīrtana*? they are simply a few hundred, prancing around screaming as if in war. Without practicing chanting, penances or cultivating knowledge they follow a concocted method of discipline and meditation. They collect foodstuffs like rice, bananas, milk and curd and mixing everything they sit together and eat, this way they corrupt the caste system."

People came to see the *kīrtana* only to abuse, “Just look at how madly they are acting, they indulged in such comments and left, again a fresh group of people gathered to continue the vilification. When two agnostics met they engaged in ridiculing the Vaiṣṇavas and rolling in laughter. When they met anyone who had never seen the *kīrtana* they forced him to go to Śrīvāsa’s house, and only on repeated pleadings would they allow someone to get away.

Someone said, “What a wonder, in spite of seeing all this, the people crazily follow Nīmāi Paṇḍita. With all the hustle and bustle Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita’s house sounds like he is celebrating Durgā-pūjā. The only sound one hears is a great din, this certainly gives rise to all the ill rumors. Navadvīpa is crowded with thousands of erudite scholars, yet there charlatans have gained prominence here. We must free Navadvīpa from this Śrīvāsa, tomorrow I will demolish his house and float his belongings down the Ganges. It is for the better of this town to be rid of this so-called *brāhmaṇa*, otherwise when the brahminical culture wanes by his bad example the Muslims will take over.”

Such were the unending string of invectives against the Vaiṣṇavas, yet some atheists were somehow very fortunate. They were born in the same place as the Lord, and so they automatically saw and heard the Lord’s dancing, *kīrtana* and other pastimes.

The devotees of Lord Caitanya were deaf to all such criticism intoxicated by the sweet nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s name. Day and night they sang the different transcendental names of Kṛṣṇa, “Jaya Kṛṣṇa, Murāri, Mukunda, Vanamālī.” And day and night a tireless Lord Viśvambhara sang and danced with His associates whose transcendental bodies were naturally indefatigable.

Immersed in the ecstasy of name *kīrtana* with Lord Caitanya millenniums passed by but by human considerations they were but a few years for the devotees. Like in the Rāsa dance pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the young damsels, the Vrajagopīs spent millenniums with Kṛṣṇa dancing with Him, but to Him it seemed a mere flitting moment came to an end only too early. Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are all inconceivable and the associates of Lord Caitanya knowing this had similar experiences of time like the Vraja *gopīs*.

One night, an hour before dawn, Lord Caitanya suddenly stopped dancing and climbed up on the altar and lifting up on His lap the *śalagrāma-śilās* that were in Lord Viṣṇu’s seat He sat down in it. The seat crackled and protested loudly under His weight. Lord Nityānanda quickly rushed to hold up the altar seat, now with Lord Ananta Śeṣa supporting the seat, it did not crumble and Lord Gaurasundara sat comfortably in it and swayed gently. Lord ordered for the *kīrtana* to discontinue and as quietness settled He began to reveal the transcendental truth about Himself with a booming loud voice. “In Kali-yuga I have appeared as Kṛṣṇa, I am the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa and the fortunate son of Devakī, I am the Lord and master of the entire cosmic creation; it is I who glorified in all your songs for you are My servitors. I have appeared for the sake of all of you, I have accepted whatever foodstuffs you have offered they were gifts meant for Me.”

Śrīvāsa said, “O Lord, everything is Yours.” Lord Caitanya replied, “I will eat everything.” Advaita Ācārya said, “Lord, it is a great fortune for us.”

The devotees became busy bringing edibles for the Lord, and the Lord enjoyed it with relish. He ate milk, curd and fresh butter and kept repeating, “What else do you have, bring it.” They brought Him milk, sweets like *sandēśa* which He mixed with sugar; they brought rock candy with coconut milk and grains, bananas with flat rice and fried rice. He consumed large amounts and still said, “Bring more.” He ate in a matter of minutes more than what two hundred men could eat. Still the Lord said, “What else is there, bring it, bring it, Oh there is nothing here.” The devotees were alarmed because their supplies were exhausted, they became amazed at the Lord in this mood and began to remember the Lord Almighty in fear.

They prayed to the Lord with folded hands, “O Lord what do we know about Your mystic potencies? How can we satisfy You with our small gifts. Someone who can hold the entire creation in His stomach?” The Lord replied, “My devotee’s gifts are never small or insignificant to Me, quickly bring, bring what other things you have!”

They said, “Please listen dear Lord, the only thing left is some camphor rice,” the Lord replied, “Do not worry, bring Me that.”

The devotees became jubilant and forgot their fears, each one hurried to bring as much rice as they could and the Lord received it with open outstretched palms. The Lord then made large eyes and rolling them He began calling out loud, “Nāḍā, Nāḍā, Nāḍā.”

The dumb struck devotees sat around with terror in their hearts. They saw the Lord as a terrible master come to give out punishments, no one could approach Him. Lord Nityānanda stood behind Mahāprabhu holding an umbrella over Him, and Advaita Ācārya stood before the Lord with folded hands offering Him prayers. All the devotees hung their heads in consternation and remembered the shelter of Lord Caitanya’s feet.

Whosoever relishes these narrations of the Lord’s mystic opulence will certainly be able to see the beautiful face of the Lord. And in whatever stage of spiritual realization one is situated he will perceive to that extent only such esoteric

revelment anything more is impossible without the Lord's sanction.

Looking at Advaita's face the Lord said, "Ask for a boon. I have incarnated here only because of You." The Lord looked at all the devotees one by one and laughing said, "Ask for what You want." The Lord manifested His divine awesome potency in this way, sweeping away the devotees in waves of ecstasy.

The Lord's inconceivable pastimes are impossible to comprehend; in a matter of moments the Lord changes from an exacting Autocrat to a devotee swooning in devotional ecstasy. On regaining consciousness the Lord wept continuously manifesting the mood of servitorship. He sent around putting His arms around the Vaiṣṇavas neck and wept calling them, "Brother, friend." An ordinary person could never see such activities, only by the arrangement of the Lord's *māyā* potency the Lord's servitors were eligible to perceive the truth about the Lord's transcendental situation. The devotees were joyous and laughing at the Lord's wonderful character and they said, "The Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa, has advented."

He again fell down unconscious with overwhelming bliss, and lay on the ground as if dead. The devotees began to lament bitterly. They thought, "My beloved Lord has left me behind and left this world. Why is He so cruel to me? I will also leave my body immediately."

The all-knowing Lord, understanding the thoughts of His devotees, returned to external consciousness and started a loud *kīrtana*. The devotees were suddenly stirred up and in extreme exhilaration lost balance. In this way the devotees in Navadvīpa relished the ecstasy of wonderful loving pastimes with the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha.

Whoever hears these transcendental pastimes of the Lord, his mind will always dwell in the associations of devotees and in the Supreme Lord Gaurasundara Himself. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana dāsa humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter Nine

Descriptions of Śrīdhara's Benediction

Lord Śrī Gauracandra is the controller of the universe, and He accepted the garb of a *sannyāsī* not for His own sake but for everyone's benefit. All glories to the son of Jagannātha Mīśra and mother Śacī! All glories to Hissaṅkīrtana movement! All glories to Lord Caitanya, the very life of Lord Nityānanda and Gadādhara Paṇḍita! He is the most beloved by Advaita and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita and Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Vakreśvara Paṇḍita and Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, Vāsudeva and Śrīgarbha. O Lord! Be merciful and look upon every living entity graciously. May the Lord and all His associates be glorified, for hearing about the pastimes of Lord Caitanya one immediately attains the supreme goal of bhakti, love of God. Please listen intently to the narration in *Madhya-khaṇḍa* because they depict pastimes of Lord Caitanya. Now hear the descriptions of Lord Caitanya's *mahāprakāśa līlā* or great revelation, for this fulfills the desire of all Vaiṣṇavas.

The Lord manifested the glorious *sāta-prahariyā bhāva*, or twenty-one hour long devotional ecstasy. In this pastime He wonderfully revealed His different incarnations, extraordinary feat at feasting and freely giving away to the devotees pure love of Godhead. And all the Vaiṣṇavas honored the Lord in a grand bathing ceremony known *asrāja-rājeśvara*, which is meant only for the most powerful kings of the universe.

One day Lord Gaurasundara came to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house accompanied by Lord Nityānanda, who was beside Himself with joy. Gradually all the Vaiṣṇavas assembled there. Lord Gaurasundara, who was then fully engrossed within Himself, looked about Him—as a regal personality surveys His surroundings with intensely powerful glances. The devotees could perceive the Lord's mood, and immediately they started loud *kīrtana*.

On other days the Lord would dance in the ecstasy of a servant of the Supreme Lord, Sometimes He would momentarily reveal His opulences as the Supreme Lord, but then He would again revert back to the mood of a devotee. But today, to the good luck of the assembled devotees, the Lord stood up as if to dance as usual, and instead sat on the throne of Lord Viṣṇu. On previous occasions the Lord would sit on Lord Viṣṇu's throne immersed in devotional ecstasy, as if unaware of His own conduct. Today, however, He did not cover His real identity with the cloak of His internal energy, but sat on the throne continuously for twenty-one hours. The devotees stood in front of Him with folded hands and hearts effervescent with joy. Such wonderful satisfaction was manifest that the devotees felt like they were in Vaikuṇṭha. The Lord also sat amidst them like the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, and everyone present became totally free from the influence of the illusory material potency.

Lord Caitanya instructed, "Sing the *abhiṣeka* song." The devotees were very pleased and they began to sing. The Lord gently swayed His head sideways in time with the song and showered the devotees with His merciful glances. The devotees could now surmise the Lord's mood, and they desired to perform His *abhiṣeka*, or bathing ceremony.

The devotees brought water from the Ganges. First they strained the Ganges water. Then they added musk, sandal paste, saffron, and camphor into it proportionately, preparing everything with increasing love of the Lord. They began the ceremony with jubilant shouts and started chanting appropriate mantras.

Lord Nityānanda was the first to pour water on the Lord's head. He kept repeating "Jaya, Jaya!" as He did so with great pleasure. Other leading devotees like Advaita Ācārya and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita bathed the Lord, chanting the famous *Puruṣa-sūkta* prayers. The devotees of Lord Gaurāṅga are very well versed in the science of the scriptures and of chanting Vedic hymns, so they poured water accompanying it with appropriate mantras.

Mukunda and others sweetly sang the bathing ceremony song, and other devotees wept or danced with overwhelming happiness. The upright and chaste wives were emulating with joy. The entire assembly was immersed in an ocean of bliss. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Lord Gaurāṅga, remained seated and the devotees one by one poured water on His head bathing the Lord. Usually on such religious occasions one hundred eight pots of water are required, but today it far exceeded that number.

Even the demigods came there not wanting to miss the opportunity to make more spiritual progress, but were disguised so as not to be recognized.

Where even a drop of water offered to the Lord's lotus feet, that also in meditation, is sufficient to ward off punishment given out by the God of death, What to speak about the good fortune of the people who were able to bathe the Lord directly, who were present there in person.

All the servants and maidservants in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house were also engaged in bringing water for the Lord. The wonderful result that one enjoys from serving the Lord was amply proved by one incident. One of the maidservants, a pious woman named Duhkhi, or sad, was one of the water carriers. The Lord saw her actively engaged and told her, "Bring more, bring more." The Lord was so impressed with her devotional service attitude that He changed her name to Sukhi, or happy, indicating He had taken away her distress.

Having bathed the Lord accompanied with the chanting of the Vedic mantras, the devotees dried the Lord's body. They dressed Him in fresh new clothes and smeared His transcendental and exquisite body with fragrant sandalwood paste. They cleaned Lord Viṣṇu's throne and arranged everything properly, and the Lord sat on the throne which was truly His. Lord Nityānanda held the umbrella over the Lord's head, while one of the more fortunate devotees began to fan the Lord with the *cāmara*. The devotees collected the paraphernalia for offering worship to the Lord and began to worship His lotus feet.

Their offering tray was packed with *pādyā*, *arghya*, *ācamana*, incense, fragrant oil, lamp, new clothes, *brāhmaṇas* thread etc. As customary they worshiped Him with sixteen ingredients. Applying sandalwood paste *ontulasī manjaris*, they offered it at His lotus feet. The ten syllable *gopāla-mantra* was chanted while they offered worship, following strictly the rules of this particular worship. All the devotees were offering their prayers to Him.

All the stalwart associates of the Lord, like Advaita Ācārya Prabhu fell before the Lord's feet like rods and offered full obeisances to Him. All the devotees were experiencing spiritual love for the Supreme Lord and tears cascading down their cheeks mingled and flowed like a river. They constantly chanted verses eulogizing the Lord, and the Lord heard everything with great satisfaction.

They prayed "All glories to the Lord of the universe. Kindly direct Your merciful glance on this world now ablaze with the threefold suffering. All glories to the original cause of everything, the maintainer of everyone, You have advented to inaugurate the congregational chanting to the holy name. You establish the Sanātana Dharma of the *Vedas* and You are the protector of the pious, the original soul of all the fourteen worlds. All glories to Lord Caitanya for He is the redeemer of the most fallen souls, an ocean of transcendental qualities, the supreme shelter of the meek and poor. All glories to Lord Caitanya who is Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa and who expands to Lord Viṣṇu and lies on the ocean of milk like Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, He appears as an incarnation for the pleasure of His devotees. All glories to Lord Gaurāṅga who is the Original and Absolute inconceivable, imperceivable. He is always transcendently situated, the compassionate Supreme Person. All glories to Lord Caitanya. He was born in a family of *brāhmaṇas* as the crest jewel of this class as well as to liberate the entire *brāhmaṇa* population; He is the origin of the Vedic religion the life and soul of every living entity. All glories to Lord Caitanya who saved Arjuna from an inglorious death and He gave liberation to the demoness Pūtānā. All glories to Lord Caitanya who never sees the faults of living entities, He is the husband of the goddess of fortune."

With such chosen words the devotees praised the Lord.

The Lord's servitors were drowning in an ocean of bliss seeing Lord Caitanya manifest this extraordinary mood. The Lord mercifully removed the veil of *māyā* from everyone's heart and offered His lotus feet to be worshiped by His devoted servitors. Some devotees brought sweetly perfumed oil and smeared it on the Lord's lotus feet, other's worshiped Him with an offering of tender *tulasī* leaves. Again more came offering precious gems, gold and silver ornaments and paid obeisances at His feet. Many valuable gifts were offered to the Lord, white, blue and bright yellow silken clothes, a variety of precious metal containers were placed in offering at the lotus feet of the Lord, the gifts were countless.

All the household servants in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house by dint of serving a pure Vaiṣṇava now could directly serve Lord Gauracandra's lotus feet, Whose lotus feet are desired by all, even Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Lakṣmīdevī aspire for that mere opportunity.

They offered many items of worship to the Lord without fear or hesitation, the Lord having removed His reverential mood. They brought unhusked rice, *tulasī*, *durvā* grass, musk, saffron, camphor, fragrant flowers, sandalwood, and varieties of fruits and placed them at His lotus feet. Each one worshiped according to his heart's inclination following different rules of worship.

Then Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, exhibited another of His extra ordinary pastimes. He said to the devotees, "Get Me something I want to eat" and held out His hand. Whatever the devotees offered, He ate.

The different Vaiṣṇavas brought a variety of foodstuff to eat, banana, mung dahl, yoghurt, sweet condensed milk, butter, milk. They gave it in the Lord's hands and He undisturbed ate everything. Some of the devotees hurried to the market and rushed back with the choicest articles. They offered the Lord coconuts, a variety of milk sweets, in huge quantities, black berries, green melons, sugar cane. Some even brought water from the Ganges; The Lord ate everything. Seeing the Lord was happily eating everything they offered, they generous helpings of more delicacies many times over. Hundreds of devotees gave gallons of Ganges water and the Lord, who is the greatest of the mystics, drank it all.

Hundreds of barrels of yoghurt, sweet condensed milk, milk, hundreds of bunches of bananas; huge amounts of mung dahl; mountains of milk sweet preparations, camphor, betel, fruits and nuts were instantly consumed by the Lord in front of the amazed and gaping devotees.

The Lord contentedly ate everything offered to Him, and in turn He revealed all the details of the devotees past life. When the devotees heard their individual stories they remembered their earlier days and fell to the ground in ecstasy.

The Lord addressed Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, "Do you remember, when you used to hear lectures on the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* at Devānanda Paṇḍita's house? Every line of the *Bhāgavatam* is saturated with the nectar of divine love of Godhead, and so your heart melted on hearing those recitations of *Bhāgavatam*. You cried loudly and fell unconscious to the ground. The neophyte and ignorant students there, not knowledgeable in the matters of devotional service could not understand the reason for your extraordinary behavior. You were engrossed within yourself in the ecstasy of love of Kṛṣṇa oblivious of the external world and so did not know as they had carried you outside to the street. Devānanda Paṇḍita, their teacher, witnessed the entire happening without dissuading his students. Since he himself was inexperienced in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it is expected that his students will also be like him. On waking and finding yourself outside on the street you picked yourself up and returned home feeling sad. Your sadness persisted and so you preferred to be alone; you desired to read the *Bhāgavatam* again. Seeing your sorrowful state I descended from Vaikuṇṭha into your heart and made you weep with the ecstatic emotions of your love for Me. You experienced happiness again reading the *Bhāgavatam* and you submerged the place you were sitting with your tears."

When Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita heard this he was overcome with emotions and he fell to the ground crying and rolling breathing fast and heavily. In this way the Lord spoke to Advaita Ācārya Prabhu and different devotees and brought back to them recollection of their earlier days. He submerged the devotees in an ocean of bliss while He sat on His throne chewing betel leaf. The devotees danced and performed *kīrtana* singing, "Jaya Śacinandana! All glories to the son of mother Śacī!"

If perchance a devotee was absent, the Lord immediately had him brought before Him. He put His hand out and would say to him, "Give Me something to eat", And whatever they offered the Lord, He ate it all. Then the Lord would say, "Do you remember that night I came to you as a doctor sat next to your bed, I had cured your fever." On hearing this from the Lord, the devotees would fall down overwhelmed by uncontrolled spiritual emotions.

Seeing Gaṅgādāsa the Lord said, "Can you recall the night you were running from the Muslim king fearing capture? Your whole family was accompanying you, and when you arrived at the ferry stand your situation was critical as there were no boats. You began weeping in anxiety as the night began turning to dawn and still no boats were in sight. You feared the Muslims might molest your family in your presence and thought it would be better to drown yourself in the Ganges. At that moment I appeared as a boatman rowing a boat towards you. Your spirits lifted seeing the approaching boat, and with affection you said, "My dear brother, please take me across, I surrender my body, wealth, life, everything to You. I solely depend upon You, here is a couple of rupees for Your endeavor, take me and my family to safety. Then I ferried you and your family across and returned to My eternal Vaikuṇṭha abode."

Gaṅgādāsa was carried on the waves of blissful ecstasy from hearing the Lord. Such are the wonderful pastimes of Lord Gaurasundara. The Lord continued, "Do you recall how when you remembered Me in your anxiety to cross the Ganges I came and took you across." Gaṅgādāsa unable to contain himself further fell to the ground rolling in ecstasy.

Lord Caitanya, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, was sitting on His throne, His body covered with sandalwood paste and nicely decorated with fragrant flower garlands. One of His dear servants fanned Him, another arranged His hair, some other prepared betel and offered it to Him, while someone sang and others danced in ecstasy around Him.

How the entire day passed and how the darkness of night stole in went unnoticed. Realizing that it was night the devotees got busy lighting lamps, which they offered in worship at the Lord's lotus feet. They began to perform *kīrtana*

playing *karatalas*, gong, conch shell, *mṛdaṅga*, and string instruments. The Lord continued sitting in a benevolent mood, but He remained silent in spite of the devotees various activities.

Devotees offered different kinds of flowers at His lotus feet and prostrated themselves before Him saying, “O Lord protect me.” Some devotees prayed to the Lord with great humility others were singing loudly in praise of the Lord; the sound of jubilant crying was the only thing one could hear. Everyone present experienced such an indescribable and wonderful elated feeling right at this moment that everyone joining the assembly felt like immediately being transformed to the Vaikuṇṭhas. In this way the Lord exhibited a mood of supreme opulence, while all the devotees stood circling the Lord with folded hands in reverence.

Lord Gaurasundara behaved in a casual manner with His disciple placing His lotus feet on them and in this manner He performed His transcendental pastimes. Lord Gaurasundara was in His munificent mood ready to disburse boons to His devotees, and the devotees remained surrounding Him with folded hands. The Lord showered His causeless mercy on everyone as He performed the pastime of twenty one hour ecstasy.

The Lord then ordered, “Go and bring Śrīdhara, immediately, let him see My opulence. He is constantly thinking about Me in separation. I want him to come right away. Go to the outskirts of town, wait there for anyone that calls for Me, and bring them here.” The Vaiṣṇavas rushed to fulfill the Lord's order and went in the direction of Śrīdhara's residence.

Now hear some stories about Śrīdhara, how he made a living from selling “khola” (or the trunk of the banana tree). He buys the khola joint and after cutting it into short pieces he sells them. Whatever he earns in a day, half of it he spends in buying offering for mother Ganges. The other half he uses to maintain himself. This is the test of a true devotee of the Supreme Lord.

Śrīdhara is a very honest and truthful person, like Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, he always quotes the correct price of his wares and never vacillates from it. Those who know this fact buy from him at the price he quotes. In this humble way this great soul lives in Navadvīpa, known to people only as the ‘khola seller’; his real self was unknown to all. He would spend the entire night engrossed in chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, forgetting everything including sleep.

The atheistic neighbors protested saying, “we cannot sleep in the night, Śrīdhara's screaming shatters the eardrums. That poor vagabond cannot fill his body and so now in the night he is kept awake by the pangs of hunger.”

The atheistic neighbors invited sure doom for themselves in speaking in this manner, but Śrīdhara continued his spiritual activities unperturbed and remained always joyful. He loudly chanted the holy name all night long with overflowing love for Kṛṣṇa.

The devotees who had gone to find Śrīdhara had covered only half of the way to his house, and could already hear his loud chanting. Following the voice they came to Śrīdhara's house. They said to him, “Please come with us O holy one and meet Lord Caitanya, we are greatly blessed being in your august presence.”

When Śrīdhara heard the mention of Lord Caitanya he became overwhelmed with ecstatic feelings and fell unconscious to the ground. Quickly the devotees picked him up, and they very slowly and gently led him to the Lord.

Lord Caitanya was extremely happy to see Śrīdhara and called out loud and warm invitations to him saying, “Come, come, you have amply worshiped Me, many lifetimes you spent in My devotional service. In this life you have rendered abundant devotional service, I have tasted your ‘khola’ countless of times. many times I took different things from your hands, you have forgotten the verbal exchanges we had.”

When Lord Caitanya was manifesting His pastimes as a scholar, He acted bold and insolent. During this time, hiding His real identity, the Lord would daily enjoy Śrīdhara's company under the pretext of bargaining with him. He would go to his shop and purchase banana, spathe etc. Daily they argue about the price for several hours and finally the Lord returned with His purchases bought at half the actual price. The truthful Śrīdhara always quoted the correct price but Lord picked the goods Himself and paid only half price. Then this would excite Śrīdhara, he would jump up and try to take the goods back from the Lord.

The Lord would then say, “Why my dear brother Śrīdhara! You are a renounced person, I think you are very rich. Then why do you try to snatch away these things from My hand. I am also surprised that in all this time you do not know who I am.”

The Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Caitanya saw there was no trace of anger on Śrīdhara's face and so He snatched away the articles.

Lord Gaurasundara was looking so beautiful that He could captivate even Cupid's mind. His fine forehead was decorated with radiant *ūrdhva-puṇḍra*, *tilaka* marks. He wore the dhoti in a most attractive manner tucking it in three different places, His earrings were nicely designed and slightly slanting. The Lord's temperamental and eyes were both extremely

agile and restless. The shining white *brāhmaṇa* thread goes elegantly around His shoulder; Lord Ananta Śeṣa has accepted this very thin form of a *brāhmaṇa* thread to decorate the Lord. He smiled at Śrīdhara with cherry lips reddened from chewing betel and again picked up the articles.

Śrīdhara said to the Lord, “Listen O *brāhmaṇa*, please forgive me this time. I am just Your dog.”

The Lord replied, “I know you, you are very cunning. You have saved much money selling these banana spathes.”

Then Śrīdhara spoke, “Are there not any other shops besides mine, please purchase from there at a cheaper rate.”

Lord Caitanya said, “I do not want to so easily abandon a steady supplier like you, give Me these spathes and take the money for it.” Śrīdhara was helpless against Viśvambhara's charm, so he smiled at Him captivated by His extraordinary beauty, while Viśvambhara continued His harangue being very pleased with His eternal associate and devotee Śrīdhara.

Lord Caitanya said, “Every day you buy offerings for mother Ganges, then why can you not sell Me your things at a discount? I am the father of mother Ganges you worship daily, this truth I am revealing to you.”

Shocked at hearing this, Śrīdhara covered his ears with his palms and repeated Lord, Viṣṇu's name. And seeing that Viśvambhara was in an insolent mood gave Him the banana spathes. In this way the Lord bargained and fought with Śrīdhara everyday; Śrīdhara thought of the boy as a very restless young *brāhmaṇa* boy.

Śrīdhara finally agreed, “I give in to You, I will give You something free of cost, but then please leave me alone. What will I lose if I give away a piece of banana spathe, a banana flower, and a slice of banana root?”

Lord Caitanya replied, “Good, good that is enough, do not give anymore.” The Lord daily ate dishes prepared with Śrīdhara's gifts. The Lord loves to receive gifts from His devotees. He would never ask for anything from a nondevotee.

The Lord desired to perform this pastime and so by His arrangement He had Śrīdhara sell *khola*. Who can understand these transcendental exchanges between the Supreme Lord and His devotee? No one can perceive these supramundane activities without the blessings of the Lord, this fact is being reminded by the Lord.

The Lord Caitanya said, “O Śrīdhara, behold My beauty. Today I will bestow on you eight mystic perfections.”

The great devotee Śrīdhara lifted up his head and saw that Lord Viśvambhara had changed His complexion and become as dark as the bark of the *tamāla* tree, He was holding a flute in His hands, and on His right stood Lord Balarāma and the entire scene was engulfed in a glowing radiance.

He saw Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva approach their Lordships and offering lotus and betel they began reciting verses in praise of the Supreme Lord. Lord Ananta Śeṣa standing behind the Lord His hood above the Lord's head like an umbrella, and saintly personalities like Sanaka, Nārada, and Śukadeva Gosvāmī offered prayers to the Lord. All around the beautiful heavenly damsels sang glorifying the Lord with folded hands.

Śrīdhara seeing this wonder of wonders was so astounded that in the next moment he slumped to the ground. The Lord called out Śrīdhara's name asking him to rise, Śrīdhara on hearing the Lord's command awoke from his swoon and stood up.

Lord Caitanya instructed Śrīdhara, “Śrīdhara, say something to glorify Me.” Śrīdhara replied, “Dear Lord I am illiterate and foolish. What intelligence do I possess to glorify Your Lordship?” But the Lord said, “Anything you speak is always glorifying Me.”

By the Lord's order mother Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, now presided over Śrīdhara's power of speech, and Śrīdhara began to glorify the Lord.

“All glories to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the Lord of Navadvīpa. All glories to the Lord of the entire cosmic manifestation. All glories to Viśvambhara, the son of mother Śacī. All glories to Lord Caitanya whose incarnation and activities are a mystery even in the *Vedas*. He has appeared as the best of the *brāhmaṇas*. Taking different forms, He appears in every millennium to uphold religious principles. Secretly You went about the town managing and maintaining everything, Your real identity unknown to all, for it is impossible for anyone to know Your real self without Your mercy.”

“O Lord You are religious principles, prescribed duties, devotional service, knowledge, the scriptures, the *Vedas*, and the object of all meditation. You are the mystic perfections, the ever increasing opulence, the enjoying spirit, and the path of mystic yoga. You are the faith, benevolence, illusion, and greed in man. You are Indra the king of heaven, the moon, fire, and water. You are the sun, the air, wealth and strength, devotion, and liberation. You are Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva. O Lord, You are not in need of anything because everything belongs to You.

“You had told me earlier that mother Ganges whom I worship has emanated from Your lotus feet, and yet due to my sinful heart I would not recognize You. I had no realization of Your supreme position. You are the same Supreme Personality who had preciously blessed Gokula with Your appearance and now have again incarnated as the sweet Lord of Navadvīpa. You are the embodiment of the highest esoteric process, that same devotional science You have propagated all over Navadvīpa.

“Bhīṣma defeated You (by making You break Your promise) in battle because of his devotional service, and for the same reason mother Yaśodā bound You. Satyabhāmādevī could once sell You, her husband Lord Kṛṣṇa, because of her desire and love for You. Captivated by the love of Your devotees You carried the young cowherd boys on Your shoulders. The entire living creation carries and cherishes thoughts of You in their hearts, yet You carried Śrīdhama on Your shoulders. It is a great secret and mystery how You are defeated by Your devotees.

Although You are defeated by devotional service, You keep devotion hidden. That quality of Yours is not present now, for the whole world is begging for devotion. Previously You were defeated by only a few, but now everyone will bind You with devotion.”

Hearing Śrīdhara’s prayers, which were inspired by Sarasvatī the goddess of learning, all the Vaiṣṇavas were struck with wonder.

The Lord said, “O Śrīdhara, choose some benediction. Today I’ll give you the eight mystic perfections.”

Śrīdhara replied, “O my Lord, please do not worry for me or deceive me any more.”

The Lord said, “Seeing Me can not go in vain. You must receive a boon according to your desire.” Lord Viśvambhara repeatedly said, “Ask for something. Ask for something.”

Then Śrīdhara said, “O Lord, give me this boon: may that *brāhmaṇa* who took my khola be my Lord birth after birth. May the feet of that *brāhmaṇa* who quarreled with me be my Lord.” Saying these words Śrīdhara’s ecstatic love increased, and he raised his arms and cried loudly.

Seeing Śrīdhara’s devotion, all the Vaiṣṇavas present became overwhelmed and cried. Lord Viśvambhara smiled and said, “Listen Śrīdhara. I’ll make you king of an empire.”

But Śrīdhara replied, “I do not want anything, just allow me to chant Your name.”

The Lord said, “Śrīdhara, you were able to see this manifestation because you are My servant. That is why your mind did not waver, and therefore I gave you devotion which is unknown by Vedic study.”

Hearing the benediction received by Śrīdhara, all the Vaiṣṇavas chanted, “Jaya! Jaya!”

He did not have wealth, followers, or scholarship. Who can understand these servants of Lord Caitanya? But what can learning, wealth, beauty, fame, or good birth do? They simply increase one’s false ego and everything becomes useless. Whatever Śrīdhara received by selling bananas and roots will not even be seen by someone who lives for billions of years and has unlimited opulence. In sense gratification there is only false ego and envy, and the ultimate result is degradation.

Whoever ridicules an uneducated, poor devotee will certainly go to the hell known as Kumbhipāka for his offense. Who has the ability to recognize a Vaiṣṇava? Although he may have all perfection, he may appear wretched. This Kholaveca Śrīdhara is the prime example, as he neglected the eight perfections for devotional service.

Although a Vaiṣṇava may appear to be suffering, know for certain that he is in great happiness. Everyone is blinded by pride and sense gratification. Being proud of their education and wealth, they fail to recognise a Vaiṣṇava.

If one studies *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* improperly his intelligence is polluted, he blasphemes Lord Nityānanda, and he will certainly meet destruction.

One who hears these topics of Śrīdhara offering prayers and receiving benediction will attain the wealth of love of God. One who does not blaspheme Vaiṣṇavas attains Kṛṣṇa through loving devotional service at His lotus feet. Nothing is obtained through blasphemy except sinful life, therefore great devotees never engage in such activities. Kṛṣṇa will without doubt deliver one who sincerely chants the holy name.

I offer my humble obeisances at the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas. Let Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu be my life and soul. I Vṛndāvana dāsa humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter Ten

Description of the Mahāprakaśa Pastimes

My dearest friend, Lord Gaurāṅga, You are an ocean of transcendental qualities. All glories to You! And all glories to Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, the Supreme Personality without beginning or end!

After bestowing boons on Śrīdhara, Lord Caitanya began to gently sway His head and repeat the name, “Nāḍā, Nāḍā, Nāḍā.” He then spoke to Advaita Ācārya, “Ācārya! Ask what You need.”

The Ācārya replied, “My prayers have already been answered My Lord.” Lord Caitanya appreciated this answer with a thunderous roar that drowned all other sound.

While Lord Caitanya was still manifesting His *mahāprakaśa-līlā* in the mood of the omnipotent, supremely opulent Lord, Gadādhara Paṇḍita prepared betel and offered it to Him, and the Lord took and ate it. Lord Nityānanda, whose partial expansion Lord Ananta Śeṣa is the support of the universe, now held the umbrella over Lord Caitanya. Advaita Ācārya and other great personages stood before Him.

The Lord ordered Murāri, “Look at Me,” and Murāri saw Lord Rāmacandra in person. He saw that Viśvambhara, Lord Caitanya, was sitting on the kingly throne with a bow and His complexion was green like the fresh tended grass shoots. He saw Jānakidevī, or Sītādevī, on the Lord's left and Lakṣmaṇa on His right. All around brave monkey leaders were offering prayers. Murāri perceiving his identity as Hanumān, and now seeing his beloved Lord Rāmacandra fell down in an ecstatic swoon by Lord Caitanya's transcendental pastimes.

Lord Viśvambhara called out loud, “Hey, monkey, you seem to forget how the demon Rāvaṇa, who stole Sītādevī, burnt your face. Enraged you set fire to his capital, Śrī Lanka, and destroyed his entire race. I am that same Lord, your worshipful Lord. Now you are again in My presence. Rise, rise Murāri, you are as dear to Me as My own life. I am that Lord Rāmacandra, and you are Hanumān.

“See your Lakṣmaṇa, your beloved life and soul. You saved His life by bringing the Gandhamādana mountain. Offer obeisances to the lotus feet of Jānakī, whose distress moved you to profuse tears.”

Lord Caitanya's words brought back Murāri's consciousness, and on awakening he saw that wonderful scene and began to cry in love of Godhead. Murāri's ecstatic crying moved even the lifeless dry wood, what to speak of the assembled Vaiṣṇavas.

Again Lord Caitanya began to speak to Murāri, “You may ask Me for any boon.”

Śrī Murāri replied, “My Lord, I do not want anything. Just grant me one wish, that I may sing only Your glories. I may be put into any situation, but birth after birth I simply want to remember You and serve You in the association of Your servants. O my Lord! Please do not place me in a position where I may deviate from the Absolute Truth and forget that You are the Supreme Lord and I am Your eternal servant. Wherever You descend accompanied by Your eternal associates I desire to be there as Your insignificant servitor.”

The Lord replied, “So be it! So be it! I grant you this boon.” Hearing this, a jubilant roar from the devotees filled the air.

All the Vaiṣṇavas were naturally affectionate to Murāri, who was always compassionate to all living beings. The purity of Murāri's devotion was such that his mere presence transformed a place into a holy pilgrimage, transcendental like Vaikuṇṭha. It is impossible to describe the greatness of Murāri, for even the Supreme Lord advents for the pleasure of Murāri.

Lord Caitanya then declared, “All of you listen carefully. If anybody criticizes Murāri, he cannot be saved even by a million dips in the Ganges. In fact his baths in the Ganges or even his chanting of Lord Hari's name will certainly destroy such a sinful wretch. Murāri, the Supreme Lord is *gupta*, secretly seated in Murāri Gupta's heart, this is the spiritual import of Murāri's name.”

Seeing how Lord Caitanya showered His mercy upon Murāri, the devotees began to weep in ecstasy while chanting Kṛṣṇa's name. Anyone who hears the pastimes of Lord Caitanya's extraordinary magnanimity will receive love of Godhead.

While Murāri and Śrīdhara cry in love of Godhead being in front of the Lord, Lord Caitanya chews on the betel pan with cracking loudness.

Lord Caitanya then turned His benign glance on Haridāsa and called out, “Look at Me Haridāsa. Your body and birth are superior to Mine and your class and caste are more elevated than Mine. Although that sinful Muslim tormentor has

inflicted great pain on you, yet I hesitate in My heart to punish him for it will disturb you, knowing your compassionate nature.”

Listen Haridāsa, when you were lashed with the whip in the different market places, I took up My Sudarśana cakra and descended to the earth from Vaikuṇṭha intending to sever the tormentor's heads.

When your tormentors were trying to beat you to death, you were all along thinking for their well being. You were unconcerned about your own pains, you had only compassion for them. And because of your merciful heart, I could not use force, My Sudarśana cakra weapon was rendered impotent. I could not strike those men because you were determined to forgive them. I was unable to see your misery, however, so I protected you from their lashes by placing My back on your back.

I accepted all those lashes meant for you on My back, see the marks on My back, I am not lying. Whatever secondary reasons there were for My descent, I hastened My advent to this world because I was unable to bear your sufferings. My beloved "Nāḍā," Advaita Ācārya, fully recognized who you are, and I am totally bound by His loving devotion.”

Our beloved Lord Caitanya is very proficient in expanding the glories of His devotees, He will say or do anything to glorify and protect His devotees. He will even swallow fire for His devotees and willingly become His devotee's slave.

Lord Kṛṣṇa recognizes only His devotees and knows nothing else. For Kṛṣṇa, there is no one equal in position to His pure devotees. All those mean offenders who are antagonistic towards such pure devotees of the Lord are devoid of all good fortune. You can see from these pastimes the highly elevated position of the devotees, and the things Lord Caitanya said to Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

When Haridāsa heard about the Lord's magnanimous deed, he fell swooning to the ground. He lost all external consciousness and was immersed in an ocean of ecstasy.

Lord Caitanya said, “Wake up! Wake up and see My opulent manifestation to your heart's content.” Haridāsa awoke becoming externally conscious, crying he looked about searching for the Lord's extraordinary manifestation. He rolled about all over the courtyard sometimes breathing heavily, other times swooning. All the ecstatic symptoms swept over Haridāsa's body like a hurricane, and although the Lord tried to steady him, Haridāsa could not remain still.

Ṭhākura Haridāsa said, “O Lord Viśvambhara! You are the Lord and Protector of the universe, now the responsibility of delivering a lowly fallen wretch like me rests on You. My Lord! How can I describe Your transcendental glories as I do not possess any good qualifications. I am sinful, and I am not even within the Vedic society.

Just seeing me makes a person vulnerable to sin, and touching me makes one so contaminated that he must bath immediately. How can I say anything about Your divine pastimes?

There is one fact that You Yourself have stated; anyone remembering Your lotus feet, even an insignificant and fallen insect, is never forsaken by You. Even a mighty king, however, falls from grace if he disregards Your lotus feet. I am incapable of remembering You although I know You shelter the most impoverished soul if he simply remembers You.

The evil Duryodhana and Duḥśāsana dragged the righteous Draupadī into the palace court wanting to disrobe her. Confronted with the danger of disgrace, she remembered You, Kṛṣṇa. And because of this, You made her sari endlessly long by Your mystic potency. Yet the evil doers could not perceive Your hand in this.

Once the witches surrounded Pārvatidevī desirous of eating her, and when she remembered You, You immediately appeared and punished the witches thereby saving Your devotee.

I am so sinful that I cannot remember You, who are so magnanimous. O Lord! Please, therefore, give me shelter at Your lotus feet.

The demon Hiraṇyakaśipu inflicted all varieties of treachery and brutal methods trying to kill Prahlaḍa like poisoning, hurling down from the mountain, throwing in boiling cauldron of oil etc. Yet throughout his tribulations Prahlaḍa meditated upon Your lotus feet and was saved from each and every calamity. In this way You humbled many of his enemies and took away all their vitality and strength: finally You appeared in Person due to Prahlaḍa's meditation.

Once the five Pāṇḍavas were in grave dilemma fearing the wrath of Durvāsā Muni, but by remembering You, You appeared personally and saved them. You calmed Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja with Your assuring words, “See I am already here, you just sit down and relax and I will take care of Durvāsā Muni and his army of disciples.”

*Only the shred of vegetable left stuck to the side of the pot after the Pāṇḍavas had eaten was taken by; Lord Kṛṣṇa relishing the thought of coming to His devotees aid. The sage with his disciples meanwhile bathing in the river suddenly felt full in the belly like having eaten a sumptuous meal" ashamed and tearful they fled.

The miraculous benefits of remembering Your lotus feet were amply demonstrated by the Pāṇḍavas in this incident. The path of true devotion for everyone is to remember You. You perform Your superexcellent activities to rescue Your devotees.

The story of Ajāmila is wonderful of how from the most degraded state he remembered the Supreme Lord at the moment of death. He saw the Yamadutas coming to drag his soul away to the nether regions of hell and in fear looking for shelter he saw his son's innocent face and called out his name "Nārāyaṇa", the holy name of the Supreme Lord, and this immediately reminded him of the Lord. As soon as his mind rested on the Lord all his danger and distress disappeared. Only the elevated devotees of the Lord have easy access to the greatest spiritual treasure, which is the constant remembrance of the Supreme Lord, this is not surprising.

"O Lord! I am such a destitute that I do not even possess the sweetness of Your memory and yet You have not forsaken me. Although I am unfit to see You, You are present before me in person. I am praying to You now for only one benediction."

Lord Caitanya replied, "Say all that you want to say, there is nothing that I do not want to give you."

Haridāsa spoke to the Lord with folded hands, "O Lord, I have known only misfortune, yet You give me so much hope. Just allow me to partake of the remnants of the foodstuffs of Your devotees who are totally surrendered to Your lotus feet. Let this activity be my permanent and most prominent service life after life. My sinful birth and existence is miserable, without remembering You, but now please make my life successful by granting me the remnants of Your servitors.

I feel within my heart that I have committed a grave offense by asking of You to situate a elevated status of that of a Vaiṣṇava, although I am grossly unfit. O Lord! My master, protector, and the maintainer of the entire creation, I am spiritually lifeless, therefore kindly forgive my ignorance. O Lord Viśvambhara, the beautiful son of mother Śacī, You are my master, so be merciful to me and keep me as a dog in the house of a Vaiṣṇava."

Haridāsa Ṭhākura was overwhelmed by feeling of ecstatic devotional emotions and he repeatedly petitioned the Lord, his desire for humility and devotional service unfulfilled.

Lord Caitanya replied, "Listen, My dear Haridāsa. You are a highly elevated Vaiṣṇava, if anyone spends a day in your services and association or you kindly speak to someone for a short time, that person certainly achieves Me, there is no doubt about this. Whoever respects and serves you does so to Me also, for I perpetually reside within you.

As My servitor your position is unique, you have therefore imprisoned Me within your heart eternally. I bless you that since you are crowned already with a faultless character that you will always continue to worship and serve Me and My devotees without a single deviation or offense."

A tumultuous sound of joy from the Vaiṣṇavas greeted Lord Caitanya's boon to Haridāsa Ṭhākura. High birth, caste, fruitive activities, or wealth are worthless commodities to achieve love of Godhead. Only the intense loving desire for Kṛṣṇa can bring one to His lotus feet.

A Vaiṣṇava may take birth in any family, but he is always the most exalted personality. This is the spiritual verdict. The living proof is Haridāsa Ṭhākura who was born into a Muslim family, yet what he saw and spiritually perceived is rarely experienced by even eminent personalities like Lord Brahmā.

Only the most wretched sinner will discriminate a Vaiṣṇava's caste, race, or nationality, and for doing so he suffers the pangs of repeated birth in the lower species of life.

One who hears this pastime of the Lord and Haridāsa Ṭhākura with proper faith will certainly enjoy the fruit of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. These words are not my concoction but the bold declarations of all scriptures. One is sure to experience the bliss of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa if one hears the transcendental activities of the pure devotees of the Supreme Lord. All glories to Haridāsa Ṭhākura, a giant amongst the Vaiṣṇavas! By remembering him one is freed from all sinful reactions.

Devotees started talking about Haridāsa: someone said, "He is like Lord Brahmā", another observed "Prahāda has come again as Haridāsa." Haridāsa Ṭhākura was in every respect a great and unalloyed devotee, he is an eternal associate of Lord Caitanya.

Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva are always desiring in their hearts the transcendental company of Haridāsa Ṭhākura. All the demigods feel this same urge to associate with Haridāsa, and Gaṅgādevī wishes to bathe Haridāsa in her waters. Such is Haridāsa Ṭhākura's exalted position. Just by seeing him one is relieved from the bondage of material existence. And what to speak of associating with him. Great stalwart devotees like Prahāda, who was the son of a demon, and Hanumān, who was a monkey, are considered exalted Vaiṣṇavas. Similarly, Haridāsa Ṭhākura was born in a low caste non-Hindu family but is counted amongst the foremost of the Vaiṣṇavas.

Haridāsa along with Murāri and Śrīdhara began to weep joyful tears. While Lord Viśvambhara smiled pleasantly on them chewing betel. Sitting on the throne the Lord was engulfed in dazzling effulgence and an equally brilliantly shining Lord Nityānanda stood holding the umbrella over Lord Caitanya.

Lord Caitanya looked towards Advaita Ācārya smiling and began to reveal His inner thoughts, "Listen Ācārya, do you remember when I once fed You one night? At that time I had not yet advented, and You were excessively endeavoring to bring Me down from My spiritual abode.

"You would hold discourses on the *Bhagavad-gītā* and explain everything in terms of devotional service, but there was hardly a soul who could grasp these topics. Once when You did not find the meaning of a certain text pertaining to devotional service You did not look for discrepancies and faults in the text but gave up enjoyment for acquiring accurate esoteric knowledge. You were very depressed and lay back refusing to eat and I appeared before You.

"When You fast, it is the same for Me too, whatever You offer Me I accept, I cannot stand to see Your slightest pain, so I appeared in Your dream that night and spoke to You.

"Awake, awake, Ācārya and hear the real purport of the *Gītā* text, this is truly its unequivocal meaning. Please get up and eat, give up Your fast, for You I will reveal the esoteric meanings, eat to Your satisfaction and everything will happen in a dream."

In this way the doubts that had arisen in Ācārya's mind while discoursing on the *Gītā*, the Lord reminded Ācārya distinctly of the dreams in which He had appeared to Him clearing His doubts. He reminded the Ācārya distinctly of the dreams in which He had appeared to Him clearing His doubts. He reminded the Ācārya of the correct number and the precise dates of the dreams and the exact texts He had explained to clear his doubts. Truly Advaita Ācārya's devotion is glorious, how can I describe His unlimited potency and His devotion?

Lord Caitanya replied, "I had explained to You all the texts that were difficult with the exception of one, and that I will explain to You now. The *Gītā* text that reads *sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādam tat*, meaning, "The Supreme Being's hands and feet are everywhere" is wrongly interpreted due to the rigidness of partisan thinking of certain schools philosophical thoughts. The real purport of this verse is read as "*sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādam tat*" meaning, "The Supreme Being pervades everything with His Omnipotent presence."

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The complete *Gītā* text reads, *sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādam tat sarvata 'kṣi-śiro-mukham sarvataḥ śrutimal loka sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati*

(Everywhere are His hands and legs, His eyes, heads and faces, and He has ears everywhere. In this way the Supersoul exists, pervading everything.) I have just revealed to you the very confidential meaning of this text, who else is there other than you who can rightly comprehend this subject matter."

Advaita Ācārya is a secret disciple of Lord Caitanya, and Lord Caitanya's explanations are His only shelter.

So when Advaita Ācārya heard this explanation which was so dear to Him He was overcome with happiness and He began to weep. He addressed the Lord saying - "I am unable to say anything, it is only My great fortune and glory that You are My Lord and master." Advaita Ācārya was merged in ecstatic bliss seeing the wonderful potency of the Lord.

One who has no faith in these spiritual explanations and such spiritual exchanges are certainly doomed to perish. Only the rare souls, the pure devotees of the Lord can understand the spiritual dissertations of Advaita Ācārya, who was personally taught by Lord Caitanya.

The instructions of the *Vedas* are invariably interpreted in various ways, so also Advaita Ācārya's highly esoteric explanations often found different interpretations. Who can grasp the meaning of the Ācārya's dissertations that deal with such subtle spiritual matters, undoubtedly His words are as good as the Supreme Lord's own.

The Ācārya's words are like the autumn clouds, it rains in certain areas only leaving other places dry; His words are understood by a few fortunate ones - not everyone. Advaita Ācārya cannot be blamed for this, for everything depends on the persons ability to understand His words due to his piety and good fortune.

Advaita Ācārya's main devotional duty was to serve the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya, this can be testified by all the Vaiṣṇavas. And those who disregard the instructions of other Vaiṣṇava associates of Lord Caitanya with the excuse that they are followers of Advaita Ācārya only cannot gain the Lord's favor. Those who accept Lord Caitanya as the Lord of all the Lords - the Supreme Lord are true followers of Ācārya and the Ācārya also recognizes their service.

Devotional service to the Ācārya is imperishable, yet it is rendered impotent if one does not accept Lord Caitanya as the Lord and master of everyone - including Advaita Ācārya.

Rāvaṇa was a great devotee of Lord Śiva, but he did not accept the supremacy of Lord Rāmacandra, who is the Lord of even Śiva. Lord Śiva was displeased with his devotee and did not receive his worship or service, so Rāvaṇa's worship was useless, hence he and his entire race was destroyed. Lord Śiva does not convey to his devotees his personal feeling about their actions - whether good or bad; whoever is sufficiently intelligent with understanding the desire of Lord Śiva in his heart.

In the same way the followers of Advaita Ācārya not understanding the desire of their master claim to be His disciples and criticize Lord Caitanya. Advaita Ācārya does not tell them anything due to His specific nature, so because of neglecting the advice of other Vaiṣṇavas and the inner desire of Advaita Ācārya, they perish. These condemned persons do not understand that Advaita Ācārya's exalted position and His mystic perfection are all due to the mercy of Lord Caitanya. And if anyone volunteers to instruct them on these matters they become enraged and go to strike their well wisher. Little do they know that. Lord Caitanya's external potency Mayadevī is exceedingly powerful and she takes efficient care of such wayward and demoniac souls.

Those who do not understand that Lord Caitanya is the most beautiful Supreme Personally and Advaita Ācārya is His servitor and is like the Lord's different jewelry and ornaments that decorate Him. Their positions have clearly defined in the previous verses and in spite of it if people fail to comprehend them they are doomed. A person's elevation and progress in devotional life depends on how much he is serving Lord Caitanya, there is nothing superior to the Lord's devotional service.

The devotees can advance in his devotional service in proportion to the mercy he receives from Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda by rendering devotional service, in this way devotional mellows constantly increase. Lord Nityānanda inspires everyone to chant all the time. He says - "My dear brothers say - 'O my Lord Gauracandra'."

Advaita Ācārya is totally engrossed in remembering Lord Caitanya and His pastimes often moved to tears by devotional emotions. After hearing these transcendental narrations if one is unable to develop devotional fervor and love for Lord Caitanya then contact with such a person should be avoided for it will wither away one's faith and piety.

One who understands that Advaita Ācārya is a foremost devotee of Lord Caitanya and serves Him in that capacity is himself an exalted Vaiṣṇava and he is assured of the shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally. Such a Vaiṣṇava is also very dear to Advaita Ācārya; others who do not understand this relationship are despicable rejects of human society.

Advaita Ācārya is always extremely pleased to hear about His Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu glorified as the Supreme Lord of all. Advaita Ācārya Himself glorifies Lord Caitanya in this manner, there should be no doubt about this. Lord Caitanya revealed the real purport of the *Gītā* to the Ācārya and then hid the portals of devotional life to the nondevotees.

Lord Caitanya suddenly spoke out lifting His arms, "Everyone look at Me, ask any boon you desire." All the assembled devotees bubbled over with happiness hearing the Lord's words and they each asked a boon from the Lord.

Advaita Ācārya spoke first saying, "My Lord, I only pray that You shower Your grace on this ignorant and fallen soul." Someone else said, "My father opposes my devotional involvement, so grant me this, O Lord, may his heart may be transformed so he becomes a devotee." In this way they asked for the good blessings of their dear ones, disciples, sons, wives, servants, and so on. One of them prayed, "Lord please increase my faith in my guru."

Lord Viśvambhara is the benefactor of all His devotees and fulfills all their wishes, smiling sweetly He granted everyone's boon.

Mukunda all this while was behind the curtains outside the room unable to muster sufficient courage to appear before the Lord. Mukunda is loved by all and he also knows everyone intimately. No one could understand why he was being ignored because when he sang the Lord seemed to hear all the time. The Lord did not call him inside, nor did he come; the devotees felt sad about Mukunda.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said to the Lord, "O Lord what offense has Mukunda committed at Your lotus feet? Mukunda is favored by You, and he is dear to all of us, who can prevent his heart from melting hearing Mukunda's singing? He is devotionally inclined and always careful in all respects, yet without seeing any apparent fault in him You have insulted him my Lord. And if he has committed some mistake then punish him, but why do You disown him and push away Your own servant. O Lord let him see Your Lordship, but he will never come in unless You call him."

The Lord said, "Never speak like that to Me. Do not plead to Me on that wretched person's behalf. The descriptions you heard about pretenders who make a show of humility and next moment they are aggressive is in fact a correct assessment of Mukunda, none of you really know him in truth. Mukunda sometimes is a perfect figure of humility approaching Me holding straw in his teeth, but the next moment he comes to strike Me with an iron rod, I cannot bear to see that pretentious wretch."

Speaking eloquently in Mukunda's favor, Śrīnivāsa said, "Who can understand the inconceivable workings of Your

energies? We never noticed anything offensive in Mukunda's character, and the shelter of Your lotus feet is witness to his innocence.”

Lord Caitanya commented, “That boy goes here and there and agrees to all philosophical views to suit the company he is in. When he reads *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha* with Advaita Ācārya he sings and dances with devotion and humility. Again when he goes and joins another *sampradaya* he rejects devotional service and flays the process of bhakti with aggressive criticism.”

“One who claims that there is some process higher than devotional service factually strikes Me with an iron rod. He commits a serious offense to the path of devotional service, and so I cannot see his face.”

Mukunda was standing outside and he heard that he will not be allowed to see Lord Caitanya. Previously on his guru's request Mukunda did not accept the process of devotional service, and Lord Caitanya with His inconceivable mystic potency could know all this. Being a pure devotee, Mukunda thought, “There is no reason to remain alive any longer, I shall give up this sinful body of mine. But even then I do not know when I will be able to see the Lord.”

Mukunda called out, “Please hear me Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura, tell me, will I ever see my Lord Caitanya again?” He broke down and wept bitterly; Mukunda's condition touched the compassionate hearts of the Vaiṣṇavas.

The Lord replied, “Let him go through another ten million births and he then can certainly see Me.”

When Mukunda heard this promise from the Lord's own mouth he was overtaken by tremendous joy and stood drenched in tears. Repeating, “I will get, I will get!” Mukunda Lord Caitanya's servitor, danced like a mad man in ecstatic love of God. The Lord's assurance that he will see Him made him dance in ecstasy.

When Lord Caitanya saw Mukunda dancing He laughed and ordered, “Bring him here immediately.” The devotees eagerly informed Mukunda to come quickly to the Lord's presence, but Mukunda did not hear anything, he was completely merged in ecstasy.

Lord Caitanya said, “O Mukunda, your offenses are excused. Come, see Me, and receive My blessings.” The devotees went and quickly brought Mukunda in front of the Lord. Mukunda fell to the ground seeing the opulent appearance of the Lord.

The Lord spoke, “Get up, get up! My dear Mukunda, there is not a fraction of your offense remaining. You lost your wealth of devotion by wrong association, but now again by your loving devotion you have conquered and obliged Me. When I said that you will see Me after ten million births, you were immediately freed of all offenses. You had full faith in My words, thus You have eternally bound Me in your heart with your loving devotion.

“You are My singer and you shall remain with Me. All this time I was cutting jokes with you because of our intimacy. And if perchance you really commit millions of offenses then I do not consider them to be offenses because you are eternally My beloved associate. Your body is fully imbued with loving devotion to Me, I perpetually reside on your tongue as the holy name.”

When Mukunda heard Lord Caitanya's reassuring words, he was moved to tears and felt apathy towards himself. Condemning himself he said, “I am so degraded. I know nothing about devotional service, how can a faithless fool like me experience the bliss of devotion just by seeing You?

“Duryodhana could see easily your universal form, whereas scholars study through all the scriptures in order to just perceive that same form. Yet, Duryodhana and his entire family was stamped out, under going extreme pains, because he lacked the slightest devotion. Therefore without possessing the proper devotional attitude now can I experience bliss even if I see You my Lord?

“When You went on Rukmiṇīdevī's request to rescue her, many powerful kings saw You approach mounted on Your bird carrier Garuḍa. These kings saw Your effulgent form at the time of Your *abhiṣeka* of the name *rāja-rājeśvara*. Your devotees like Lord Brahmā desire in meditation to see this effulgent form as You appeared in the Vidarbha kingdom. As You were kidnapping Rukmiṇīdevī, the kings saw You, put up a fight with You, and were all slain, simply because they had no devotion for You.

“When You appeared from the waters of the casual ocean in the form of a boar and picked up the earth from the waters between Your tusks, the demon Hiranyākṣa saw this extraordinary brilliant form. The demigods pray to see this wonderful form Yours. But Hiranyākṣa was killed by You because he was a demon and had no love and devotion to You.

“His brother saw Your terrible and mighty form of half man and half lion that is rarely seen by anyone, whose breast is the resting place of mother Lakṣmī, Your eternal consort. This wonderful form of Nṛsiṃha, unparalleled in the entire creation, was seen by Hiranyakasipu, but his life was squashed with ease by You because he was a gross materialist, a nondevotee.

“O Lord I have no devotional feelings, yet strangely I am still alive, my head does not roll down due to grievous sins.

“Kubja, the hunchback maidservant, of Mathurā, wives of the sacrificial *brāhmaṇa* priests of Vṛndāvana. The noble ladies of the palace in Mathurā, the garland maker Sudāmā, when did they see You before they saw You for the first time? Yet all of them were elevated to the blissful state of loving devotional service to You. And Kāṁsa, the king of Mathurā, at the same time saw You but was killed. I do not possess any devotion to You my Lord, but yet You keep me.

“Lord Ananta Śeṣa, that extremely powerful personality, holds this immense cosmic creation with great pleasure only because of His devotion to You. The universe sits on just one of His many hundreds of hoods like an insignificant drop of water, while He is submerged in the ecstatic pastime of glorifying You. Although He Himself is without support or foundation He is the support and sustainer of everyone. He can perform such extraordinary feats simply due to the potency of devotional service to You. Yet I am so fallen and impious that I cannot appreciate even such wonderful devotional fervor, I am destined for eternal degradation.

“Lord Śiva, Śaṅkara, became the husband of Gauri, Durgā, by dint of his devotional service. Nārada Muni rose to the platform of an eternal associate of the Lord also through loving devotion. Vyāsadeva compiled the entire Vedic literature yet he was feeling dissatisfied deep in his heart. You had revealed to him in precise form the essence of the highest spiritual knowledge which is the science of devotion but he was unable to grasp the full import slight impurities of the mind. Then You spoke to him again through Nārada Muni the same science of devotional service and in this way he felt resuscitated, with happiness and went on to make perfect this human birth.

“I am worse than an insect yet I am not moved by such devotion, O Lord how can I ask to see You?” Mukunda began to weep raising his arms up in the air, his body trembled and he released heavy sighs in ecstatic devotional emotions. Mukunda is a pure devotee, with a simple and spontaneous love of the Lord, how can I describe sufficiently the extent of his glories. He is counted amongst the most intimate eternal associates of the Lord.

Lord Viśvambhara was moved by His devotees suffering and feelings. He said, “Mukunda's devotional service is very dear to Me, wherever and whenever you sing I will be present there. And all you have said is absolutely true, one cannot perceive Me as I am even if one sees Me, one can see My true self only through the eyes of loving devotion.

“Truly I say to you for you are very dear to Me that the instructions I have given in the Vedic literature about the different rites and duties of everyone and their concomitant results cannot be changed by anyone. I alone can do as I please and supersede these rites and results, because I have the full authority to do so.

“I have made you speak the truth about devotional service, nothing is of any value if it is not My devotional service. It pains Me grievously if someone is against My devotional service, and due to My suffering such an atheist is deprived of all happiness even if he sees Me.

“The demon King Kamsa's washerman also saw Me, I asked him for help but he refused, this was very unfortunate for him because he was deprived of the opportunity to render devotional service. He had no attraction for Me. He had performed very severe austerity and penances for many many life times just to see Me; this piety gave him the fortune to see Me. Yet he could not experience the exhilaration of seeing Me due to lack of devotion.

“I do not show any mercy to nondevotees and even if they see Me they are deprived of the transcendental result, eternal happiness. One's devotion is drained if one is offensive to the authorized process of devotional service. Due to the absence of devotion seeing Me is fruitless. Whatever you have said are actually just the things I wanted to say: in fact why should any other topic grace your mouth?

“I shall propagate the process of devotional service everywhere this I have said to you; I will do this through your voice, through your songs. All the Vaiṣṇavas' hearts will melt with ecstatic joy hearing your songs. Just as you are very dear to Me, so will you also be amongst all My devotees, the Vaiṣṇavas. And wherever I descend in any incarnation you will be also present as My singer.”

As the Lord showered blessings and boons on Mukunda, the Vaiṣṇava assembly resounded with great jubilation. Devotees clapped their hands and sang out, “Glories to Lord Jagannātha, glories to the Lord!” and so on. Whoever hears these narrations about Mukunda receiving the Lord's special mercy is favored by the Lord to become an associate of Mukunda as a singer.

All the topics on the pastimes of Lord Caitanya are highly confidential subjects undisclosed in the *Vedas*, only the intelligent class of men can appreciate these topics and not the foolish. Those who relish these pastimes will certainly be able to see Lord Caitanya face to face.

So it continued, each Vaiṣṇava as he desired had his wish fulfilled by the Lord. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita is a very great and exalted personality and so all these pastimes took place in his own house.

The Lord appeared to each devotee individually as different incarnations according to the devotees attachment to a particular incarnation of the Lord. All these manifestations were extraordinary and super excellent, Lord Caitanya performed His pastimes in this manner. Everyday the Lord revealed His supramundane pastimes and all the assembled Vaiṣṇavas along with their wives saw these extra ordinary happenings.

One who surrenders his body and mind and becomes the Lord's servitor can perceive these transcendental activities. In Navadvīpa there is no dearth of *sannyāsis*, mental spectators, scholars, and men who perform severe penances or yogic practices. Most of them are studying the *Gītā* and *Bhāgavatam* since long, and some of them are even giving lessons to others on these scriptures, yet not one of them are willing to give up their own ways and practices and religious views. Some undertake strict vows to remain celibate throughout life, never to accept service from others, and in this way lead a life of extreme hardship.

The intelligence of this was covered over by false ego to such an extent that none of them could perceive the descent of Vaiṣṇaṭha to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's residence and the spiritual bliss emanating from these. That which was seen and experienced by the servants and maidservants in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house is unknown to even scholars well versed in all the scriptures. The wonderful boon Murāri Gupta's servant received went unnoticed by those who shaved their heads to exhibit renunciation.

Lord Caitanya can be captivated by devotion alone, not with wealth, high birth, erudition, or any such mundane means. One may be crowned with wonderful accomplishments, yet he is unable to attract mercy of Lord Caitanya, for the Lord submits to unalloyed devotion, as is clearly declared in the *Vedas*. So in Navadvīpa, all the great scholars and *paṇḍitas* were unaware of these extraordinary happenings.

Those who are sinful are like a lake without water where beauty is absent, how can the living beings otherwise be deprived of the spiritual bliss of experiencing these pastimes? These super-mundane pastimes of the Lord are continuously existing, never ever ending; the *Vedas* describe them as sometimes 'manifest' and at other times 'unmanifest'.

Lord Caitanya's pastimes are being performed even now. Whoever is blessed by the Lord to see can see, others cannot see.

The Lord appeared to His different devotees in the particular incarnation the devotees worshiped Him. He personally taught them about His supreme absolute position and that He is the source of everything and everyone. This knowledge was then later transmitted to posterity.

The Lord said, "In every birth you have received My association, your servants and disciples will thus also see My pastimes through you." The Lord then distributed the garlands that graced His chest, and all were blessed to receive the chewed remnants of the Lord's betel. The devotees were caught up in the wave of ecstatic joy as they munched on the radiant moonlike Lord's remnants.

The remnants of the Lord's food went to the pious and fortunate Nārāyaṇī. The Lord gave the innocent young daughter of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's brother His remnants. She ate the Lord's remnants with joy and relish. The Vaiṣṇavas blessed her saying that she was most fortunate since she could serve the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇī directly at such a young age.

After Nārāyaṇī had eaten, Lord Caitanya said, "Nārāyaṇī, let Me hear you cry for Kṛṣṇa in great ecstasy." Such is the influence of Lord Caitanya's words that she immediately called out "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa" and began to weep. Thus the pastime came to be known to all the Vaiṣṇavas for all times and she became famous as "Nārāyaṇī, who ate Lord Caitanya's remnants."

As the devotees were beckoned by the Lord they hastened to His presence. All these pastimes of Lord Caitanya that are being narrated are transcendental, if one does not have faith in them then his future is dark.

Lord Caitanya is very close and dear to Advaita Ācārya this relationship makes Advaita Ācārya glorious. And Lord Nityānanda is very close and dear to Lord Caitanya, these glories of Lord Nityānanda are sung in all the Vedic literatures.

If one does not recognize his identity as a devotee of Lord Caitanya, and he may be respected by the whole world, he is worth no more than a straw to the learned Vaiṣṇava assembly.

Lord Nityānanda introduce Himself saying, "I am Lord Caitanya's servant." He is always in this mood of a servitor. And only by His mercy one develops love for Lord Caitanya. All detriments in spiritual life are overcome by worshipping Lord Nityānanda.

The greatest hope I always cherish in my heart is that Lord Caitanya is the Lord of my Lord. O Lord Caitanya kindly offer me the shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda, who as Lord Ananta Śeṣa is holding this universe. I am able to sing the glorious life and pastimes of Lord Caitanya out of my love and attachment for Lord Balarāma. My Lord Balarāma is always desiring the best for the world.

Lord Nityānanda knows no other designation other than being Lord Caitanya's servant and only through serving Lord Nityānanda is one eligible to become a devotee of Lord Caitanya. As by Lord Nityānanda's grace I can know Lord Caitanya in truth, similarly to fully comprehend the truth about devotional service one must receive the blessing of Lord Nityānanda.

Lord Nityānanda is very dear to all the Vaiṣṇavas, everyone can receive entry into the path of devotional service by Lord Nityānanda's mercy. Somehow, if by chance someone disregards Lord Nityānanda, then Lord Caitanya Himself condemns him to eternal suffering. The full glories of Lord Nityānanda are very rarely known, even the great yogi and exalted Vaiṣṇava Lord Śiva does not know His unlimited potencies.

One who is not offensive and critical of others and who chants Kṛṣṇa's holy name always will soon be able to captivate the uncontrollable and invisible Lord Caitanya with his love. The scriptures instruct that spiritual goals are unattractive through criticism of others, the religion expounded by *Bhāgavata* is to respect everyone.

These narrations of the *Madhya-khaṇḍa* are like nectar, but to an atheist they taste bitter. If one has a bitter taste eating sweets, then he is truly unfortunate and sick. But that does not make the taste of sweets bitter. Similarly if one cannot relish the nectarean pastimes of Lord Caitanya then that is his own misfortune.

Even though a person may be in the order of *sannyāsa*, he will enter into countless cycle of births of total ignorance if he is offensive to Lord Caitanya. Whereas if even a bird, without proper spiritual knowledge, sings the name of Lord Caitanya it will enter the Lord's eternal abode.

All glories to Lord Gaurācandra, the life of Lord Nityānanda! Kindly make Your beloved Lord Nityānanda my life and soul. I offer my obeisances at the lotus feet of all Your associates with whom You performed so many pleasurable pastimes.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, offer this song to Their lotus feet.

Chapter 11

O Lord Gaurāṅga, O most precious treasure, O unlimited ocean of love of Godhead, where do You come from? You are the Lord and maintainer of the helpless, the true friend of the downtrodden. All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the most powerful and regal of the *brāhmaṇas*. Victory to all Your associates who are like honey bees attracted to the nectar of Your lotus feet. You are as dear to Paramānanda Purī as his own life, and You are the greatest wealth Svarūpa Dāmodara possesses. You are very dear to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, and You are the heart of Jagadīśa and Gopīnātha.

Lord Viśvambhara continued performing His pastimes in Navadvīpa, not visible to every eye. The blessed Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita sat in his house situated in the central island of Navadvīpa and watched the endless and marvelous pastimes of the Lord. He served the Lord with pure love and saw the *mahāprakāśa-līlā* with the other Vaiṣṇavas.

Lord Nityānanda was residing in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house and loved and respected him as His father. Day and night Lord Nityānanda manifest the mood of a little child, and He continually drank Mālinī's (Śrīvāsa's wife) breast milk.

Mālinī's breast had long ago dried up, but on Lord Nityānanda's touch milk flowed again in her breast. She was amazed at such miraculous happenings. Caitanya Mahāprabhu ordered her not to reveal this to anyone. Everyday she saw Lord Nityānanda's childlike behavior.

Lord Viśvambhara said to Lord Nityānanda, "Listen Nityānanda, so that You avoid arguments and fights with anyone, do not behave recklessly in Śrīvāsa's house."

Lord Nityānanda objected saying, "Kṛṣṇa! You will never see Me acting reckless. You will not find another person as well behaved as I am."

Lord Viśvambhara replied, "I know You too well."

Nityānanda said, "Tell Me if You find any mistakes or ill behavior on My part."

Smiling, Lord Caitanya said, "You want to know Your mistakes? You throw showers of rice in every room of the house."

Lord Nityānanda said, "This is the work of a madman. Do You want stop My food by falsely blaming Me? If You want to eat all by Yourself, that is alright with Me, but why do You defame Me to everyone?"

Lord Caitanya replied, “I feel ashamed of Your misconduct, so I am trying to rectify You.”

Lord Nityānanda smiled and said, “That is very good! You must always teach Me whenever You see Me misbehaving. You are correct in assuming that I am the culprit.” He then *broke into peals of laughter.

Lord Nityānanda became immersed in an ocean of happiness. His ambient receded to oblivion, and taking His cloth He tied it around the head, standing naked before all. He pranced about in great leaps bubbling with laughter, staggering sometimes like a drunk man.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, and Haridāsa beheld this sight of the Lord's special mercy for it was meant to teach a lesson to the whole world.

Lord Viśvambhara held Nityānanda and said, “What are You doing? Such behavior is inappropriate in a householder's house. You just told Me that You were not mad, and the next moment You contradict Your own words.”

What reaction can words have on one who is oblivious of the external world? Lord Nityānanda was floating on the waves of ecstasy. Lord Viśvambhara had to dress Nityānanda Prabhu Himself. Such are His inconceivable activities. Lord Caitanya's words fell on deaf ears, for Lord Nityānanda was totally unaware of everything like a mad lion.

He would not even eat with His own hands, Mālinī had to feed Him. Mālinī, the chaste and righteous wife of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, could sense Lord Nityānanda's inner feelings and so she served Him like a mother to a son.

One day a crow stole a small bell metal container and flew out of sight, upsetting Mālinīdevī. The crow suddenly returned again, but without the container. Mālinīdevī was well aware of her husband's reaction once he saw that the ghee vessel of Kṛṣṇa's was missing, his temper was nothing more short than a thunderstorm, she felt helpless and began to weep.

Just then Lord Nityānanda came there and saw tears streaking down Mālinīdevī's eyes. Smiling He asked, “Why are you crying? Tell Me the cause of your distress? I will take care of everything.”

Mālinīdevī tearfully replied, “O Śrīpāda! Listen, a crow flew away with the ghee vessel, who knows where. He assured her, “Mother stop weeping and worrying I will get your vessel back.”

The Lord spoke to the crow smiling pleasantly, “O crow, go and bring back the vessel quickly.” Lord Nityānanda resides in everyone's heart. Who has the power to disobey His orders. The crow immediately flew off followed by the distraught eyes of Mālinīdevī. The crow returned soon with the vessel in its beak and kept it near Mālinīdevī. Mālinīdevī could very well understand the extraordinary potency of Lord Nityānanda from this incident.

Swooning with ecstasy, she began offering prayers to the Lord, “For one who can bring to life the dead son of His guru from the custody of Yamarāja and for one who maintains this cosmic manifestation, what is so wonderful in bringing back a small vessel from a crow? On His head rests the unlimited creation and He does not even feel its weight while performing His pastimes; the endless ocean of resilience is destroyed just by chanting His name to influence a crow to bring back a small vessel it had stolen is not an extraordinary deed for Him.

In the past, as Lakṣmaṇa, You were guarding Sitādevī while living in the forest, yet You only looked at her feet and no other part of her body. Your powerful arrows later defeated and exterminated the entire demon family of Rāvaṇa, and so winning back this small vessel is indeed an insignificant deed.

At whose lotus feet Yamunādevī begged forgiveness and offered chosen prayers to glorification, who has the potency to maintain all the fourteen worlds, what marvel is for Him to get back a small vessel from a crow? Yet none of Your activities can be diminished, since all of Your activities, however easy and small it may seem are transcendental and the Absolute Truth, such is the clear verdict of the *Vedas*.”

Lord Nityānanda smiled as He listened to her prayers and remarked in His child like manner, “I want to eat.” Whenever Mālinīdevī saw Lord Nityānanda, milk oozed from her breasts out of parental love. In order to fulfil her spiritual desires, Lord Nityānanda sucked on her breast like a child. These are some of the inconceivable pastimes of Lord Nityānanda, my capacity to describe all this limited, the pastimes of th Lord are already widely known all over the world.

His activities are extraordinary and difficult to understand, those who know Him in truth can easily believe in all His pastimes. Lord Nityānanda is always totally engrossed in ecstasy and He moves about Nadia as does the brilliant sun across the vast sky.

A mystic yogi, or a learned scholar, or anybody may think and say anything about Lord Nityānanda. People may comment that Lord Nityānanda is not a close associate of Lord Caitanya, but I do not care to hear such remarks, I only pray that His lotus feet remain imprinted in the depths of my heart.

There are many atheists who criticize Lord Nityānanda, in spite of hearing His glories. I kick them in the head, hoping for the Lord's mercy on them. Lord Nityānanda is so lost in His transcendental pastimes in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house that Lord Gaurāṅga has to look after Him.

One day Lord Caitanya was sitting in His house with his wife, Viṣṇupriyadevī, whose exquisite beauty was matched only Lakṣmīdevī's. She prepared betel pan for the Lord, and He received them smiling with pleasure. This way He spent nights and days with her lost in the pleasure of each other's company. Mother Śacī's heart exulted to heights of unknown joy as she saw the happy couple. Lord Caitanya knew the reason for His mother's exhilaration and so He spent much time with His wife.

Around this time, Lord Nityānanda, who was always immersed in bliss, came to Lord Caitanya's house in a restless mood. He stood before everyone, naked like a innocent child, not feeling any shame.

Lord Caitanya inquired, "Nityānanda, why are You without clothes?"

Nityānanda replied with a smile, "It is so, it is so."

Lord Caitanya said, "Nityānanda put Your clothes on."

He replied, "Today I leave." Lord Caitanya insisted, "Why?" Nitāi said, "I cannot eat anymore."

Lord Caitanya said, "When I say something why do You answer with a completely different suspect?"

Nitāi replied, "I want all around attention."

Angrily Lord Caitanya said, "It is not My fault."

Nitāi replied, "My Lord, Śacīdevī is not here."

Lord Caitanya said, "Be merciful and wear Your clothes."

Lord Nityānanda said, "I will eat." Like this Lord Nityānanda is always in the serving mood of Lord Caitanya; while one hears the other speaks, and Lord Nityānanda wanders all over Nadia laughing joyfully.

Lord Caitanya got up and personally dressed Nitāi and Nitāi continued chuckling. Śacīdevī smiled seeing Nityānanda's activities and felt a motherly affection towards Him thinking of Viśvambhara. His words strongly reminded her of her older son and sometimes He even looked like Him. Unknown to anyone, mother Śacī felt equal love for both Lord Nityānanda and Lord Viśvambhara.

When Lord Nityānanda came out of His trance He dressed Himself up. Śacīdevī gave Him five milk cakes to eat. Nitāi put one of the sweets in His mouth and threw the other four sweets far away. Śacīdevī raised an alarm saying, "Alas, alas, why are You throwing it away?"

Lord Nityānanda replied, "Why did You put all the sweets in one place?"

Śacīdevī said, "I do not have anything more, what will You eat now?"

Lord Nityānanda answered, "Ask for it, and it will be certainly there."

Śacīdevī went inside the room only to be greeted by a wonderful surprise. She saw the four sweets that Nitāi had thrown away. She thought out aloud, "Where were the sweet cakes thrown? And how could they be here now?" Śacīdevī was amazed and amused she removed the dust particles from the sweet cakes and came to Nityānanda. She found Him eating laddus, and inquired, "From where did You get those laddus?"

Lord Nityānanda replied, "I saw you were disappointed when I threw the sweet cakes away so I brought them back."

Seeing these miracles Śacīdevī considered in her mind that who can know the extraordinary qualities of Nityānanda Prabhu. To Nityānanda Prabhu she said, "Nityānanda why do You bewilder me in this manner? I know very well that You are the Supreme Lord, please therefore remove Your illusory potency for me."

Exhibiting the mood of a young boy, Lord Nityānanda went running after Śacīdevī to touch her feet as she tried desperately to escape Him. Such are the superexcellent activities of Lord Nityānanda. They bring pleasure to the pious devotees but to the envious it brings pain.

Those envious and sinful wretches who criticize Lord Nityānanda become so contaminated that even Gaṅgādevī who purifies everything runs away from him. Lord Nityānanda is the Supreme Lord of the Vaiṣṇavas. As Ananta Śeṣa He holds the universe on His hood. Although I have no attachment for Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya, I pray that the treasure of the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda be firmly situated in the inner recesses of my heart. This is my earnest desire for which I beg at the feet of all Vaiṣṇavas, let Nityānanda Prabhu, Lord Balarāma, be my supreme Lord and master.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana Dāsa offer this song at their lotus feet.

Chapter 12

All glories to Lord Viśvambhara the Lord and master of all the Vaiṣṇavas, please give us devotional service to You and make us Your surrendered devotees.

Lord Nityānanda performed many wonderful pastimes with Lord Caitanya in Navadvīpa. Lord Nityānanda did innumerable extraordinary deeds engrossed in the ecstasy of love of Kṛṣṇa, like a little boy He went about His work with simple enthusiasm.

He spoke always very sweetly to all the devotees He met. He danced laughed and sang to Himself in bliss. Sometimes moved to outburst of ecstasy he roared loudly astonishing one and all.

He sometimes jumped and swam in the crocodile infested swelling hissing monsoon waters of the Ganges, fearless and carefree. Everyone gasped with consternation, but Lord Nityānanda swam about in the waters laughing and splashing. He swam about the mood of Lord Ananta Śeṣa feeling completely at home in the waters of the Ganges, while the spectator devotees held their breath in anxiety.

At times Lord Nityānanda became so surcharged with ecstasy in love of Kṛṣṇa that He went into unconscious trance lasting three to four days. These are some of the inconceivable pastimes of the Lord, they are endless and eternal and I am incapable of describing them all.

One day Lord Caitanya was sitting alone when Lord Nityānanda came to Him completely naked chuckling like a child; His eyes and pure face were twinkling and tears of limitless joy cascaded down His cheeks. He went about repeating like loud peals of thunder this sentence, “My Lord and master is Nīmāi Paṇḍita of Nadia.”

Lord Caitanya smiled, amused at the sight of Lord Nityānanda's large, brilliant, beautiful formed and completely bare frame. Hastily Lord Caitanya removed the cloth from His own head and wrapped it around Nītāi, who continued to chuckle as if nothing happened.

Lord Caitanya then smeared perfume on His body, decorating Him with a flower garland and began to glorify Lord Nityānanda, “Your name is Nityānanda and so is Your form and demeanor, always and eternally blissful. You are Nityānanda now as You were Balarāma before. No one can interrupt the ecstatic and unlimited joy, You experience as Your name suggests, in everything You do whether, walking, eating or otherwise. Ordinary men cannot appreciate Your transcendental potencies. You are always to be found where n̄Lord Kṛṣṇa is present, Kṛṣṇa is eternal and is the Absolute Truth and so are You since You are His eternal associate.

Lord Nityānanda is perpetually relishing the nectar of loving devotion to Lord Caitanya, all His words and deeds are fulfilling Lord Caitanya's inner most desire. Lord Caitanya said to Him, “Since long I have one unfulfilled desire, I would like to have Your *kaupīna* loin cloth dress.” Saying this He went and brought His *kaupīna*, then tore it to many long strips.

The Lord then distributed these strips one by one to the assembled Vaiṣṇavas, telling them, “Place it on your heads, these are most precious worshipable objects even to Lord Śiva, the king of the yogis; what to speak about others. One attains the exalted position of becoming a pure devotee of the Supreme Lord only by Nityānanda's grace; all of you should know that He is the embodiment of Lord Kṛṣṇa's full transcendental potencies.

Lord Nityānanda is the immediate expansion and therefore identical with Lord Kṛṣṇa. He is an eternal associate, friend, and brother to Kṛṣṇa, He expands Himself as Kṛṣṇa's bed, ornaments, and other such paraphernalia. His character and pastimes are a mystery even in the Vedic literatures although He is everyone's maintainer, protector, and friend. All His activities are full of devotional nectar to Lord Kṛṣṇa; it is easy to attain the highest perfection of love of Kṛṣṇa by serving Him. So all of you place these strips from His *kaupīna* on Your heads and go home and worship it with care and regard.”

The Vaiṣṇavas wrapped the *kaupīna* strips lovingly around their heads following Lord Caitanya's instruction. Again Lord Caitanya spoke, “Listen, all you devotees! Now drink the water that has washed the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda, this

will immediately imbibe in you unfaltering faith in Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotional service, of this there is no doubt."

Having received Lord Caitanya's instructions the devotees washed Lord Nityānanda's lotus feet and drank the water. They drank as much as possible, five times, ten times and more, while Lord Nityānanda, who was throughout the entire episode engrossed within Himself, remained smiling benignly.

Lord Caitanya sat down and began to distribute this water (*padodaka*) with utmost pleasure. The devotees drank and became intoxicated chanting, "Hari, Hari."

The devotees each expressed their joy, someone said, "Today was the fulfillment of my life"

Another said, "All the bonds of my material entanglement were severed today."

Another commented, "Today I feel I have become a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa."

Still another voice said, "This water is so relishable, its sweet taste still lingers in my mouth."

This water was so unique that immediately upon drinking everyone became spiritually excited, some danced, some began to sing, others started rolling on the ground, and still others could not stop roaring out aloud in joy.

Just then a jubilant *kīrtana* started up, some devotees sang Kṛṣṇa songs and others began to dance. In a moment Lord Caitanya rose up and letting out a thunderous cry joined in the dance. Meanwhile, Nityānanda Prabhu also stood up and started dancing, unable to contain their joy the devotees encircled both their Lordships and continued their ecstatic dancing and jostling.

They were intoxicated with joy falling on each other, played little games touching each others feet and smearing their heads with the dust; some hung on to the others neck sobbing happily. They all mingled happily forgetting the mood of reverence, the Lord and His servants all danced together. Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda embraced each other ever so often and danced with blissful gestures. Mother trembled under the rhythmic dancing of Lord Nityānanda and the whole world resounded with, "Hari Hari."

Drowned in the nectarean ocean of love of Godhead Gaura and Nitāi the Lords of Vaikuṇṭha danced in ecstasy with their servitors. All these pastimes are endless they simply became manifest at a certain time and place and again became non manifest, this is clearly explained in the *Vedas*.

After dancing the whole day, Lord Caitanya finally sat down with all His devotees. He clapped thrice loudly and then spoke benignly, "Whoever worships Lord Nityānanda in loving devotion loves Me also. His lotus feet are worshiped by Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā, hence always offer your love and devotion to Him.

If anyone is critical of Him or dislikes Him, then even if he is a devotee, he is rejected by Me. Whoever has even so much as received a slight touch of Lord Nityānanda, Lord Kṛṣṇa will never forsake him. Lord Caitanya's words brought resounding applause from all the devotees.

Whosoever hears these transcendental narrations with faith and devotion becomes protected and maintained by Lord Caitanya. Such activities of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are fully understood by only those who are His confidential associates and the eternal associates of Lord Caitanya.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana Dāsa offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 13

I offer my humble obeisances at the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, whose elongated arms reach down to their knees; Their complexion is as brilliant as molten gold. They imitated the congregational chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa; They have exquisite elongated lotus petal eyes, They are the maintainers of the entire universe, the top-most *brāhmaṇas*, protectors of the religious principles of the age; the well wisher of every living entity and the embodiment of mercy and magnanimity.

All glories to Lord Gaurasundara! All glories to Lord Nityānanda who is served by everyone.

Lord Caitanya is always performing His pastimes in Navadvīpa, but they are not visible to every eye. Ordinary people simply see Him as before, as Nimāi Paṇḍita. They are not able to perceive the uncommon activities or character of the

Lord.

The Lord reveals Himself to the fortunate devotees according to their realizations in devotional service. He hides Himself to the outside world of materialists.

One day the Lord suddenly expressed a certain feeling to Lord Nityānanda and Haridāsa Ṭhākura, “Listen Nityānanda and Haridāsa, travel everywhere and tell people about My teachings. Go to every house and beg everyone of this, Chant Kṛṣṇa's name, worship Kṛṣṇa, and cultivate the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Just repeat this only and make them chant only Kṛṣṇa's name and at the end of the day come and give Me your reports. Those who do not comply to your requests I will come personally and cut them with My Sudarśana cakṛa.”

The Vaiṣṇavas were very amused to hear the Lord's orders and there was no question of anyone trying to change any of it. Considering that Lord Nityānanda has accepted these orders with utmost respect, anyone who disregards them is demented. If someone is only serving Advaita Ācārya but does not worship Lord Caitanya will be destroyed by Advaita Ācārya Himself.

Lord Nityānanda and Haridāsa Ṭhākura the two Lords were on their way in a blissful mood with Lord Caitanya's order as their prime inspiration. They visited every house, going all over Nadia and requested all, “chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa and worship Him, He is everyone's shelter, friend and most treasured wealth, practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness with undivided intent.”

Wearing robes of renunciates they approached the householders, many invited them for food but they only replied, “I only beg of you to chant Kṛṣṇa, worship Him and cultivate devotional service.”

This is all they repeated and went their way. The pious received their instructions well with faith being also impressed by their effulgent figures and replied happily to them expressing their pleasures. “I will do, I will do.” Someone else said, “You two have mental aberrations due to wrong advice from others, You have become mad because of bad company, why have you come to infect us with your madness. Good and healthy persons have gone mad because of Nīmāi Paṇḍita's bad influence.”

Those who were disallowed entry into Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house during *kīrtana* to see Lord Caitanya dance would react insolently to this saintly pair. They shouted, “beat them, beat them!” still others said, “Maybe these two are informers of dacoits, under the present pretext and garb they are collecting information. Why should saintly men act in this manner? If they come this way again I will hand them over to the law.”

These comments only amused Lord Nityānanda and Haridāsa Ṭhākura, they did not feel hurt or daunted they simply continued to preach everyday Lord Caitanya's message and on returning described everything to Lord Caitanya.

One day they came across two drunkards totally intoxicated, giant in size, and looking like the worst kind of pirates. Their tales of wicked acts are unending and there is not a sin that they have not committed. Although born in *abrāhmaṇa* family they consume liquor and beef, rob, steal and burn other houses. They disobey the court injunctions against them and always avoid appearing before the officers of law, all day engaged in their wicked activities.

The two drunks rolled on the public streets, and when one caught the other unawares he pounded him with his fists. People watched this fun always keeping a distance. Just then Nityānanda and Haridāsa arrived there.

The two drunks sometimes embraced each other affectionately and the next moment they would pull each other's hair. They used the most filthy and abusive language on each other. They ran the good name of the *brāhmaṇa* class in Navadvīpa to the ground. Intoxication can ruin anyone's life and character.

Although they had committed every conceivable sin they were still free from the offenses against Vaiṣṇavas. They were just always intoxicated and had no opportunity to criticize Vaiṣṇavas.

Such company, where Vaiṣṇavas are offended may consist of highly pious persons still all their mercy is depleted. If Vaiṣṇavas are offended even by an assembly of renunciates, *sannyāsīs*, such an assembly is more irreligious than a group of drunkards. For the drunks there is still a chance for salvation but for those who are critical of Vaiṣṇavas there is no hope for liberation.

In spite of studying the scriptures a person may not become purified, and if such a person criticizes Lord Nityānanda then he is doomed.

The two drunks were still very much intoxicated as Nityānanda and Haridāsa see them from a distance. Nityānanda turned to one of the crowd in the street and asked, “who are these two men, why do act like this?”

They replied, “Gosvāmī, they are *brāhmaṇas*, very good and noble parents, very good and aristocratic family, their family

dates back many generations in Navadvīpa, their family has a spotless reputation. These two are the black sheep of their family and from the beginning they are engaged in all sorts of sinful activities.”

“Their family and society ostracized them seeing their character, and from that time they live independently as outcasts in the company of other drunkards. All the residents of Navadvīpa are terrorized by them, they fear that anyone of them could be the next target of their arson and looting. Everyone knows that they are capable of anything and everything.”

When Lord Nityānanda heard these facts about the two scoundrels His heart melted. He immediately felt great compassion for them and began to consider how He could save them. He thought, “Lord Caitanya incarnated only to liberate and save the most fallen souls, who is more degraded than these two?”

The Lord has appeared hiding His real identity, the ordinary folks are unaware of this and they foolishly deride Him. If My Lord is merciful to these two and saves them then the entire world will acknowledge His Supreme potency. I Nityānanda can prove to be a real servant of Lord Caitanya only when I persuade My Lord to awaken in these two their original Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

They are so drunk now that they are oblivious of everything even themselves, if they could become similarly engrossed in chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa, if they could cry My Lord's name, then My preaching and travelling is successful.”

People now have to bathe in the Ganges with their clothes on for fear of somehow the shadow of these sinners as much as falls on them, but if I could reverse this present condition by being purified by Lord Caitanya when people saw them again they would feel clean as though they had taken a bath in the Ganges then only can I become worthy of My true name.”

Lord Nityānanda's glory and mercy is unfathomable, he has advented only to save the most fallen souls. After thinking to Himself He expressed to Haridāsa Ṭhākura, how rotten they are, although born in a *brāhmaṇa* family they are so debauched that there is no way they can escape the worst kind of hellish punishment.

The Muslim guards who had whipped You almost to death were forgiven by You, so now in the case of these two if You are compassionate to them then constantly they can be saved. The Lord will certainly you if you plead on their behalf to Him, the Lord Himself has said that He cannot refuse you Haridāsa. Let the whole world see the magnanimity of our Lord, that He is the savior of even these two. Just as the Bhāgavatam sings about the liberation of Ajāmila, let all the three worlds witness something as unique.”

Haridāsa Ṭhākura is all too familiar with Nityānanda's nature, so he considered that these two sinners are as good as saved. Haridāsa said, “Listen My Lord. Your desire is certainly also the Lord's desire. You deceive me by saying I can speak to the Lord because I am an animal and I need to be deceived, You are doing this repeatedly only to teach me of my lowly position.”

Smiling benignly Lord Nityānanda embraced him and spoke softly to him, “Let us repeat to these drunks the Lord's message for which purpose we are roaming the streets. The Lord has instructed everyone to chant Kṛṣṇa's name and especially the most degraded persons. Our duty is to simply repeat, the rest depends on the Lord whether they follow or not.”

Once decided they now walked alike to the two drunks. The pious and saintly persons alike tries to dissuade Nityānanda and Haridāsa, “Do not venture near them, if they catch you then you might even lose your life. We live in fear of these two, how do you muster up the courage to go to them? You cannot expect them to understand the holy position of a *sannyāsī*, these two, murder *brāhmaṇas* and slaughter cows.”

Yet undeterred and joyously both continued walking towards the sinners chanting Kṛṣṇa's name. They came close enough for them to hear Lord Caitanya's message, they called out, “Chant Kṛṣṇa's name, worship Him, for the Lord is dear to you as mother and father, He is the most wonderful treasure of the heart. He has appeared in His incarnation only for your sake, so give up all your sinful activities and surrender to such a merciful Lord.”

Hearing voices the two drunks lifted their heads, their eyes blood shot with rage. Seeing that the voices belonged to *sannyāsīs*, they cried out in anger, “catch them, catch them” and prepared to grab them. Haridāsa and Nityānanda hastily retreated being chased by these two yelling drunks, their cries were nasty and the two *sannyāsīs* were afraid of them.

People started saying, “we had warned them from before, but they did not heed it and so now they are put into a fearful situation.” The atheistic persons derived pleasure out of this inside themselves and maliciously thought, “these charlatans have been properly punished by Lord Nārāyaṇa.” The pious *brāhmaṇa* lot cried out, “O Lord Kṛṣṇa save them, save them!” and they all fled the place in fear.

The two rogues were now chasing the two saints and although they cried out, “catch them, catch them,” they were still not near them. Nityānanda said, “My dear Vaiṣṇava, Haridāsa, we have got ourselves into a good mess, we can call

ourselves lucky if we come out of this alive.” Ṭhākura Haridāsa replied, “O Lord, what is the use of talking, acting on Your advice we now face unnatural or violent death. Because You have given instructions on the holy name of Kṛṣṇa to these two faithless drunkards we are earning our due reaction and punishment, death.”

Speaking in this manner Lord Nityānanda continued to run laughing gleefully while the two rogues chased them hurling loud abuses. Their bodies were ugly and fat so movement was difficult yet they ran after the two.

“O brothers, where do you think you can go, how will you escape Jagāi and Mādhāi today? You seem not to know that Jagāi and Mādhāi move about in this area, so stay a while and get acquainted with this place nicely.” These words further spurred them on and they kept chanting, “Save us Kṛṣṇa, save us Kṛṣṇa! O Govinda.”

Haridāsa said to Nityānanda, “Lord Kṛṣṇa saved me sometime back from the cruel hands of my Muslim tormentors, but today due to my companion's restless nature and lack of mature intelligence I am about to face my final end.”

Lord Nityānanda replied, “You are incorrect, this restlessness is not My real nature it is manifesting in this manner due to your master, Lord Caitanya's spiritual ecstasies. Although He is *abrāhmaṇa* He is relaying orders like some king. And by His orders we go from door to door, although I never heard anyone else give such orders. In the process of executing His order our only remuneration is the harsh abusive words and false accusations by the people. If we do not carry out His orders then we are finished and if we do then this present dilemma is our answer. As for blaming someone for all this, you single Me out in fact your master has also a share in it.”

The two carried on their verbal mock fight with each other with great pleasure while still being chased by the two drunken rogues. They went running in the direction of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house, while the two rogues were left behind to run around in circles confused by intoxication.

The two rogues were confounded looking in all direction. They had no idea where the two saints had gone, they just gave up the chase and went about shuffling.

Nityānanda and Haridāsa after a little rest turned back to check if the rogues were still chasing them, they got up embraced each other laughing and went to see Lord Caitanya.

They found Lord Caitanya sitting amidst all the Vaiṣṇavas, His exquisite beauty flowed from every part of His transcendental form. His eyes were like two full bloomed lotuses, His beauty caused Madana, the God of love, to swoon. They were discussing Kṛṣṇa conscious topics in the assembly and sometimes the Lord would reveal the transcendental truth about Himself. It was as if the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Nārāyaṇa sat to discourse with Sanaka and other sages.

Nityānanda and Haridāsa narrated their days experience to the assembly, “A strange incident occurred, we came across two drunks totally intoxicated, we were told that they were from *brāhmaṇa* families. We thought of doing them a good turn and requested them to chant Kṛṣṇa's holy name, but they reacted violently and chased us, we could barely escape with our lives.”

Lord Caitanya said, “What persons are these, what are their names? Being *brāhmaṇas* why do they act in this coarse manner?”

Śrīvāsa and Gaṅgādāsa were sitting close to the Lord and they said, “My Lord, these two persons are Jagāi and Mādhāi. Their father is a pious *brāhmaṇa* but bad company has spoiled these two, now they know only intoxication. Their names instill fear in the hearts of the people and they live by stealing, looting and violence. It is impossible to describe how fallen they are, but You see everything and know everything My Lord.”

Lord Caitanya said, “I will show these two rogues, I will cut them to pieces if they come in front of Me.”

Lord Nityānanda said, “You may cut them to pieces but I will not move from there, and if they are not alive I will not be able to carry out Your mission. Why are You getting so angry with them, allow Me first to make them chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's name. The pious will naturally chant Kṛṣṇa's name but these two know only irreligious activities. If You deliver them and bring them into devotional service, then Your fame as 'Patita pavana' or 'deliverer of the fallen' will remain intact. Your fame as 'Patita pavana' had increased when You saved Me but that fame will reach unlimited bounds if You deliver these two.”

Laughing Lord Viśvambhara said, “They are already liberated, as soon as those two rogues saw you they were delivered. You are so concerned about their welfare, Kṛṣṇa will very soon take full care of them.”

The devotees broke out in jubilant shouts of “Hari, Hari!” when they heard Lord Caitanya's words, they were convinced that the sinners were already saved.

Haridāsa spoke to Advaita Ācārya, “The Lord has sent me out with an extremely restless person, if I go in one direction He

will find another. He will jump into the crocodile infested swelling monsoon waters of the Ganges and try to catch the crocodiles. I stand on the banks shouting for Him to return He ignores everything and floats downstream like a dead man. And if He sees a young boy on the banks He gets up and goes shouting angrily after the boy. Soon the boy's irate parents arrive with sticks who I have to plead and beg with before sending them away."

He steals butter and cream from the milkman and runs away and I get caught and they want to beat me up. He is always doing the sort of activities which are incorrigible and beyond all logic. If He comes across a young maiden He asks her to marry Him. He sits on a bull shouting "Maheśa" (Lord Śiva) and if He sees a cow He milks her and drinks the milk."

When I try to advice Him on His activities He mocks you saying, "What can that Advaita of Yours do to Me? And that person who You call 'Caitanya' what can He do to Me?"

"I repeat nothing of all this to Lord Caitanya. Today I was saved only by the Lord's grace. These two drunks were lying in the street in a stupor and He goes to them and tries to preach to them about Kṛṣṇa. They are enraged and charge at us, we were saved from death today only by Your mercy."

Very much amused Advaita said, "That is nothing special for Him. An intoxicated person should join other drunks. He is drunk with love of God, so He should join the other two. And as a renunciate devotee, you have no business in such company. I know Nityānanda's character and ability, He will make everyone intoxicated with divine love. Wait another few days, He will bring those two also into the Vaiṣṇava fold.

Advaita Ācārya was suddenly overcome with anger and He threw away His clothes from His body and started strongly chastising. He said, "I want to hear everything about Caitanya's devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. How He sings and dances what is the extent of His potency. Just wait and see tomorrow Nīmāi and Nītāi will bring those two drunks with them and dance with them here, and have them mingle with all the other Vaiṣṇavas. Let us not run away from here and save our castes."

Haridāsa laughed at Advaita Ācārya's angry mood and was relieved and assured that the two drunks would be saved. Who is able to really fathom the inner meaning of Advaita's words? Only personalities like Haridāsa Ṭhākura can understand, since he is of that spiritual caliber. Many who misunderstood the real position of Advaita in relation to the other associates of the Lord and the Lord Himself criticize Gadādhara Paṇḍita for acting on the Lord's desire, they invite their own doom. Any person who sides with a Vaiṣṇava against another Vaiṣṇava and criticizes him is destined to be destroyed.

The two drunks were as usual going to different places of the town and by some divine arrangement came and set up their den ;on the banks of the Ganges, a bathing place frequented by Lord Caitanya and went about their business of terrorizing the people.

The entire neighborhood was in the grips of terror, rich, poor, miser. After dusk no one ventured to go to the Ganges for their evening ablution and if at all then only in large groups.

They spent their nights close to the Lord's house. Every night they heard the Lord's *kīrtana*, staying up whole nights when they heard the sweet *kīrtana* accompanied by *mṛdaṅga* and cymbals. They danced a drunken jig to the sound of the *kīrtana*, greatly amused at themselves. The *kīrtana* and their dancing increased their appetite for more wine. At times listening to the *kīrtana* at other times getting up to dance all this went on in a state of drunken stupor, they were totally drowned in intoxication oblivious of time and place.

When they accidentally met the Lord then they remarked to Him, "O Nīmāi Paṇḍita, it is nice that you sing, I want to see how You sing the mangala Chandi (verses in glorification of Durgādevī) every night. I will bring all the paraphernalia for the chandi *kīrtana*."

Lord Caitanya kept a distance from them seeing their drunken state, but others went a different way altogether to escape these rogues.

One day Lord Nityānanda was returning to Lord Caitanya's house in the evening after moving about town the whole day. The two rogues went and halted Him. Jagāi and Mādhāi shouted out, "Who are you? Who are you?" Nityānanda replied, "I am going to Nīmāi Paṇḍita's house." In a drunken state they commanded, "What is Your name?" Lord Nityānanda replied, "My name is Avadhūta."

Lord Nityānanda lost in the mood of a young boy began to converse with the two drunks performing His līlā. He had already made up His mind that He will deliver them and so He had purposely chosen this time to come this way. When Mādhāi heard the name `Avadhūta' he picked up a piece of broken earthen wine pot and seething with rage he threw it at Nityānanda. The stone struck Nityānanda on the forehead and it started bleeding. Lord Nityānanda quietly meditated on Govinda, Kṛṣṇa.

Jagāi was deeply shocked to see blood dripping from Lord Nityānanda's forehead; when Mādhāi once again raised his arms

to strike Nityānanda, Jagāi caught his hands. He said, “Why did you do such a heartless brutish thing, what can you gain by striking this foreigner? This Avadhūta is innocent do not hit Him again, He is a renunciate hitting Him will not benefit you.”

People went running to Lord Caitanya and informed Him of the incident. The Lord immediately collected a large army of His disciples and arrived at the spot. Lord Nityānanda was still amidst the two, blood dripping all over His body, but He was smiling.

When Lord Caitanya saw blood on His beloved Nityānanda, He went into a fit of wrath and cried out, “cakra, cakra!” calling for His most devastating weapon, the Sudarśana disc. The cakra immediately appeared looming ominously before the very eyes of Jagāi and Mādhāi.

The devotees became very fearful and Nityānanda quickly went to Lord Caitanya begging Him, “When Mādhāi was about to hit Me, Jagāi tried to check him, but accidentally I was hit and although You see blood on Me I do not feel any pain. Please be calm My Lord I have no pain see, I beg of You to spare them and give them to Me.”

When the words of Jagāi being checked penetrated Lord Caitanya's hearing He became very pleased and He went up to Jagāi and embraced him. He said to Jagāi, “May Lord Kṛṣṇa bless you. You have won Me over by protecting Nityānanda. You can ask for anything you very much desire, I shall grant you the boon, and from today may you be firmly situated in a pure devotional life experiencing love of Godhead.”

The Vaiṣṇavas became joyous, appreciating Lord Caitanya's blessings on Jagāi with loud cries. And when Jagāi heard Lord Caitanya's blessing him with love of Godhead, he fell unconscious with ecstasy.

Lord Caitanya said, “Jagāi, rise up and see, I have really blessed you with love of Godhead.” Jagāi then saw Lord Caitanya in His four-handed manifestation, holding the conch, disc, and lotus. Jagāi placed the Lord's lotus feet on his chest. Jagāi knew that the lotus feet on his chest sustained Lakṣmīdevī's life and so he caught them tightly as his most treasured object and wept like a child purified of his sins. Lord Caitanya is always performing such wondrous pastimes.

The same soul resides in both Jagāi and Mādhāi, one was purified of all his sins, and the other still a sinner. While Jagāi was praying to Lord Caitanya Mādhāi was already being transformed within. Overlooking the presence of Lord Nityānanda, Mādhāi quickly got up and threw himself like a stick before Lord Caitanya and catching hold of His lotus feet he prayed, “Both of us were sinners, sinning together, in the same place at the same time. Why was Your mercy shown to one and not the other My Lord? Be merciful to me, I shall chant Your holy name, for there is no one else who can deliver a wretch like me.”

Lord Viśvambhara replied, “I cannot deliver you, you were responsible for shedding Nityānanda's blood.” Mādhāi replied, “You cannot say this My Lord. How can You act against Your own religion? In Your previous incarnation, why did You give liberation to those demons who were piercing Your body with arrows?”

The Lord replied, “Your offense is far greater than those demons, because you have hurt Nityānanda, My most beloved associate. I am revealing to you this truth that Nityānanda's body is more dear to Me than My body own is to Me.”

Mādhāi said, “Since You are already revealing the truth to me, tell me how I can be saved? You are the Supreme healer of all diseases. I can be healed of my disease only by Your treatment. Please do not deceive me anymore, O Lord of the universe, Your real identity is already known. Who can You hide it from?”

Lord Viśvambhara said, “You have committed a grievous offense: go and fall at Nityānanda's feet.” Mādhāi threw himself at Nityānanda's feet following Lord Caitanya's instructions. Lord Nityānanda's lotus feet are eternal treasures and once anyone holds on to them they will never be forsaken: this fact is well understood by Revatidevī.

Lord Viśvambhara said, “Listen dear Nityānanda, he is at Your feet. You must show him mercy. As he was responsible for shedding Your blood, only You can forgive him.”

Lord Nityānanda said, “What can I say or do My lord? Everything is a transformation of Your mercy. If I have acquired any piety due to devotional service to You, then let all My pious results be given to Mādhāi. And as for his offenses, I do not mind them, but You Lord should leave aside Your deception and unconditionally shower Your mercy on Mādhāi.”

Lord Viśvambhara said, “Now that You have forgiven everything why not also give Mādhāi Your transcendental embrace.” Receiving Lord Viśvambhara's order Nityānanda firmly embraced Mādhāi, and Mādhāi was immediately relieved of all sinful reactions and his body became surcharged with Lord Nityānanda's spiritual powers.

Both Jagāi and Mādhāi were now completely purified of all sins, and they began to glorify Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi.

Lord Caitanya said, "From now do not commit anymore sinful activities." Jagāi and Mādhāi replied, "Never again My Lord." Lord Caitanya said again, "Both of you listen carefully, it is an absolute fact that I have delivered you of all your sinful reactions accumulated over many, many births, and if you do not engage further in any sinful activities I take full responsibility of your sinful lives. I will take your reactions and My energy will manifest within your bodies."

The Lord's promise to the two was like sweet nectar in their ears, and they fell down in a state of blissful trance hearing His words. All misconceptions and nescience dissipated from their minds, and Jagāi and Mādhāi were exhilarating in these moments of spiritual happiness. The Lord perceived this mood and instructed His men accordingly.

"Take those two men to My house and I will perform *kīrtana* with them. I will give them today what is rarely accessible to even Lord Brahmā. I will convert these two men into top class devotees who will become famous all over the world. I will change the opinions of those who used to bathe in the holy waters of the Ganges after they contacted Jagāi and Mādhāi. From now they will consider that Jagāi and Mādhāi's association is as good as the association of Gaṅgādevī herself, this was Nityānanda's desire. Nityānanda's promise can never go in vain."

All the Vaiṣṇavas escorted Jagāi and Mādhāi into the inner recess of Lord Caitanya's house. The Lord closed the doors and allowed only the Vaiṣṇavas inside.

Lord Viśvambhara sat down, and Nityānanda and Gadādhara sat on either side of Him. In front facing Him sat the exalted Advaita Ācārya, and the rest of the devotees sat all around Him. They were, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Garuḍa, Rāmāi, Śrīnivāsa, Gaṅgādāsa, Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, Candraśekhara and many other associates of the Lord who know the real nature of the activities of the Lord, they all sat in that assembly with Jagāi and Mādhāi.

Jagāi and Mādhāi were so swayed by the spiritual ecstasy generated in that Vaiṣṇava assembly and *kīrtana* that they began rolling on the ground manifesting the symptoms of ecstasy like horripilation, profuse of tears, shivering, etc. Who is able to fathom the unlimited and nectarean pastimes of the Lord that He can convert two rogues into exalted devotees. They were previously atheists and sinners, but now they became like two renounced spiritualists. Whosoever has faith in these activities of the Lord will attain the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and the worst degradation is reserved for the nonbelievers.

Jagāi and Mādhāi offered prayers of praise to the Lord, and the Lord and His devotees heard them with happiness. By the will of the Lord, Sarasvatidevī, the goddess of learning, appeared on their tongues. Jagāi and Mādhāi saw both Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda sitting in one place, and they perceived Their individual real identity. The prayers they offered were so potent that if one hears them he immediately develops loving attachment to Kṛṣṇa.

They prayed, "All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the Lord of Lords. All glories to Lord Nityānanda, who is serving Lord Viśvambhara in so many ways. All glories to Lord Caitanya, who is the preceptor for congregational chanting of the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. All glories to Lord Nityānanda, who carries out all of Lord Caitanya's desires. All glories to the son of Jagannātha Miśra, and all glories to Lord Nityānanda, who has taken complete shelter of Lord Caitanya.

"All glories to Śacīdevī's son, who is an ocean of mercy, and all glories to Lord Nityānanda, the Lord's constant companion. All glories to You, Lord of my heart, who was born as the son of a king's scholar, and all glories to Lord Nityānanda, who is the embodiment of compassion. All glories to the activities of Lord Caitanya, and all glories to Lord Nityānanda, the most exalted Vaiṣṇava.

"All glories to the Supreme Lord, Śrī Caitanya who holds the conch, disc, mace, and lotus. All glories to Lord Nityānanda, who is nondifferent from Lord Caitanya and is glorious as the Avadhūta.

"All glories to Lord Gauracandra the life and soul of Advaita Ācārya. All glories to Lord Nityānanda, who in His Ananta Śeṣa expansion is glorifying the Lord with thousands of mouths.

"All glories to Lord Caitanya, Gadādhara Paṇḍita's life force and the master of Murāri, He is the source of all joy to Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Vāsudeva.

"O Lord! You have in all Your previous incarnations delivered innumerable sinful persons; these acts are Supremely wonderful, the whole world sings hymns praising these pastimes. In fact by delivering two sinful wretches like us the glories of Your previous activities are somewhat reduced, after all we are insignificant.

"The story of Ajāmila's deliverance was glorious, we seem puny and small next to that. This I say not in useless praise but with full conviction, Ajāmila was the tight candidate for Your mercy. The *Vedas* declare that even a killer of millions of *brāhmaṇas* can attain liberation immediately upon chanting Your holy name. It is not at all surprising that Ajāmila attained liberation by chanting Your name because such is the transcendental potency of Your holy name.

"You have incarnated specially to expound the highest truth of the *Vedas*; the authority of the *Vedas* would be undermined if sinners like us are not delivered. We were inimical towards You and even struck Your beloved Nityānanda, yet You delivered us. One can easily judge the unimaginable difference between Your magnanimous act and our heinous

low performance.

“As soon as Ajāmila uttered Nārāyaṇa, four messengers of the Lord appeared before him. As for us, when we saw You we immediately drew blood from Your forehead, for which we were able to see Your expansion, and expansion of expansions, Your weapon for this incarnation (the holy name) and Your eternal associates. You had all along kept these wonderful facts a secret, but now these unlimited excellencies have been exposed.

“Now by Your grace the essence of the *Vedas* is more clear and so Ananta Śeṣa can freely sing this truth. Now the hidden storehouse of Your transcendental qualities has been opened and the best example of this is that You have saved us out of Your causeless mercy.

“Demons like Kamsa although cruel to You, You still gave them liberation after killing them. You have so many places which are most confidential and some of the kings and warriors could see a little of it unravelled when they fought with You at the Svayamvara. Although they could see You face to face they all met with doom.

“The devotees would bathe in the Ganges if they even stepped on our shadows; now they are touching and mingling with us. O Lord in every respect Your activities are transcendental, and there is no way to deceive anyone anymore about Your nature, everyone is well aware of this.

“When Gajendra the king of the elephants prayed to You, You appreciated his faith and surrender, and so You relieved him from his distressful condition and gave him liberation.

“Similarly it was not by accident that You delivered Pūtana the witch, and all the other demons like Aghāsura, Bakāsura etc. Upon leaving their bodies, they were immediately transported to transcendence. Who can understand these activities of Yours unless they approach this subject through the knowledge of the *Vedas*?

“The way You have delivered these two most wretched, fallen souls was witnessed by the entire creation. All the wretched sinners You have delivered so far had some kind of qualifications, but we have not a single qualification and yet You causelessly delivered us because of Your unlimited merciful nature.”

Jagāi and Mādhāi finished their prayers with tears of joy streaking down their glowing faces, such is the transcendental potency of the Lord. The assembled Vaiṣṇavas were astounded having seen everything that had happened before their very presence, and they clasped their hands in great reverence before the Lord offering Him their prayers.

“The choicest words that were just spoken by these two drunks in praising You was possible only by Your causeless mercy. Who can understand the nature of Your inconceivable potencies, You give Your mercy by Your own sweet will.”

The Lord replied, “These two are not to be considered as drunks or rogues any more, from now they are My servitors. All of you kindly pray for them that they may never leave My devotional service. Whatever offenses they may have committed against any of you, please forgive them and bless them.”

Hearing Lord Caitanya's words, Jagāi and Mādhāi threw themselves down at the feet of all the Vaiṣṇavas and catching their feet begged for mercy. The devotees were moved by their humility and blessed them, thus Jagāi and Mādhāi became free from all desires to commit further sinful activities.

Lord Caitanya said, “Rise, rise O Jagāi and Mādhāi, You have nothing to worry anymore now you are My servitors. Your prayers were all true and are well appreciated. Such mercy and miracles that you have now witnessed and experienced is impossible in your present bodies, but it is now made possible only by the mercy of Lord Nityānanda, this is an absolute fact. All you Vaiṣṇavas present here please witness that I am taking on Myself all the sinful actions of these two souls.”

To make everyone understand that He was accepting the sinful actions of Jagāi and Mādhāi, Lord Caitanya's body became blackish in complexion. The Lord inquired, “Why do you all look at Me in that manner? How do I look?” Advaita Ācārya replied, “You look like Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

Lord Caitanya began to laugh at Advaita Ācārya's words and all the Vaiṣṇavas became ecstatic and expressed their joy in jubilant sounds.

Lord Caitanya said, “Begin *kīrtana*, then this black shroud of sin will lift from My body and enter the bodies of those who criticize the devotees of the Lord.” The devotees were happy to hear these words and they began a loud *kīrtana*.

Lord Viśvambhara and Lord Nityānanda began to dance and the Vaiṣṇavas circled around them in joyful abandonment, singing their praise. Advaita Ācārya also began to dance, Lord Caitanya had advented on his request and the worlds was saved because of him alone.

Everyone joined in the ecstatic singing and dancing keeping time with the clapping of hands. They forgot their awe and

reverence for the Lord in their joy and nobody knows the countless times they bumped into the Lord while dancing.

Mother Śacī sat in the inner chambers with her daughter-in-law and saw everything feeling herself carried away in waves of ecstasy. Everyone was drowned in the flood of happiness of love of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Even Lakṣmīdevī is very careful to touch the Lord's body but now even the two drunks were freely mingling and dancing and touching the Lord.

Lord Caitanya delivered these two, while He pushed the fault finders and offenders of the Vaiṣṇavas down to the worst well. One never advances in spiritual life by finding faults in other Vaiṣṇavas, in fact only sinful reactions are increased so give up all your fault findings.

After dancing the Lord sat down and all the Vaiṣṇavas sat around Him. The Vaiṣṇavas were covered in thick layers of dust, yet they were clean and glowing.

The Lord again looked like His original beautiful golden self and smiling He said, "Do not consider these two persons as being sinners any longer since I Myself have burnt up their sins. My energy has entered them and I make them act, speak, walk, eat and when I leave they will also leave their bodies behind. The conditioned living entities unable to bear much pain calls out for help with a little suffering, and even when the body is burnt the soul does not want to associate with his body.

The conditioned living entities under the influence of his false ego begins to accredit himself for all his activities and becomes proud, this is very dangerous. All the activities so far carried out by these two were under the spell of false ego but now I have stopped all that. From now they should be counted amongst you as Vaiṣṇavas without discriminations.

All of you please listen attentively, anyone who gives these two brothers anything to eat with devotion and respect is in fact offering Lord Kṛṣṇa the most relishable honey: even a leaf offered with love to them is nectar to Kṛṣṇa.

If anyone ridicules these two in any way, they will be destroyed because of their offensive attitude." The Vaiṣṇavas were pleased to have Jagāi and Mādhāi join their fold and offered them obeisances.

The Lord said, "Let us all go to the waters of Bhagirathi Ganges." As they came to the river they jumped inside. Constant chanting of God's holy name has made the devotees young in spirit and now they played in Jahnāvī, Gaṅgā's waters like little children. Even the sober older devotees were acting like the restless youths, this is true because of the influence of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Just before this was the festivity of *kīrtana*, and now they were all submerged in the festivity of water sports with the Lord. All the barriers of awe and reverence were lowered between the Lord and His devotees and they played with each other as equals. The Lord splashed water on the devotees, but no one could counter the Lord's attacks. In all the water fights between the Lord and the devotees, the Lord was always the winner and the devotees flee His ferocious attacks after only a few minutes of feeble resistance.

At times Advaita Ācārya, Lord Gaurāṅga and Lord Nityānanda were engaged in water sports together, another time Śrīvāsa, Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Mukunda played together. In this way all the devotees including Śrī Garbha, Sadāśiva, Murāri, Śrīmān, Puruṣottama, Mukunda, Saṅjaya, Buddhimanta Khān, Vidyānidhi, Gaṅgādāsa, Jagadīśa, Gopīnātha, Garuḍa, Śrīrama, Govinda, Śrīdhara, Kṛṣṇananda, Kāśīśvara, Jagadānanda, Govindānanda, Śrī Śuklāmbara etc.. took part. It is impossible to write down all the names of the unlimited lists of Lord Caitanya's devotees, later Vedavyāsa will compile all the names in the *Purānas*.

All the devotees were wholly engrossed in water sports experiencing the highest spiritual pleasures sometimes someone was victorious and at other times he lost. They all enjoyed playing together with Lord Caitanya, Gadādhara Nityānanda and Advaita Ācārya.

Once Lord Nityānanda catching Advaita Ācārya unawares splashed water into His eyes. For a while He could not open His eyes and so infuriated He started hurling abuses at Nityānanda. He said, "Where did this drunkard come from, He has blinded me. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita has brought this travelling mendicant from somewhere and He is now moving about as if He is one of us. And that Viśvambhara is also associating with Him closely, doing so many things secretly with this travelling mendicant."

Lord Nityānanda replied, "Do you not feel any shame? What is the use of all this argument after all you have lost." Lord Caitanya intervened saying, "Once is not sufficient, I will accept a win or loss only if it is repeated three times."

So once again Advaita Ācārya began to fight with Nityānanda Prabhu. It was difficult to discern them, due to their physical similarities in water they seemed like one person in two different places. Both played vigorously sometimes someone won and again lost in the next fight. Like this they were both equally matched. But once Nityānanda again caught Advaita off guard and He forcefully splashed water into His eyes. Advaita Ācārya was hurt and startled and said, "You drunkard, You cannot become a *sannyāsī* just by murdering a *brāhmaṇa*. You have spent most of Your time in the

West eating in different people's houses while travelling and nobody knows anything about Your family, Yours caste and other such background information. We know nothing about Your parentage, Your guru. You are simply here eating, sleeping and moving about and everyone just calls You 'Avadhūta'."

Actually Advaita was eulogizing Lord Nityānanda under the pretext of using abusive language; all of Nityānanda's followers laughed at the words along with Nityānanda knowing the real meaning of these words. But Advaita Ācārya continued His acting and was livid with rage and He said, "I will destroy everyone, then do not blame Me."

The devotees laughed at the show of anger; He was revealing the truth under the guise of being angry, His words only sounded like abuses. If someone does not understand the esoteric meaning of such vociferous fights and takes sides glorifying one and condemning the other he will certainly be annihilated.

Only those fortunate souls who have received the mercy of Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya can understand the esoteric meanings of the Vaiṣṇavas' words.

Then after a while the two stalwarts, Nityānanda and Advaita, embraced each other. These two Lords are always drunk with the nectar of love of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

In this way, every night after *kīrtana* Lord Caitanya went with all His associates to perform water sports in the Ganges. Such pastimes cannot be seen by the ordinary people but the demigods take great pleasure in witnessing all these sports of the Lord remaining in their hiding places.

They got up from the waters and came to the land chanting Lord Hair's name. The Lord garlanded everyone with *prasāda* flower garlands and applied sandalwood paste on them, bidding them farewell before they went for their meals. He then again offered Jagāi and Mādhāi to all the Vaiṣṇavas and gave them His personal garland. These pastimes of the Lord are eternal and continuous they only appear and disappear as described in the *Veda*.

The Lord returned home and after washing His feet He offered prayers to Tulasīdevī. He sat down to eat and Mother Śaci brought all the *prasāda* foodstuff to His presence. He prayed to all the previous Ācāryas offering them *prasāda* and then the Lord of the entire cosmic manifestation ate His meal with relish. He cleansed His mouth and went and sat by the door. Mother Śaci looked to the hearts content at the young couple at the young couple as they sat together, she felt a great ecstasy drowning her body and soul.

Who can fully gauge the extent of Mother Śacīdevī's good fortune? Only if Ananta Śeṣa can emulate with His thousand of hoods can one understand this. Even if one utters the name 'Ai' (short term of Śacīdevī's name) in material consciousness that word will free him from all sufferings. Śacīdevī even forgot herself as she gazed into her son's beautiful face.

At last Lord Viśvambhara got up to go to bed then all the demigods who were secretly present there also left. Daily Brahmā and Lord Śiva and other demigods came to serve their Supreme Lord, Śrī Caitanya. No one can see these personalities without the Lord's grace, and the Lord sometimes allows a few devotees to see and hear about their presence. Some days when Lord Viśvambhara would be sitting one of these unseen servants would approach Him. He said, "remain where you are" and all the rest of them would immediately again go back into hiding.

The number of such unseen visitors are so numerous that there is no need to write the exact figure. The Lord asked His devotees, "Can you not see these heavenly visitors?" The devotees replied with folded hands, "All the three worlds are serving You my Lord. What power do we possess to see all of them unless You empower us with the vision to see them."

These are the Super excellent pastimes of Lord Caitanya which are esoteric in nature and anyone who faithfully hears them attains the highest perfections, one should not doubt the veracity of this statement, the proof is that all the prominent demigods like Brahmā and Śiva were daily visitors to Lord Caitanya's house.

Thus Lord Caitanya delivered Jagāi and Mādhāi very easily because He is the life and soul of the universe, the most munificent of all incarnations and so He will deliver everyone with the exception of those who are critical of the Vaiṣṇavas and who act against the teachings of the *Vedas*.

If a personality, even of the stature of Lord Śiva, commits an offense against a devotee of the Lord then according to the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* he soon meets his end.

mahad-vimānāt sva-kṛtād dhi mādṛṇ
nāṅśyaty adūrād api śūlapāṇiḥ

"Although I have committed an offense by insulting You, I know that there is no loss or gain for you due to my insult. You are fixed in your determination, but I have committed an offense. Because of this, even though I may be as strong as Lord Śiva, I shall be vanquished without delay due to my offense at the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava" (*Bhāg.* 5.10.25)

The scriptures are strong in condemning offenses against the Vaiṣṇavas, even a erudite scholar is not saved by his spiritual readings or a person engaged in chanting Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name is also not spared punishment if he offends a Vaiṣṇava. The instructions of the *Padma Purāṇa* as cited here, when followed strictly will help one develop love of Godhead.

*satām nindā nāmaṇaḥ paramam aparādhām vitanute
yataḥ khyātīm yātaṁ katham u sahate tad-vigarhām*

To criticize and find faults in pure devotees of the Lord is the most grievous offense against the holy name. O holy name! how can You bear the criticism against Your pure devotees through whom Your glories have been propagated (You can never tolerate criticism against those who have dedicated their lives in propagating the holy name of the Lord). Such offenders are annihilated.

Lord Gauracandra will certainly deliver anyone who hears with faith the deliverance of these two big sinners. All glories to Lord Gauracandra who is the deliverer of the most fallen and demoniac souls, He is the most magnanimous Lord, an ocean of mercy, He sees only one's devotional qualities and rejects his faults. If anyone can remain alive without rendering devotional service to His lotus feet is a great sinner, and only by one's previous pious activities somehow life is maintained but what good is such a life?

In spite of my discrepancies please be merciful to me so that I may be allowed to always chant Your glories. Lord Caitanya is my spiritual master and Lord's Lord and master and in every birth I pray that I may become their eternal servitor.

The pastimes of Lord Caitanya are without beginning and without end and I am compiling these pastimes to be able to glorify Him in any manner I can. I offer Him and His associates my respectful obeisances and I pray at their lotus feet that all my offenses may be excused.

Lord Śrī Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I Vṛndāvana dāsa offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 14

O Lord Gaurāṅga, Your exquisite form is bubbling over with the nectar of love of Godhead as You dance within Yourself.

Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā and the other demigods came regularly to serve Lord Caitanya, but without the Lord's permission no one could see them.

Everyday they witnessed the different pastimes of the Lord, and when the Lord went to sleep for the night they would also disappear only to return the next day ready to render any service to the Lord. They had witnessed how Jagāi and Mādhāi were delivered and now they were returning in a jubilant mood.

They were discussing with each other, "The Lord has such unlimited compassion for the fallen souls that He liberated even those two most abominable characters. This has imbibed in me great hopes that one day I shall certainly cross over this ocean of nescience."

Yamarāja, the god of death, was also a daily visitor, and he witnessed Lord Caitanya's pastimes. He inquired from his assistant Citragupta, who tabulates and calculates virtuous and sinful activities of human beings. "What is the extent of the sins that these two persons have committed, and what does it mean to exonerate them?"

Citragupta replied, "O Yamarāja, why pursue this matter? It is futile. If my assistant writers sit down to write the sins of these two, they will never finish even after a month. And if you want to sit and hear their sins, then even after hearing many millions of them it is your prerogative. All the messengers constantly describe their sins so much that the writers always feel harassed and unable to cope with their voluminous scores of sins."

The messenger said, "The amount of sins they committed forced me to the brink of complete exhaustion and break down from writing them. The bottomless pits where these records are kept will bear witness to my plight; these two have made us writers weep. But now that Lord Caitanya has so quickly absorbed all their mountains of sins, please permit me to cast them into the ocean."

Yamarāja had never before witnessed such a display of compassion for another. Yamarāja was an elevated Vaiṣṇava; he is the embodiment of religious principles and well conversant with the injunctions of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. When he heard Citragupta he went into a trance of love for Kṛṣṇa. He fell down unconscious inside his chariot. Citragupta and his assistants became concerned and tried to pick him up as they wept uncontrollably.

The demigods who were returning were jubilantly performing *kīrtana*. Yamarāja's chariot had come to a halt, and Yamarāja was lying unconscious inside. Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, Ananta Śeṣa, Nārada Muni, and the other demigods were experiencing a new type of happiness while glorifying Lord Caitanya and His boundless magnanimity for delivering those two sinners.

When the others noticed that Yamarāja's chariot had halted they came and saw Yamarāja lying unconscious inside. They were astonished to see him in this condition and could not understand the cause of his loss of consciousness. Citragupta explained to them the reason for his present condition, and Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā could immediately perceive symptoms of ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa in Yamarāja. They began loud *kīrtana*, singing into his ears.

Hearing the *kīrtana*, Yamarāja regained consciousness and got up and began dancing like a madman. The *kīrtana* revealed a crescendo and Yamarāja, son of the sun-god, matched it with his wild dancing. The demigods got infected with Yamarāja's dancing and they joined in with him. Lord Śiva, Nārada Muni, and everyone else were drawn in by the mood of love of Godhead. These are very confidential matters and one day the *Vedas* will reveal these activities of the demigods.

Dharmarāja now freed from his feelings of shame and intoxicated by love of Kṛṣṇa lost himself in the movements of dance. Bringing back to memory the pastimes of Lord Caitanya he cried out, "Hallowed be the Lord, the most munificent Lord, friend of the fallen souls!"

The body movements were accompanied with ecstatic symptoms of uproarious calls, horripilation all over the body, a continuous flow of ecstatic emotions as he wept thinking of the Lord. His assistants and companions were overflowing with joy seeing Dharmarāja. Citragupta was a devotee who was very attached to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, he joined in with unrestrained loud and charming appreciation and all were rolling on the ground.

Lord Śiva was also dancing in intense rapture unaware that his clothes were strewn everywhere. Naked he pranced about in love of Kṛṣṇa. That exalted Vaiṣṇava blessed the world with his chanting of the Lord's holy name. His matted locks cascaded down and flared up with each upward movement of his body. Seeing their master in such raptures, Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya also joined Lord Śankara as they all remembered the unlimited mercy just exhibited by Lord Caitanya.

Four-headed Lord Brahmā, whose life and soul is in devotional service to the Supreme Lord, also began to dance in the company of his family members. Kaśyapa Muni, Kardama Muni, Prajāpati Dakṣa, Manu, Bhṛgu Muni all joined in with Lord Brahmā. All those stalwarts in the realm of devotional service became completely intoxicated by relishing the mellows with Lord Kṛṣṇa. They wept and danced in a circle around Lord Brahmā, who releasing sighs of devotional feelings.

Devaṛṣi Nārada was also dancing next to Lord Brahmā. Tears of love flowed from his eyes in streams. He forgot his vina as he relished the glories of the Lord and His holy name. Śukadeva Gosvāmī was a beloved devotee of Lord Caitanya, one who knew perfectly the science of devotion. He also joined the dancing and, chanting the names of Jagāi and Mādhāi, he rolled in the dust while offering obeisances to the Lord.

Indra, the king of the demigods who is most powerful with his vajra weapon, felt repentant. Tears flowed constantly from his thousand eyes like rivers. Now his thousand eyes, which he received due to Gautama Muni's curse were able to see for the first time the glorious pastimes of Lord Caitanya and he felt that the curse was a blessing in disguise. Indra was experiencing such great happiness that he rolled on the ground with no concern for his kingly position. His weapons felt impotent and his priceless and opulently studded kiriti necklace lay limp and neglected. These symptoms indicated the influence of love of Kṛṣṇa.

Candra, Surya, Kuvera, Varuna and all the demigods, servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa, were dancing intoxicated by the nectar of love of Kṛṣṇa which they had just drunk with their eyes in the form of Lord Caitanya's pastimes. They were jostling freely with each other oblivious of high or low positions. They all delighted in dancing in ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Ananta Śeṣa was dancing accompanied by Garuḍa. Lord Śeṣa holds the entire creation on one of His hoods, but now He was fully absorbed in love of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, and others surrounded Him as He danced and sang with His thousand hoods the unparalleled pastimes of Lord Gauracandra, who had just delivered the worst kind of sinners.

They were all in the grips of spiritual ecstasy, some wept, others laughed and some lay unconscious on the floor. Someone said, "How wonderful to see Lord Caitanya's pastimes, O how blessed are Jagāi and Mādhāi!" The whole atmosphere reverberated with their joyous pandemonium, purifying the entire cosmic creation with the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa. They dispelled the gloom of auspiciousness.

The all auspicious sound of their *kīrtana* permeated the vast coverings of the material world from Satyaloka down to Patalaloka. The glories of Lord Gaurāṅga's delivering the two sinners, Jagāi and Mādhāi was all that could be heard. Having now once relished the nectar of Gaurāṅga's pastimes, they continued to glorify Lord Caitanya as they went back to their abodes.

All glories to Lord Gauracandra who has appeared in this material world to benedict the conditioned souls. He is the Lord of all living entities, the Lord of the universe. Just as You have so munificently delivered these two most fallen sinners, kindly shower Your mercy on everyone one of us also. O Lord! You are most gracious because You have come to save the fallen souls.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I Vṛndāvana Dāsa string a garland of songs in Their praise and offer it at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 15

All of you behold the superexcellent potency of Lord Gauracandra. He is difficult to attain through meditation even by exalted personalities like Lord Śiva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Devaṛṣi Nārada, yet we see Him mingling freely with people who do not possess any devotional qualities.

Lord Viśvambhara is always performing unlimited and inconceivable pastimes in Navadvīpa out of His causeless mercy, but no one can perceive them. Just as the fish in the ocean can never know the moon, similarly the common people could never know the nature of Lord Gauracandra's pastimes.

By the mercy of Lord Caitanya, Jagāi and Mādhāi were living in Nadīa as most religious persons. Everyday before sunrise they took bath in the Ganges and then sat in a secluded place to chant the name of Kṛṣṇa two lakh times.

They always condemned themselves for their lowly position, and they incessantly chanted Kṛṣṇa's holy name with tears in their eyes. After tasting the nectar of the holy name and devotional service they could perceive this material existence as part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa.

When memories of their past sinful activities plagued them they wept with repentance and fell almost unconscious to the ground. They cried out, "O most merciful Lord Caitanya, the savior of the fallen souls!" Remembering the Lord's mercy again and again they shed tears of joy.

The happiness they experienced in Kṛṣṇa's service made them forget even about eating, and when they thought of the mercy shown to them by Lord Caitanya they wept uncontrollably. Lord Caitanya and the devotees were always very kind to them, giving them inspiration and hope. The Lord Himself came to feed them, but still they could not feel peace deep inside.

Mādhāi specially felt greatly afflicted each time he remembered how heinously he had struck Lord Nityānanda. Although Lord Nityānanda had forgiven him, Mādhāi was far from feeling exhilarated.

He said, "I have hurt Nityānanda Prabhu, drawing blood from Him. In His body resides Lord Caitanya, and I am so sinful that I struck such a personality." Saying this Mādhāi condemned himself.

Mādhāi was unable to contain his feelings at such memories, and day and night he cried— nothing else came to his mind.

Lord Nityānanda roamed about in Nadīa always in the mood of a child, laughing and carefree. He was very easy to please and always happy. He was totally free from any sense of false prestige.

One day Mādhāi found Lord Nityānanda all alone, and he threw himself down and embraced His lotus feet. Tears of love for the Lord washed His feet, and with complete humility he prayed to Lord Nityānanda.

"O Lord! As Viṣṇu, You maintain this universe. And as Ananta Śeṣa, You hold the cosmic manifestation on Your hood. You are the embodiment of devotional service, Lord Śaṅkara and Pārvatidevī constantly meditate upon You. Devotional service to the Lord is exclusively Your property, and it is Your prerogative to grant anyone the eligibility to be situated on the platform of devotional service. No one is more dear to Lord Caitanya than You.

By Your grace the mighty Garuḍa participates in Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes as the Lord's carrier. You are constantly chanting Kṛṣṇa's glories with Your unlimited mouths, propounding and explaining the process of devotional service as the highest human occupation.

Devaṛṣi Nārada experiences unlimited bliss chanting Your glories; Your only and most treasured possession is Lord Caitanya.

You are famous as the one who forced the Yamunā to change her course and flow according to Your desires. King Janaka received transcendental knowledge by serving You.

You embody the essence of all scriptures being the original person, and the primeval Supreme Personality as declared by the *Vedas*. You are the divine father of every living entity, the greatest mystic. You are Lakṣmaṇa the valorous prince.

You are the vanquisher of demoniac and atheistic forces, the Supreme enjoyer of all mellows, and the foremost spiritual guide. You are well conversant with all of Lord Caitanya's pastimes. Mahā-maya, Your external potency, has become worshipable throughout the universe because she has served You. The whole cosmic manifestation seeks the shelter of the shade of Your lotus feet.

You are fully devoted to Lord Caitanya, and so You are the most proficient propagator of the path of devotional service. You are the sum total of all Lord Caitanya's potencies. You expand Yourself as Lord Caitanya's bed, throne, resting place, and umbrella. You are His very life and soul.

As Balarāma, You are matchless in Your service to Kṛṣṇa; and as Nityānanda, You are the foremost of Lord Caitanya's associates as well as the origin of all Lord Caitanya's incarnations. You are always delivering the fallen and annihilating the atheists.

You are the protector of the Lord's devotees and the propounder of true religion—pure devotional service to the Lord. By Your grace Lord Brahmā creates this universe. You are always worshiped by Your energies, Revatīdevī, Vāruṇīdevī, and Kāntīdevī.

The Rudra incarnation was produced out of Your anger, through him You bring about the annihilation of this cosmic creation.

In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* it is stated, *śaṅkarṣaṇātmako rudro niṣkramyātti jagattrayam*. "Rudra was born out of Lord Śaṅkarṣaṇa's face and he dissolves the universe with the great fire called *kālānala*."

Although You seem to be doing everything yet You are not the doer, O Lord the whole cosmic manifestation is resting on Your bosom. Your body is very soft and gives Kṛṣṇa great pleasure when You expand Yourself as His bed and He lies on You. But I am so monstrous and sinful that I hurt Your transcendental body. Who is more wretched than I?"

Your transcendental form is constantly worshiped by Lord Śiva accompanied by his beautiful consort Pārvatī and other young maidens. Simply by remembering Your form one is freed from all bondage, and this same spiritual body was bleeding due to my misdeeds.

Citraketu, the famous emperor, was living happily by worshiping You and was counted amongst the foremost of the Vaiṣṇavas. That same form that is worshiped by the entire universe was brutally hit by me, the lowest of sinners.

The sages of Naimiṣāranya forest headed by Śaunaka Ṛṣi became freed from all material entanglement by meditating upon Your form. In Your expansion as Lakṣmaṇa You were wounded by Indrajit, son of Rāvaṇa, in battle and for this You slew him. Similarly the gorilla demon, Dvidida, also met with a premature death at Your hands because he was harassing You.

The mighty Jarasandha was also vanquished by You for being inimical to You. I am so foolish that I did not understand what is beneficial to me and so I inflicted pain upon Your transcendental form. I did not know then the consequences of such an act for when Rukmi, Kṛṣṇa's brother-in-law, insulted You, You took his life.

Romaharṣaṇa Suta was blessed with a long life by the sages of Naimiṣāranya, but when he failed to offer You respect, You slew him with a blade of grass.

King Duryodhana and the entire dynasty was almost exterminated for disregarding Your words: they were spared by good luck because of the presence of elevated devotees like Kuntīdevī, Bhīṣma, Yudhiṣṭhira, Vidura, and Arjuna who intervened supplicating You with appropriate words.

When one's very life is at stake just by a little disrespectful attitude towards You, then to what depths of depravity and hell must I enter for my heinous act?" Speaking like this Mādhāi started experiencing love of Godhead, and he fell to the ground clutching the Lord's lotus feet to his bosom.

Mādhāi continued to pray, "The shelter of Your lotus feet can save anyone from the endless cycle of rebirth. You have appeared simply to deliver the most fallen, so my dear Lord kindly protect this fallen soul surrendered to You. You are my life and soul and most treasured goal.

All glories to Lord Nityānanda, the darling son of Padmavatīdevī! You are the most precious jewel of all the Vaiṣṇavas. You are completely free from any malice and always submerged in the highest state of blissfulness. You are always inclined to forgive those who are surrendered to You. I am the most atrocious beast and offender, so kindly forgive me Lord for all my offenses."

Lord Nityānanda smiled after hearing the loving supplications offered to Him and said, “Get up! Arise, O Mādhāi, you are My servitor. I now reside within your body. Is the father disturbed if his little child hits him? I have accepted your beating in this parental mood. What is more important is that anyone who hears your wonderful and devotional prayers to Me will certainly develop loving attachment to My lotus feet.”

You are the recipient of My Lord's mercy, therefore you are free from all blame. Whoever worships My Lord Caitanya becomes most dear to Me and I offer him My protection eternally.

If anyone disregards Lord Caitanya but offers Me worship and sings My glories, I will be unhappy and that person suffers birth after birth.” He then embraced Mādhāi and took away all his misery.

Mādhāi again fell at Lord Nityānanda's feet and said, “I have one other prayer my Lord, You are situated in everyone's heart, and I have inflicted severe violence on many such living entities. I do not even know to whom and to how many souls I have inflicted pain. If I could recognize them, I would beg forgiveness from them, but in this situation I am deprived of their blessings and forgiveness. O Lord if You are pleased with me then advice me how I can get out of this dilemma.”

Lord Nityānanda replied, “Listen to My advise, Mādhāi, construct a bathing place on the Ganges so the residents of Nadia can take a bath without difficulty and fondly think of You for this convenience. This is also a service to Gaṅgādevī, who dissolves everyone's sins with her pure waters. What better blessings can you ask for? Stand at the bathing place and beg for forgiveness from every bather praying to them for their blessings. In this way you can exonerate yourself of all offenses.”

Mādhāi took Lord Nityānanda's advise to heart. After circumambulating Him several times with utmost love and respect he left. Chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy name with tears of love of God streamed down his face, he began to construct a proper bathing place on the bank of the Ganges. The people saw this sight with great wonder. Mādhāi offered prostrated obeisances to everyone who came to the site and begged them saying, “Please think kindly of me and forgive me for all the offenses I have committed knowingly or unknowingly against you.”

Seeing Mādhāi shedding tears of love, everyone cried, and in ecstasy they remembered Lord Govinda. The word went around, “Nimāi Paṇḍita has marvelously converted Jagāi and Mādhāi into good and pious men.”

The people greeted the news with sheer astonishment and commented, “Nimāi Paṇḍita is not an ordinary mortal. Evil men ridiculed and criticized Nimāi Paṇḍita without knowing Him. Nimāi Paṇḍita was always actually engaged in performing *kīrtana*, Nimāi Paṇḍita is truly a real devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Whosoever ridiculed or denigrates Him will certainly meet his doom.

Anyone who could transform the character and mentality of these two is surely the Supreme Lord Himself or at least specially empowered by Him. Nimāi Paṇḍita is certainly an extraordinary personality, and now the extent of His power has become widely known.” The people of Nadia discussed amongst themselves in this manner and they avoided the company of men who continued their criticism.

Mādhāi was leading a very austere life and became known as a *brahmacārī* following strictly the vow of celibacy and restraint. He was always in sight of Gaṅgādevī living on her bank and worked very hard with the spade constructing the bathing place.

This wonderful pastime of Jagāi and Mādhāi's deliverance is marked for posterity by this bathing place. These narrations of the *Madhya-khaṇḍa* becomes nectarean because it describes Lord Caitanya's munificence in delivering these two fallen wretches.

Whoever is envious of the fact that Lord Caitanya is the origin of everyone will be destroyed. The extraordinary activities of Lord Caitanya are the hidden treasures of the *Vedas* so hear these narrations attentively and with proper faith.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana dāsa humbly offer this song at their lotus feet.

Chapter 16

All glories to Lord Gauracandra, the Supreme Lord of Lords. All glories to the beloved devotees of Lord Viśvambhara.

Lord Viśvambhara is now in the midst of fully manifesting His *saṅkīrtana* movement with His associates in Navadvīpa. Whole nights are passed in dancing and *kīrtana* behind closed doors, for such pastimes are not meant for the common

materialistic men.

One day the Lord was engrossed in dancing in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house. Unknown to anyone Śrīvāsa's mother-in-law had hidden herself behind baskets in a corner of the room. But what is the use of such hide and seek games? When there is a lack of devotion, then one will never be fortunate enough to see the Lord's ecstatic dancing.

While dancing the Lord repeatedly inquired, "Why do I not feel the usual exhilaration today?" The Lord is the Supersoul residing within everyone's heart. Yet although He knows everything, He did not reveal anything and pretended ignorance. He stopped dancing and said, "I am not deriving any pleasure today. Is someone hiding inside this room somewhere?"

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita went through the whole house looking for strangers, but did not find anyone and informed the same to the Lord. The devotees continued the *kīrtana* but the Lord felt the same as before. He again stopped and said, "I am still not feeling the usual ecstasy, maybe this is Kṛṣṇa's wish."

The devotees were thrown into a whirlpool of mental agony, they said to each other, "There is no one other than ourselves here, so probably due to some offense on our part the Lord is not relishing His dancing today."

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita went searching again and discovered his mother-in-law hiding behind the baskets. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita is a sober person always submerged in loving devotion, he is never proud or cantankerous. But now he began to shake remembering Lord Viśvambhara's displeasure, he ordered his mother-in-law to be taken away pulled by her hair. This was done without anyone's knowledge. Lord Viśvambhara almost immediately began to feel the usual ecstasy in dancing. He said, "Now I can feel the ecstasy," Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita was very happy to hear this and laughing he joined in the *kīrtana*.

The *kīrtana* picked up momentum indicating the devotee's jubilant response—everyone was laughing and dancing. Lord Caitanya danced in divine pleasure and Lord Nityānanda danced around Him.

Lord Caitanya's pastimes are not visible to everyone, only to those fortunate souls who receive the Lord's special mercy.

While dancing on another occasion Lord Caitanya suddenly stopped and looked about Him discontented. He said, "I am not feeling any joy from dancing today, I do not know what offenses I have committed against a Vaiṣṇava." Everyone stopped and wondered what had gone wrong.

This incidence is actually a sequel to something that happened earlier. Advaita Ācārya is naturally a devotee of Lord Caitanya in the mood of servitorship. When Lord Caitanya sat on the throne of Lord Viṣṇu, He placed the Lord's lotus feet on His head. And when the Lord begins exhibiting His power and grandeur Advaita Ācārya was carried on waves of bliss.

As the Lord said, "O Nāḍā, You are My servant!" Advaita Ācārya became submerged in an ocean of bliss.

Lord Caitanya's nature and position is inconceivable and cannot be understood. One moment He is the supreme autocrat, and in the next moment He reaches out to embrace the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas. Crying out in great humility the Lord said, "O Kṛṣṇa, My dearest Lord, You are My very life."

The Lord wept in such a pathetic manner that even the people with hearts of stone melted in pity. The Lord continuously manifested these devotional moods of servitorship. In front of everyone He discarded the omnipotent demeanor of the Supreme Lord acting contrary to the nature of His omniscient self He inquired, "Have I done something due to lack of self restraint and restlessness of mind? If so, then why was I not immediately put to death? Kṛṣṇa is My life and soul, Kṛṣṇa is My goal, and you are My brothers and friends birth after birth. Devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate destination, all of you kindly instill in Me this faith otherwise, I will become wayward."

All the devotees became perplexed with anxiety and no one could defy the Lord's words. At other times when the Lord Himself is in His omnipotent mood He Himself orders the devotees to touch His lotus feet. But now acting out the pastime of a devotee of Kṛṣṇa the Lord, upon seeing the Vaiṣṇavas, takes the dust from their feet and offers them respect. This hurt the devotees intensely within and so to mitigate their misery the Lord embraced them.

In such moods the Lord respected Advaita Ācārya as a guru. This, however, caused pain to Him. Advaita Ācārya thought that it was so difficult for Him to serve the Lord since the Lord would not allow it, and on top of all this the Lord considered Him as a guru and was begging for dust of His feet. So Advaita Ācārya was always contemplating how to serve the Lord and be specially blessed by having the dust from the Lord's lotus feet on His head. Since this was impossible to have while the Lord was aware and conscious He waited for the Lord to go into an ecstatic state of coma and then prostrating Himself He smeared the dust from the Lord's lotus feet on His head. Embracing His lotus feet He wept bathing them with His tears of love. Sometimes He wiped and cleaned His lotus feet on His head, on other occasions He offered the Lord full worship. All this was possible for Advaita to do only by the Lord's grace.

So one must understand that Advaita Ācārya is foremost amongst the Lord's associates for He has received the Lord's

blessings. The envious and anguished cannot appreciate such wonderful qualities in Advaita Ācārya.

So this day when Lord Viśvambhara was dancing, Advaita Ācārya was happily dancing circumambulating Him. Suddenly Lord Caitanya fell down unconscious in the highest state of spiritual ecstasy. Advaita Ācārya seeing this as an opportunity took the dust from the Lord's lotus feet and stealthily smeared it all over His body.

Lord Caitanya got up and again started dancing. But He did not feel the usual exultation. The Lord then said, "Why is My heart not revealing to Me the reason for My dissatisfaction? Whom have I offended that I must be without joy? Which thief has stolen from Me that due to this offense I cannot dance in carefree ecstasy? Has anyone taken the dust from My feet? Kindly speak out the truth, do not worry, you have My assurance that nothing will happen."

When the devotees heard Lord Caitanya, who was the omniscient Supersoul within everyone's heart, they remained silent in fear. On one side they were afraid of Advaita Ācārya, and on the other had if they did not speak the truth it was doomsday for them. Understanding their dilemma, Advaita Ācārya spoke up.

With folded hands Advaita Ācārya said, "My dear Lord Caitanya, if a thief cannot have the treasure he is looking for while the master is awake and unwilling then the thief must steal it while the master is unable to know or see. I have stolen the dust from Your lotus feet, kindly forgive Me for this offense, I will not do this again if this dissatisfies You My Lord."

Lord Caitanya became infuriated by Advaita's words and under the pretext of angry words the Lord revealed the transcendental qualities of Advaita Ācārya. He said, "Even after You have annihilated the entire cosmic You don't feel a touch of retribution. After this total devastation only I remain, and it seems that You will be propitiated only after You have devastated Me. You do not destroy the sages, hermits, yogis, and philosophers with Your trident. But those who come to You gracefully seeking Your grace You catch their feet and finish them off."

I am just a Vaiṣṇava from Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, (referring to Himself as Kṛṣṇa) and I have come to pay My respects at Your lotus feet. By seeing Your lotus feet a person should develop more attachment to Lord Viṣṇu, but instead You devastate whatever devotion He possesses. You have reduced His devotional wealth by taking from Him the dust of His feet, You are really heartless when it comes to destroying someone's devotion."

Lord Kṛṣṇa has gifted You with all the devotion available in this unlimited creation, yet You steal from one with meager holding. You have no compassion. You are really heartless when it comes to destroying someone's devotion.

The Lord spoke real facts about Advaita Ācārya's transcendental character under the pretext of being angry, and all the devotees were enjoying the fun. The Lord continued, "You have been stealing and You think I am not able to do the same, just wait and see how to steal from a thief."

The Lord embraced Advaita Ācārya and catching His feet He smeared the dust from His feet on His body, laughing as He did so. Advaita Ācārya's strength was no match for the lionlike Lord Gaurasundara as the Lord took His feet and rubbed them on His head. He then placed His feet on His chest and said, "Now see how I have bound the thief on My lap. You tried to steal from Me, many many times, a little at a time, but I have relieved You of everything in one time.

Advaita Ācārya said, "Whatever You say My Lord is true. You are the real proprietor of everything and I am an ignorant person. Everything belongs to You—My life, intelligence, mind, and body—who can protect Me once You decide to destroy and punish Me? You are the giver of happiness and You also mete out punishment. When Nārada Muni travels to Dvārakā to pray at Your lotus feet, You in turn took the dust of His feet. When You want to finish off Your own devotees then what can the devotee do? You are supposed to allow the devotees to take the dust from Your lotus feet, but that never occurs, and who can defy Your instructions? And that You are acting in this way is not proving Your omnipotence, You might desire pleasure out of this but this will surely destroy Me. Ultimately this body is Yours, You may do as You desire, You can keep it or destroy it."

Lord Viśvambhara replied, "I serve Your feet because You are the keeper of the storehouse of devotional service. By smearing the dust of Your feet all over the body one attains love of Godhead only if You distribute it. Know for certain that I am Your property in every respect. To say the truth You can sell Me anywhere."

The devotees marvelled to see Lord Caitanya's extraordinary munificence towards Advaita Ācārya. They were saying, "Truly the Lord has served Him, He is a very exalted Personality. The mercy He received is far better than a million liberations. The mercy Advaita Ācārya received from Lord Caitanya is scarcely attainable by even Lord Śiva. We are also very fortunate to be able to associate with such an elevated devotee, let us smear the dust from His lotus feet all over our bodies."

Only those who are suffering the reactions of their most degraded sinful activities cannot appreciate Advaita Ācārya's position. All the activities of such personalities are absolute. The cynics and doubters fall away from the righteous path.

Lord Viśvambhara stood up chanting, "Haribol!" and all the devotees gathered around Him and started singing. Advaita

Ācārya was overwhelmed with a surge of ecstasy and He began to dance, running His fingers through His flowing beard and raising His voice as loud as thunder and His eyebrows were drawn together in a frown.

The devotees sang happily, “Jaya Kṛṣṇa, Gopāla, Govinda, Vanamālī.” Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya danced in a rapture, yet Lord Nityānanda was always watchful of Lord Caitanya's movements. Anytime Lord Caitanya lost consciousness and started falling Lord Caitanya would stretch out His hands and prevent the Lord from falling.

Lord Caitanya's unlimited dancing is indescribable and when He sang both Sarasvatidevī and Lord Balarāma unite and manifest in His melodies singing, thus fully satisfying Him. The different ecstatic symptoms manifested one after another in His body, shivering, weeping, laughing, long and heavy breathing, feelings of total humility, feeling of immense arrogance, loss of consciousness etc.

After awhile they sat upon the throne and laughed out aloud with a booming sound. The Lord showered His grace to the different devotees according to their degree of spiritual realization and thereby carrying them up in waves of great bliss.

Now hear how Lord Gaurāṅga showed His special mercy upon Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī, a native of Navadvīpa and who was then standing in front of the Lord. He was very righteous and peaceful, always performing his duties, no one knew what an exalted devotee he was. He went around the Navadvīpa town with a cloth bag over his shoulder, begging from house to house. He was constantly chanting Kṛṣṇa's name and tears streamed down his eyes at the recitation of the Lord's name.

People treated him with the usual disdain reserved for the beggars, but the *brāhmaṇa* begged from everyone, even from improvised dwellings. At the end of the day he collected everything and, after offering it to Kṛṣṇa, he ate the remnants. He never experienced the misery of poverty, for by the grace of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa he was always blissful with love of Kṛṣṇa as he went from door to door. Who can recognize a devotee of Lord Caitanya other than a person who has received Lord Caitanya's mercy?

Śuklāmbara, the poor and devoted *brāhmaṇa* was just like Śrīdāmā, Kṛṣṇa's friend. He was always inside the house seeing Lord Caitanya dance. This was certainly the Lord's special mercy.

The Lord was seated on the throne in the mood of the supreme controller. He saw Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī join the dancing with a cloth bag hanging from his shoulder. The Lord and His devotees enjoyed seeing him dancing with carefree glee, and they all laughed. The munificent Lord addressed Śuklāmbara endearingly asking him to come nearer.

The Lord said, “Birth after birth you have been My impoverished devotee, offering Me everything and remaining a beggar yourself. I always hanker for your offerings, and if you do not give Me I must then take it by force. In Dvārakā I snatched away the sack of chipped rice you had concealed, and when I started eating from it Rukmiṇidevī took hold of My hand to stop Me.”

The Lord then plunged His hand inside Śuklāmbara's bag and took a handful of husked rice. He then put it in His mouth and began chewing it. Śuklāmbara hastily said, “O Lord what have You done, this rice is full of broken rice chips.” The Lord replied, “I eat with delight your chipped rice pieces, but I will never accept or ask for nectar from a non-devotee.”

The Lord who is the life and soul of the devotees is fully independent and always submerged in the highest state of transcendental bliss, who could forbid Him from eating the chipped rice. The devotees marvelled at the Lord's unlimited compassion, holding their heads in their hands, they wept profusely in joy rolling about oblivious of everything as they had never seen such kindness before.

The devotees started up a jubilant *kīrtana* chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy name, everyone old and young joined with tears in their eyes. The devotees wanted to express their humility and joy. Some offered obeisances to the Lord, others spoke saying, “O Lord kindly never leave me.”

Śuklāmbara was feeling the highest ecstasy seeing the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha merrily chewing on his chipped rice.

The Lord said, “O Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī, I eternally reside in your heart. I eat when you are eating and when you go out begging it is like I am going out for a walk. I have descended to distribute love of Godhead and you are My eternal servitor birth after birth. I gift you now with loving devotional service, which is most dear to Me.”

The Vaiṣṇava assembly greeted these benedictory words with clamorous and joyous appreciation. Only the very righteous souls know the real essence of the begging activities of the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa's servants. It is a real wonder that the Lord of the goddess of fortune is snatching and eating the chipped rice that has been begged for from many different houses by a poor *brāhmaṇa*.

The Lord Himself has instructed in the *Vedas* how to make offerings of food with different *mudras* and mantras, and without these the Lord refuses to accept anything. But the Lord Himself has transgressed these rules and regulations for

the sake of His pure devotees. The living proof of this is the eating of Śuklāmbara's chipped rice. Therefore the conclusion is that loving devotion is the foremost of all rules, regulations, and rituals. Rules and speculations are meant to be subservient and secondary to devotional service; those who are dissatisfied with this arrangement fall down from the path of self realization.

Śrīla Vedavyāsa formulated in the Vedic literatures that devotional service is the source and root of all rules and regulations, Lord Gaurāṅga now has directly substantiated this. The *brāhmaṇa* Śuklāmbara did not voluntarily offer the rice with the required regulations of *mudras*, yet the Lord ate it with painstaking care.

Those materialists who have been blinded by the glitter of gold, position, and family cannot recognize a Vaiṣṇava. Lord Kṛṣṇa never accepts the offerings of those who ridicule a Vaiṣṇava seeing him only as a poor simpleton.

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.31.21) it says:

na bhajati kumaṇiṣiṇām sa iḥyām
harir adhanātma-dhana-priyo rasa-jñāḥ
śruta-dhana-kula-karmaṇām madair ye
vidadhatai pāpam akiñcaneṣu satsu

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead became very dear to those devotees who have no material possessions but are fully happy in possessing the devotional service of the Lord. Indeed the Lord relishes the devotional activities of such devotees. Those who are puffed up with material education, wealth, aristocracy, and fruitive activity are very proud of possessing many material things and they often deride the devotees. Even if such people offer the Lord worship, the Lord never accepts it.”

The *Vedas* glorify Kṛṣṇa as being the life of the materially impoverished and surrendered souls, and Lord Gaurāṅga is personally showing this by example. One who hears this narration of how Lord Caitanya ate Śuklāmbara's rice will indeed attain loving devotion to Lord Caitanya's lotus feet.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana dāsa humbly offer this song at their lotus feet.

Chapter 17

All glories to Lord Gaurasundara the Supreme Personality of Godhead and all glories to Lord Nityānanda the embodiment of the highest mood of devotional service. The narrations of pastimes in *Madhya-khaṇḍa* are a cascade of nectar that can wash away the contaminations of faithlessness within.

Lord Caitanya continued His nonstop *kīrtanas* although His true identity remained undisclosed to common men. When He went about the town the people were stunned by His exquisite looks, they thought that He might be Cupid. Some people thought that His demeanor was arrogant; the atheists and logicians felt He paid little attention and respect to the scholars holding titles for as He walked about in a carefree manner, He would associate mostly with His devotees.

The atheists would say to Lord Caitanya, “O Nimāi Paṇḍita, as Your friends we advise You to be careful, because the king might summon You to his court any day now. The people do not see You but hear Your night long *kīrtanas* and because of that their sleep is being disturbed and they curse You and send reports against You, naturally the king believes the people.”

Lord Caitanya replied, “Let it be so. Let your words come true. It has been My wish to see the king. I have studied all the scriptures since childhood and no one inquires from Me on any subject considering Me to be too young and immature. I do not usually meet anyone who is wanting to meet Me, and so if someone is wanting to have audience with Me, I am indeed pleased.”

The atheists sarcastically continued, “The king is a Muslim, he will not engage himself in a scriptural debate, he will want to just hear Your *kīrtana*.” The Lord just ignored them and went home.

The Lord said to His devotees, “Let us perform *kīrtana*, I feel discontent because I have spoken to atheists today.” The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Nimāi Paṇḍita began to dance and all His associates danced around Him.

Suddenly stopping everything Lord Caitanya spoke hesitantly, “O My dear brothers, today everything I do lacks loving ecstasy. Maybe it is due to My having spoken to atheists, or perhaps I have offended You, in which case kindly forgive Me and resuscitate My withering soul.”

The greatly blessed Advaita Ācārya, who was dancing grimacing plainly said, “How will You feel ecstasy, Nāḍā has drained all out of You. Neither I nor Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita can get this love of Godhead, but low class millers and gardeners are relishing the exchange of love and devotion with You. Even Avadhūta Nityānanda is also a recipient of Your love but not Me or Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. We have been down graded and made noneligible for Your love but this Avadhūta came from nowhere and became the storekeeper in charge of the storehouse of love of Godhead. Listen to Me, My Lord, if You do not give Me this love of Godhead then I shall suck from You all the love, and then I cannot be blamed for it.”

Advaita Ācārya is always intoxicated with love for Lord Caitanya, therefore He is unmindful of what He says or does. He is an expert in incarnating the fame and glory of Kṛṣṇa's devotees. He is the property of the Vaiṣṇavas, they can sell Him where they want. Such is the degree of His surrender to the Vaiṣṇavas. It is not surprising to hear Advaita's words to Lord Caitanya, for He is a devotee of such a stature that He can sell even Kṛṣṇa with His loving devotion.

Lord Caitanya arranges in so many ways for His devotees to advance in spiritual life, who can understand His mercy and His ways of chastising. The Lord felt empty within and devoid of love of Godhead, and Advaita Ācārya clapped His hands and danced.

Lord Viśvambhara heard Advaita Ācārya speak but did not reply. Right then He left the house closing the door behind Him. Lord Nityānanda and Haridāsa Ṭhākura went hurrying after Him. The Lord was brooding over the fact that as He was devoid of love of Godhead. Thinking that there was no use maintaining His body, He plunged into the waters of the Ganges.

Lord Nityānanda and Haridāsa Ṭhākura almost simultaneously jumped into the water after the Lord. Swimming swiftly, Nityānanda caught the Lord by His hair and Haridāsa firmly gripped His feet. They brought Lord Viśvambhara to the safety of the riverbank.

The Lord inquired of them, “Why did you capture Me? What is the necessity of prolonging this lifeless soul which had no love for Kṛṣṇa? You have committed a mistake.” Both Nityānanda and Haridāsa were shaking with anticipation as to what would happen next. Lord Gauracandra looking at Nityānanda said, “Why did You catch Me by My hair?” Nityānanda replied, “Why were You trying to commit suicide?”

Lord Caitanya said, “I know You are always engrossed in love of Godhead.” Lord Nityānanda replied, “O Lord, please forgive everything. The person You could have easily perished is the person You are trying to give up Your life for. Your devotees have spoken to You harshly out of loving insolence, and for this reason must You go away from us, Your servitors, their most precious life?” Lord Nityānanda, who is always relishing Lord Caitanya's love spoke this with a voice full of flattery and tears full in His eyes, Lord Caitanya means everything to Lord Nityānanda.

The Lord said, “Listen carefully Nityānanda and Haridāsa. Do not disclose to anyone that you have seen Me. If anyone inquires, then tell them You do not know anything about My whereabouts. I will remain here in hiding. If You do not follow what I say then I am not responsible for the consequences.” The Lord then went to Nandana Ācārya's house. The two of them did not reveal any of these facts to anyone being bound by the Lord's order.

The devotees were in a state of painful shock. When they did not receive any news of the Lord, they took shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa. They were torn apart by separation from their Lord, and their minds and hearts were burning up.

The devotees felt as if thunderstruck, especially Advaita Ācārya was ravaged by a tremendous sense of guilt. Feeling intense separation from the Lord He went home and began to fast without hearing His name.

The other devotees also went back to their homes, their hours darkened by deep sorrow, but ensconced within their hearts was their precious treasure, the Lord's lotus feet.

The Lord entered Nandana Ācārya's house and sat on the throne of Lord Viṣṇu. Nandana Ācārya felt that his house was now most blessed by the Lord's presence. He fell flat on the ground to offer obeisances to the Lord. He immediately brought fresh new clothes to the Lord, and Lord Caitanya changed out of His wet clothes into the new ones.

Nandana Ācārya then decorated the Lord with the deities flower garlands, sandalwood paste, scented oils and brought Him chewing betel leaf in camphor. The Lord enjoyed these offerings made by His pure devotee with loving surrender and forgot His aching heart. The Lord said, “O Nandana Ācārya, kindly hear Me. I want you to hide Me here.”

Nandana replied, “My dear Lord, that is an almost impossible task. Where in this entire creation can You hide? You could not remain hiding within the hearts of living entities but were made to appear in person by Your pure devotees. One who could not hide, lying in the middle of the vast milk ocean how can He hide in the middle of this congested human inhabitation?”

Lord Caitanya smiled, appreciating Nandana Ācārya's words, and passed the night in his house. Nandana was indeed very

pious and fortunate, he conversed with the Lord the whole night long with the greatest of pleasure, divining topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes. As if in a short moment the night was gone and as the Lord looked out He saw the first faint light peeping through.

At first the Lord was chastising Advaita Ācārya in His mind, but later He felt very compassionate towards Him. Lord Caitanya instructed Nandana Ācārya, "Bring Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita here alone." Nandana immediately went to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house and brought him back to the Lord's presence.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita broke down in tears of love as soon as he saw Lord Caitanya. The Lord spoke to him ever so kindly, "Do not worry any more, now tell Me how is Advaita Ācārya?" After describing the critical condition of the devotees, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said, "And here is more news, Advaita Ācārya is on fast since yesterday and is somehow continuing to live as His body is still there. He is exceedingly afflicted, be merciful to Him my Lord, and appear before Him in person, if this concerned someone other than Advaita I would not feel responsible. But I know that You mean everything to Him. Without You, my Lord, our lives are dark and gloomy, what is the reason we suffer such excruciating pain of separation. Your leaving us is more than an harsh chastisement so now kindly return and give us Your mercy."

Śrīvāsa's words made Him feel supremely compassionate, and He went to see Advaita. The Lord saw Advaita in a state of abysmal gloom and thinking of Himself as the worst offender. He felt that He had become overtly proud from receiving the Lord's special grace and now by this punishment He was shaking all over His body. This pitiable sight of Advaita's condition softened the Lord's heart and He spoke to Him benignly, "O Advaita Ācārya, get up and see I, Viśvambhara have come to see You." Feeling ashamed, Advaita remained silent, and in intense love for the Lord He just meditated on His lotus feet.

Again Lord Caitanya addressed Him, "Rise up Advaita, discard Your mood of discontentment and go about doing Your normal routine."

Advaita Ācārya replied, "O Lord now You have made Me do something. All that You speak about Me are superfluous praises, this turns My head and boosts up My pride leading Me to the path of hell. You have allowed every other devotee to develop a healthy mood of servitorship to You, but to Me You show Your reverence. You make Me do things and ascribe My position and You also mete out chastisement accordingly. You say that I am Your servant in Your mind You harbor some other ideas. You are My life, treasure, body, mind, You are everything to Me. Yet You cause Me pain, of course that is the prerogative of Your supreme position. My dear Lord, I just pray to You for one thing, kindly allow Me to serve You as Your eternal servant and give Me shelter at Your lotus feet as You would to a maidservant's son."

Lord Gaurasundara then spoke to Advaita Ācārya in front of the assemble of Vaiṣṇavas, "Listen Advaita I will reveal to you the esoteric truths. Let Me cite you an example that will explain My point. When the highly placed and trusted officer of the king goes to see the king then all the guards and servants approach him with their problems to be placed before the king. This officers does so as well as collects their remunerations on their behalf and also disburses the money amongst them which sustains the many families of the guards and servants. And if such a trusted officer commits a grievous offense then the king's order for his death does not put the guards and servants into anxiety for sustenance. On one hand because of being loyal the officer was entrusted with an important position as a mark of appreciation, but the same person was executed for his offenses.

Similarly, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the emperor of all the kings and emperors, He is the master of both Brahmā, the creator of the universe and Lord Śiva, the annihilator of this creation. The Lord gave everyone their potency, whether to create or do anything. No one dare raise objection if the Lord wants to punish our individuals. Even Rāmā, the goddess of fortune, who is the eternal consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa is punished and even Lord Brahmā and other demigods are not spared from His punishment. But the Lord is always prepared to forgive the offenses of His devotees. When Lord Kṛṣṇa sees anyone committing any offense and actually punishes him, then know for certain that that person will attain the position as His eternal servant. So get up and bathe and complete your daily worship, then eat and stop worrying."

Advaita Ācārya became elated, the servant felt happy hearing about his punishment for his master. Advaita said, "Now I can say You are My Lord and master," and He began to dance and clap His hands. He was overwhelmed with joy being assured of the Lord's shelter and He forgot His previous sorrows.

The devotees became very happy, and Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa Ṭhākura began laughing. Those who are unfortunate are deprived of relishing this nectarean pastime of the Lord.

Advaita Ācārya is Lord Caitanya's eternal servitor. If anyone considers Advaita's spiritual wealth and position as the Lord's servant to be meager and low is in illusion. One should not diminish the significance and standing of a servant of the Supreme Lord because the Lord never elevates anyone to the position of His servitor until that person has sufficient spiritual realization to attain that transcendental platform. A person first attains liberation thus breaking the bonds of the materialistic concepts of life, only then does he become eligible to be a servitor of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This has been delineated by the great Ācāryas who have commented upon *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and other Vedic works, they all described the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, and worshiped Him. The pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa are all invested with

His spiritual potency and if anyone commits any offenses Kṛṣṇa mercifully punishes him to rectify him.

Those devotees who are narrow minded and bigoted start fighting over petty matters, this is a serious deviation from the path of spiritual realization and so a real knowledgeable devotee will refrain from taking sides in such disputes.

Pure devotion means someone who has no doubt that Lord Gauracandra is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, others who doubt are faithless, their devotion is impure that will lead them ultimately to degradation. Such faithless persons sometimes play the part of a 'guru' collecting disciples having the intelligence of asses and foxes and instruct them to think that the guru is equal to the Supreme Lord Himself.

Those who possess the power to create, maintain and annihilate this material cosmos is certainly not greater than a pure devotee of Lord Caitanya. One of the best examples of such devotees is Lord Balarāma, although He is the support of the entire cosmic creation He is still a perfect devotee of Lord Caitanya. All glories to Lord Nityānanda, Haladhara, by whose mercy one is able to glorify Lord Caitanya. Only He can bless one to develop attachment for Lord Caitanya; all the pastimes I am narrating is possible due to His potency. One thought I always cherish in my mind is that my Lord and master Nityānanda Prabhu is the servant of Lord Caitanya.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana dāsa humbly offer this song at their lotus feet.

Chapter 18

All glories to Lord Gauracandra, the benefactor of the world. Kindly offer Your lotus feet to be cushioned deep within my heart. You are the life and soul of Lord Nityānanda and Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī; You are the abode of all excellences and the protector of Your devotees, All glories to You and Your devotees. One attains the highest perfection, love of Godhead by hearing the pastimes of Lord Caitanya as He gradually unfolded the transcendental mystery of the congregational chanting of Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name. Kindly hear those narrations of *Madhya-khaṇḍa* attentively as it reveals the pastime of Lord Viśvambhara dancing dressed as Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune and eternal consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

One day Lord Viśvambhara told His devotees that He wanted a dance drama arranged. He called for Buddhimanta Khān and instructed him, "Prepare a stage for a dance drama and get the costumes, conch shell bangles, brassieres, silk sari, ornaments and other items for everyone. Gadādhara Paṇḍita will play the role of Rukmīṇīdevī and Brāhmaṇanda will be her old lady companion Suprabhat. Nityānanda will play My old grandmother, and Haridāsa will play the guard responsible to wake everyone up. Śrīvāsa will be Nārada Muni. Śrīrama will be the *brāhmaṇa* who is returning from his bath, and Śrīman insists on being the torch bearer. So, Buddhimanta, quickly go and arrange all, I want to dance."

Sadāśiva Buddhimanta became very enlivened and happily went off to make the necessary arrangements. He pulled out the canopy made in Kathiār just for such occasions a built a nice enclosure and stage. He also brought the different costumes and placed them before the Lord. Lord Viśvambhara was pleased with the costumes and He said, "Today I will dance as the potency and consort of the Supreme Lord. Only those who are in control of their senses can enter the house and see the performance, others are not to enter." At first when they heard that Lord Viśvambhara will dance as Lakṣmīdevī they were excited and happy, later when the Lord repeated the conditions He had set, the Vaiṣṇavas became depressed in spirit.

The first person to react was Advaita Ācārya He drew a line on the floor and said, "I cannot see the dance today. I come under the category of persons with uncontrolled senses so I have no business seeing the dance." Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita joined in saying, "Yes, I feel the same way too." Lord Caitanya gave a short laugh and said, "If you do not come then for whom am I to dance?" Lord Caitanya, the Supremely scintillating actor reviewed His instructions and said, "All of you do not worry, today you will be like the most perfected and self controlled yogis. You will not be attacked by delusion seeing My dance."

Advaita Ācārya and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita became merry again with the other Vaiṣṇavas and all followed the Lord to Candraśekhara Ācārya's house. Mother Śacīdevī accompanied Lakṣmīpriya, the relatives of all the Vaiṣṇavas also went to attend Lord Caitanya's dance performance, which they heard will be unique to see Lord Caitanya as Lakṣmīdevī. Candraśekhara Ācārya was indeed a very fortunate soul to have Lord Caitanya reveal such an unprecedented pastime in his house.

Lord Caitanya sat down with all the devotees and allocated different roles to them. Advaita Ācārya, with folded hands inquired repeatedly, "Which role do You want Me to play?" The Lord replied, "All the roles are at Your disposal, choose anyone You like." Advaita Ācārya was at a loss as to which role to play, He made the usual grimaces and danced about, floating on clouds of ecstasy. The other Vaiṣṇavas began a jubilant melodious Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana* lead by Mukunda who sang with a clear charming voice, "Bolo Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Hari, Gopāla Govinda."

The first to enter the drama arena was Haridāsa Ṭhākura, dressed as a guard flourishing a full grown flowing moustache, a turban tied around his head, and a piece of cloth tied tightly around his waist. With an ominous looking stick he warned everyone, “Hear now! Hear now my brothers! Look sharp and sit up, the Lord and soul of the universe, Śrī Caitanya will now dance as Lakṣmīdevī.” He wriggled his stick and paced about, his body horipilating into loving sentiments for Kṛṣṇa and stirring in others the same spiritual emotions. With a loud and arrogant voice he declared, “Worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, render service unto Him, and chant His holy names.”

The devotees broke out in peals of laughter seeing this new appearance of Haridāsa and asked, “Who are you? What are You doing here?” Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, “I am a guard in Vaiṣṇava, I travel everywhere continuously to awaken Kṛṣṇa consciousness in everyone. The Supreme Lord has left His eternal abode Vaiṣṇava to come here and indiscriminately and profusely distribute love of Godhead. Today He will dance in the role of Lakṣmīdevī so you should diligently and greedily collect love of Godhead.” Saying this he twirled his handle bar moustache and moved about the arena stomping and loudly exclaiming with his partner Murāri Gupta. Both these devotees are pure loving servants of Kṛṣṇa and indeed Lord Gauracandra is always residing within there.

Soon Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita entered the arena dressed as Nārada Muni looking very joyful. He had a long white beard, his body was decorated with little dots of sandalwood paste, he was carrying the vina hung over his shoulders and holding *kuśa* grass in his hands he looked about him standing in the middle of the arena. Rāmāi Paṇḍita followed him in with a folded sitting mat under his arms holding a renunciates water pot. Rāmāi spread the mat for Nārada to sit; it was as if Nārada had appeared in person.

The devotees were impressed with Nārada's make up and laughed in appreciation, but Advaita spoke up in a loud grave voice, “Who are you, and what brings you here?” Śrīvāsa replied, “Listen carefully to my narration. Nārada is my name, I am a singer, I sing about Kṛṣṇa, and I travel the length and breath of this unlimited cosmos. I went to Vaiṣṇava in search of Kṛṣṇa and there I was informed that Kṛṣṇa has come to Navadvīpa. There I noticed that the houses were empty and practically no one was in sight. I could not remain in a deserted place even if that was Vaiṣṇava, so I remembered my Lord and came here. Today, my Lord is dancing here dressed as Lakṣmīdevī, that is why you find me here.” When Śrīvāsa finished speaking the Vaiṣṇavas had no doubt that in speech, looks, action, and character Śrīvāsa was the same person as Nārada. The devotees greeted him with loud applause.

Mother Śacī was sitting with the other pious and pure ladies, drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa consciousness that flowed freely in the play. She asked Mālinīdevī, “Is that Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, your good husband?” Mālinī replied, “Indeed it is so.” Śacīdevī is the mother of the universe, she marvelled at Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's present appearance and feeling uncontrollable joy she fell down unconscious. Everyone was feeling amazed at this wonderful sight. The ladies around her chanted Kṛṣṇa's name into her ears, and slowly she regained consciousness. Then remembering Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, she became again spiritually restless making it difficult for the ladies to hold her still. Inside and outside the house people were moved by wonderful spiritual emotions and they wept oblivious of everything.

Inside the dressing room Lord Viśvambhara had finished dressing and suddenly He was overcome and captured by the emotions and moods of Rukmīṇīdevī. The Lord forgot Himself, thinking and feeling like the princess of Vīdarbhā, Rukmīṇīdevī. As He wanted to write a letter to Kṛṣṇa for help, the tears that rolled down His cheek became His ink; mother earth, the paper; and His finger, the pen. He wrote down the seventh verse of Rukmīṇīdevī's letter to Kṛṣṇa from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Those who were present there read the words with moistened eyes. So now hear the explanation of this verse by which the Supreme Lord becomes one's husband, the only beloved and protector.

They read:

śrutvā guṇān bhuvana-sundara śṛṇvatām te

nirviśya karmā-vivarair harato 'ṅga-tāpam

rūpam dṛśām dṛśimatām akhilārtha lābham

tvayy acyutāviśati cittam apatrapam me

Śrī Rukmīṇī said [in her letter, as read by the *brāhmaṇa*]: O beauty of the worlds, having heard of Your qualities, which enter the ears of those who hear and remove their bodily distress, and having also heard of Your beauty, which fulfills all the visual desires of those who see, I have fixed my shameless mind upon You, O Kṛṣṇa. (*Bhag.* 10.52.37)

Lord Caitanya started speaking with the emotion and mood of Rukmīṇīdevī. He said, “O My matchless beauty when I heard of Your qualities all the material miseries that set me on fire were extirpated. The sight of Your charming face is the rarest treasure in the world; only those who are given the eyes to see this wonderful sight by the Lord's mercy is able to see. O Lion-hearted Yadu king, Your fame has fanned my hearts desire to reach out to You. Which chaste maiden in this universe can resist the attraction of Your lotus feet if she once has the opportunity to worship You. In Your absence erudition, aristocracy, character, wealth, beauty, behavior, and house all seem empty and futile.

“O Supreme Lord forgive me for my shamelessness, but I cannot refrain my yearning heart from rushing out to meet You. Thus I have earned Your lotus feet, and I offer my mind, intelligence, my very life to You. Now kindly make me Your maidservant by accepting me as Your wife, let not my fate drive to be the object of Śiṣupāla's pleasure. O Lord let me become Your property so that what is meant for the lion may not be usurped by the jackal. If I have truly worshiped the Gods, performed austere, honored the *brāhmaṇas* and guru and served the lotus feet of Acyuta, Viṣṇu, then let the Lord who holds the mace become my eternal master and that Śiṣupāla be driven out of my life forever, this is the only favor I ask of You. Tomorrow I am supposed to wed this Śiṣupāla so come immediately without delay. At first remain secretly near the palace in hiding then enter the palace assembly with your army. You must take me from the midst of such kings as Chedi, Salva, Jarasandha with valor and might.

This is the opportunity to show off Your *kṣatriyas* pride and strength because Your wife is not meant to be desecrated by Śiṣupāla. You have to kidnap me from amongst my friends and relatives, so You must be careful not to harm them. I have a plan how this can be accomplished and I place it for Your approval at Your lotus feet. It is customary in our family that the bride to be visits the temple of Durgādevī, on the day prior to her marriage. This is the best chance for You to kidnap me but without hurting my friends. Forgive me my Lord, if I sound offensive. The dust of Your lotus feet is covered by all the demigods and goddesses even Lord Śiva desires to cover his body with this dust, and if You do not offer me the same as a token of Your mercy then I will surely take an oath to quit this body. O my lotus eyed Lord, please listen, I am willing to go through as many life times as required but I must receive the dust of Your lotus feet. You have heard carefully, O *brāhmaṇa*? Now run swiftly to Kṛṣṇa with this message and beg Him on my behalf.”

Thus the Lord manifested Rukmiṇī's mood and emotions making the devotees sometimes weep and at other times laugh, all this was happening under the influence of love of Godhead. Candrasekhara's house reverberated with jubilant sounds of Lord Hari's name. Haridāsa continued his duty as the guard to wake up everyone and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita playing Nārada Muni continued dancing.

The first scene ended on this merry note. The second scene commenced with Gadādhara Paṇḍita entering the arena, with her old lady companion acted by Brāhmaṇanda. Brāhmaṇanda was so well dressed that he was unrecognizable in his role as the old lady with a stick in one hand, a basket clamped under the other arm, and a net like cloth draping over the shoulders. Haridāsa inquired, “Who are you?” Brāhmaṇanda replied, “Mathurā is our destination,” Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita probed further, “Who are your husbands?” Brāhmaṇanda rallied, “Why must you know that?” Śrīvāsa said, “Is it not proper to ask?” Brāhmaṇanda simply said, “Yes, yes” and shook his head. Gaṅgādāsa said, “Where will you stay today?” Brāhmaṇanda replied, “Why, will you give us a place?” Gaṅgādāsa said, “That is a big request, no need for further discussions. You should move out of here.”

Advaita Ācārya said, “What is the necessity for such interrogations? Other's wives are to be respected as the mother, so why then in this manner?” My Lord is extremely fond of singing and dancing, so dance here and you will receive handsome rewards.”

Advaita Ācārya's words were soothing to Gadādhara Paṇḍita and being encouraged and pleased he began to dance. He was dressed as Rāmā, Lakṣmīdevī, and his dancing was enrapturing and the devotees sang appropriate songs in accompaniment. The devotees were unable to remain still, moved to tears by Gadādhara's ecstatic dancing. Gadādhara's tears of love of Godhead cascaded down to be received gratefully by the more than fortunate mother earth. It was as if Gaṅgādevī in person had appeared, indeed she is the transcendental internal potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya so often said, “Gadādhara is My wife from Vaikuṇṭha.” Those who were present in that assembly both the performing artists as well as the audience were enraptured in love of Godhead by the mercy of Lord Caitanya. Lord Hari's name was being chanted loudly all around accompanied by weeping in loving ecstasy. Gadādhara Paṇḍita steeped in the mood of *agopī* danced and danced.

Just then Lord Viśvambhara entered the arena dressed as the original pleasure potency of the Lord, Rādhārāṇī, and Lord Nityānanda as the old grandmother Paurṇamāsī walked in front slightly bent, looking shrewdly about her, her whole demeanor exuded ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. They were greeted from the Vaiṣṇava assembly with loud jubilant applause.

It was impossible to recognize Lord Caitanya as He had dressed Himself very well and looking most charming. The viewers just saw two ladies: the elderly lady played by Nityānanda Prabhu and the young enchantress played by Lord Caitanya. Nothing indicated Their actual identities. The audience tried to guess which one of them was Lord Caitanya. They started wondering had she, Rāmā just now appeared out of the ocean, or was Sitādevī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra? Maybe she was Mahālakṣmī, the eternal consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa; or was she the life of Lord Śiva, Pārvatīdevī? Or is she the most precious gem of Vṛndāvana, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī? Or was she Gaṅgādevī, or compassion, or Mahā-māyā. Everyone imagined according to their belief without recognizing the Lord: persons who have known the Lord since birth were also fully deceived. What to speak of other people being deceived, even mother Śacīdevī failed to recognize her own son; she said, “she must be Lakṣmīdevī herself, come here to dance.” The consort and pleasure potency of the Lord Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is inconceivable, Lord Hari the Supreme Lord Himself is now playing her part.

This bewitching form of the Lord's potency and consort had put Lord Śiva and Pārvatīdevī into this same delusion, yet

presently the assembled Vaiṣṇavas did not experience this same decision, because of the Lord's special grace upon them; He showed His unlimited compassion on the Vaiṣṇavas like a mother tending Her young ones, all the devotees felt that she was their mother on a visit from the spiritual realm. Their exultations were unreserved and made them forget themselves; Advaita and all the devotees were swept away on waves of spiritual bliss in love of Godhead seeing their beloved Lord dressed in the role of Lakṣmidevī.

Lord Viśvambhara as Lakṣmidevī was the universal mother, and as she danced being overtaken by different emotions singers sang appropriate songs complimenting the Lord's moods. The devotees could never discern with certainty what and whose spiritual emotions were being manifest in the Lord's dancing. When the Lord suddenly asked, “*Obrāhmaṇa*, has Kṛṣṇa arrived?” then they understood that the Lord is Rukmiṇidevī, the princess of Vaiṣṇa. When cascading tears decorated the Lord's emotions then the Vaiṣṇavas seemed to think that the Lord was Gaṅgādevī in person. And when the Lord laughed with ear splitting peals they assumed that He was the ferocious form of Mahā-māyā, Durgādevī. At times when He danced swaying and spinning like a drunken lady they thought that He was Revatī, wife of Lord Balarāma. Another time when the Lord said, “O grandmother! come let us go to Vṛndāvana.” The Vaiṣṇavas guessed He was none other than a *gopī* from Vṛndāvana. When the Lord sat on the deities throne the Vaiṣṇavas recognized Him as the powerful goddess controller of the material nature Durgādevī. One by one the Lord played the roles of His different eternal potencies.

Beside's performing this transcendental pastime for everyone's pleasure the Lord simultaneously gave spiritual instructions through them. That no one should at any time criticize or diminish the position of His energies manifested on the many demigods and goddesses. By showing proper love and reverence to them one strengthens his devotion and love to Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is unhappy if His devotees the demigods and goddesses are offended; Kṛṣṇa becomes very content if He is offered worship along with His energies and associates. These instructions of the Supreme Lord is the Absolute Truth only the impious are unable to receive and implement them.

The Lord's dancing completely captivated everyone's mind and heart. Whether someone was singing in accompaniment, or just listening and seeing His dancing they experienced sublime joy. Spontaneous tears of Godhead rained from the eyes of all the assembled Vaiṣṇavas. The Lord saw with great pleasure His devotees, who are like the honey suckle bees attracted by nectar of His lotus feet, were always around Him and were happy. The Lord displayed all the ecstatic devotional symptoms like shivering, perspiring profusely, horripilating, weeping etc. Simultaneously as He danced holding Lord Nityānanda's hand.

Śrīman Paṇḍita stood in front holding a lamp, and Haridāsa went around calling everyone's attention. Just then Lord Nityānanda fell to the ground unconscious, unconcerned about His grandmother's costume and His roles as Paurṇamāsī, He was overwhelmed by Kṛṣṇa's love. The devotees looked on in amazement at this wonder and themselves became restless with ecstatic feelings, they began to weep feeling the overpowering influence of Kṛṣṇa's love. All these were being done unseen by Lord Gaurāṅga as some devotees rolled on the ground, others embraced each other and still others wept loudly in great joy.

Lord Caitanya at this juncture took hold of Gopinātha and sat down with him on Lord Viṣṇu's throne manifesting once again the mood of Mahālakṣmī. As the devotees stood around Him with folded hands He said, “Chant prayers to glorify Me.” The devotees discerning the Lord's mood offered their eulogy: some recited prayers to Lakṣmidevī, others to Candi Durgā each according to his realization.

“All glories to the universal mother, Mahā-māyādevī, kindly give the shelter of Your lotus feet to the miserable and suffering living entities. You are the controlling mistress of the entire material system and You appear in every millennium to uphold the principles of religion. Even Lord Brahmā, the creator, Lord Viṣṇu the maintainer, and Lord Śiva the destroyer of this material cosmic structure are incompetent to fully describe Your unlimited potencies, what to consider about others. You are the personification of this material nature and the possessor of all energies; You are faith, compassion, shame and the embodiment of pure devotion to Lord Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa so all branches of learning is Your multifarious manifestations. The *Vedas* describe You as the original energy. You appear to be within this material nature consisting of the three modes, because You are its cause, in fact You are always situated in a transcendental position, even Lord Brahmā is unable to fathom You. You are the eternal, never changing original supreme energy the shelter and resting place of all living beings, the universal mother who sustains everyone being matchless and unrivalled. You are the life sustaining water and one can sever the bonds of material existence by remembering You. You appear also as the blessed mother, Lakṣmī the eternal consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa in the homes of the pious and righteous but to the sinful You manifest as the all devouring death. You are the creator and maintainer of this gigantic cosmos and the living entities who ignore You, not offering You worship are punished by the threefold miseries. You inspire pure faith in the devotee, kindly shelter me in the shade of Your lotus feet. Your illusory potency has kept the entire creation in a trance, and if You do not protect me then who will? Your appearance in the material world is to deliver the living entities, kindly accept the suffering millions as Your eternal servants. You are the object of Lord Brahmā's prayers, by remembering You one attains all perfection.”

With these chosen phrases the Vaiṣṇavas propitiated Lord Caitanya now in the guise of Mahā-Lakṣmī. Then prostrating themselves repeatedly before the Lord they again began to pray to Him, “O mother we are all surrendered to You, kindly

look upon us graciously so that we may remain with fixed minds at Your lotus feet.” A wave of joy swept over the devotees and they raised their arms and began to weep. The ladies were also caught up in this joyous wave and they joined in with tears of bliss drowning Candraśekhara's house with unlimited happiness.

When everyone was thus engrossed in such spiritual merriment night crept in stealthily and left as well unnoticed by the Vaiṣṇavas. Suddenly the brilliant sunrise greeted them; they realized that the night had passed in singing and dancing. But now the dancing had come to an abrupt stop, the devotees looked around perplexed and then began to bitterly regret the passing of the wonderful night. The grief laden eyes of the Vaiṣṇavas that looked at the intruding morning sun would have turned it to ashes if not for the mercy of Lord Caitanya. The devotees and the ladies were weeping in great anguish and throwing themselves on the ground.

Vaiṣṇava ladies are not to be considered in any way inferior but are in fact partial expansions of Nārāyaṇa's potency. They not be consoled for the night that they had just passed in such sublime ecstasy was gone, they all fell at Śacīdevī's feet. Pure devotees should be easily moved to tears because of their long association with pure devotional service.

The devotees lamented, “Oh , why did this night have to end? Why is Kṛṣṇa depriving us of this sublime nectar?” When Lord Caitanya saw that the Vaiṣṇavas were grief stricken He felt compassion for them. Just as a mother feels affection for her son, Lord Caitanya felt that same motherly affection for His devotees. The Lord called everyone one at a time, and as a mother breast feeds her infants, so He breast fed the devotees with milk by His mystic potency. The Supreme Personality of Godhead now accepted the role of His devoted energies, Lakṣmīdevī, Pārvatī, Nārāyaṇī the universal mother. The Lord proved right His own words recorded in the Gītā, *pitāham asya jagato mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ* (Bg. 9.17) “I am the father of this universe, the mother, the support, and the grandsire.”

These devotees who could happily suck this extraordinary milk from the Lord are eternally liberated souls, their good fortune is immeasurable. As they drank the milk their acute feeling of separation dissipated and once again they were intoxicated with sublime joy. The Lord's pastimes are eternal and are perpetually happening without interruption, they simply manifest at a certain time then disappear by the Lord's will just as it is explained in the *Vedas*.

The Supreme Lord of Lords, Viśvambhara manifested such wonderful pastimes in Navadvīpa.

The most precious knowledge of the *Vedas* was exposed in Lord Caitanya's dancing as a *gopī* of Vṛndāvana. And Lord Nityānanda accompanied the Lord as the elderly grandmother Paurṇamāsī. Sincerely hearing these narrations will result in immediate loving attachment for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Nityānanda supported in every respect the moods of Lord Caitanya as He danced as *agopī*. One who is devoid of devotional feelings will never relish such spiritual exchanges. One must be graced by Lord Kṛṣṇa only then can one comprehend the real absolute identity of Lord Nityānanda. One may consider Lord Nityānanda as a yogi, experiencing philosopher, devotee or as one thinks according to his spiritual realization, and one may even doubt that Lord Nityānanda is dear most to Lord Caitanya, still I pray that the lotus feet on my Lord be ever situated on the throne of his heart. But in spite of my Lord Nityānanda being so merciful if He is criticized then I kick that wretched sinner in the head.

These topics as narrated in the *Madhya-khaṇḍa* were indeed streams of nectar for it describes the extraordinary pastimes of how the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa danced with the emotions and sentiments of His eternal consort Śrī Lakṣmīdevī. Dressed as the Universal mother He taught the process of pure devotional service and satisfied everyone's desire by suckling them with breast milk.

The Lord remained for seven days in Candraśekhara's house. The Lord was always enveloped in an extremely brilliant halo much more powerful than the combined energies of the sun, moon and lightning. The fortunate and righteous men, the pure devotees could behold the Lord and His marvelous opulence.

People who came to visit Candraśekhara's house were blinded by this brilliant illumination and could not keep their eyes open. People started commenting, “What can be the cause that one cannot open his eyes in Candraśekhara's house?” The Vaiṣṇavas heard their comments and smiled inside not revealing anything.

Lord Caitanya's Supreme potency is such that no ordinary person can understand His transcendental activities with His devotees and associates.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana Dāsa, humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 19

All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the Lord of all the Vaiṣṇavas. O Lord! Kindly reclaim the living entities by giving them

Your devotional service.

The Lord performed His supramundane pastimes in Navadvīpa hidden from the vision of gross materialists. He went to different devotee's homes and engaged in pleasurable pastimes with Nityānanda, Gadādhara, and other associates.

The Lord is the source of all spiritual ecstasy for the devotees, and in His association they see everything in relationship to Lord Kṛṣṇa. They are completely oblivious to the phenomenal world because they are engrossed in relishing transcendental mellows by chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. They have no other business.

Foremost amongst these intimate associates of the Lord is Advaita Ācārya. His character is unfathomable and only a few devotees know His transcendental position and how close He is to the Lord. Whenever Lord Caitanya came out of His ecstatic trances He would immediately render service to the assembled Vaiṣṇavas, especially to Advaita Ācārya. These dealings of the Lord were the cause of Advaita's constant discontent. His hurt feelings rumbled in His mind like an active volcano. He thought, "He is constantly deceiving Me like a thief. He gives up His position and tries to stealthily catch My feet. I cannot match His strength for He is supremely powerful, so He forcibly takes the dust from My feet. The only support to back on for Me is the devotional service, because without spiritual realization one cannot recognize the Supreme Lord Viśvambhara as He is. People call Me "Advaita-sinha" and I become further deluded by this. Kindly destroy this delusion. In Your pastimes with Bhṛgu You are more glorious than Bhṛgu although some think otherwise and so I will gather about Me hundreds of disciples like Bhṛgu. This will enrage the Lord so much that He Himself will have to punish Me. Lord Caitanya has appeared to explain the path of devotional service and I will firmly oppose His instructions. Naturally this will anger Him and He will have to punish Me, catching Me by the hair.

Preoccupied with these plans, Advaita left Navadvīpa accompanied by Haridāsa Ṭhākura. He came home and remembered all that He had planned and He became obsessed by that one goal. He began to read and explain a book called *Yogavāśiṣṭha* which subscribed to the impersonalistic thought and which was contradictory to the path of devotional service. He explained that according to *Yogavāśiṣṭha* the path of deductive knowledge or empiric speculation was the essence of self-realization. Without understanding the deductive path of knowledge, the path of devotion becomes impotent. Thus empiric knowledge is the essence of everything. Many persons leave home to live in the forest not understanding that this wealth of knowledge is there in the deductive path.

The path of devotion to Lord Viṣṇu is like a mirror and the path of deductive knowledge is compared to the eyes. What use does a blind man have for a mirror? I have thoroughly studied the different scriptures and I have readily arrived at the conclusion that empiric knowledge is the ultimate goal.

Haridāsa Ṭhākura was more than familiar with the ways and nature of Advaita Ācārya and when he heard the Ācārya's attempt to explain everything in light of empiric knowledge he merely laughed. Such is the transcendental characteristic of a pure devotee like Advaita Ācārya. Those who are righteous can easily understand his position but the offensive lot are rejected.

Lord Viśvambhara who is the most munificent Supreme Personality and who fulfills all desires, perceived in His heart Advaita Ācārya's desire. One day He was promenading the streets of Navadvīpa with Nityānanda Prabhu, observing His own creation. Lord Brahmā, the creator of this universe, was watching all these activities of the Lord and feeling very fortunate and, elated, he thought to himself, "The Supreme Lord is appreciating my artistry in engineering this creation."

The two of Them looked like two full moons sailing across the sky as They moved about with charming gracefulness. The residents of Navadvīpa could see Them each according to his own devotion.

The demigods were also surveying the movements of the two moonlike Lords but remained unseen to the human eyes, and they wondered in their minds. They thought they were seeing two moons and because of this they mistook their own heavenly abodes as the earth and the earth as the heavenly planet. They also erred that they were the earthly beings and the earthlings were the residents of heavenly planets. They began talking with each other about the mystery of the two moons. Someone said, "Two moons together were never permitted entry in the heavenly planets." Someone else said, "Let me tell you that one of them is the original moon and the other is His reflection." Yet another said, "The son takes to the father in all respects, so one is the father Moon and the other is his son Mercury?" It is not in the least bit surprising that the demigods are bewildered by the Lord's beauty, for even the *Vedas* are unable to fully describe the form of the Supreme Lord.

So the two Lords moved about in Navadvīpa when Lord Viśvambhara said to Lord Nityānanda, "Let us go to Śāntipura to Advaita Ācārya's house." Both Lords were always ready engage in pleasurable pastimes so They immediately headed for Advaita Ācārya's house.

Almost halfway to Śāntipura, They came across a village called Lalitpura situated on the banks of the Ganges. There in a hut by the river lived a householder *sannyāsa*. Lord inquired from Nityānanda Prabhu, "Please find out whose abode this is." Nityānanda Prabhu replied, "Lord, this is a *sannyāsi*'s residence." Lord Viśvambhara said, "If our fortune permits we might see him. Let us go." Happily they went in and Viśvambhara offered His obeisances to the *sannyāsi*. The *sannyāsi*

was enchanted by Lord Viṣvambhara's charming appearance, perfectly shaped limbs and radiant smile, and being satisfied, the *sannyāsī* blessed Him saying, "May you be blessed with wealth, a large family, learning and a beautiful wife." The Lord immediately replied, "Dear Sir, Gosvāmī, this is not really a blessing. Please tell Me, 'May You receive Kṛṣṇa's blessings.' Such a blessing brings one to the platform of devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu and is eternal, inexhaustible and infallible. It is not becoming of your position to bless Me with these other materialistic advantages."

With a false laugh, more out of displeasure than anything else, the *sannyāsī* replied, "Now I have direct proof of the axiom I have so often heard before that if you try to do good to people they take it in a bad way. This is exactly the manner in which this young *brāhmaṇa* has reacted. I was very pleased and I wished Him all success but He turned my words around and even started blaming me."

The *sannyāsī* inquired, "Tell me, O young *brāhmaṇa*, why do You find fault with my blessings? If a man is born into this world and has not enjoyed the company of an attractive woman or has not collected sufficient wealth, then what is the use of his living? I was wishing You success in this kind of pleasurable life but You are ashamed and reluctant to receive it well. You may be a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu but how will You maintain Yourself without earnings?"

The Lord simply smiled at his words and placed His hand on His forehead in a gesture of sheer fatigue at the *sannyāsī*'s gross foolishness.

The Lord utilized this situation to teach everyone that one should not ask for any blessings other than devotional service to the Supreme Lord. He said to the *sannyāsī*, "Listen, O Gosvāmī, whatever food we eat comes automatically due to our karma.

"If people take birth for the sole purpose of family life with wife, children, and earnings, then why is he forced to leave everything at death? No one desires to be sick and ailing, so why do various diseases attack us and make us suffer? The reason for all this is karma. Everything is a result of our previous activities. Only the elevated and knowledgeable person have full understanding about these facts. Some persons point out that the *Vedas* say that the final goal of human life is to be elevated to the heavenly planets; the real understanding of this Vedic injunction is that the *Vedas* have so enunciated out of extreme leniency towards the ignorant people. Materialistic and ignorant people are naturally inclined to a life of luxury and physical pleasures, so knowing this well, the *Vedas* have recommended accordingly—the *Vedas* are not to be blamed for this.

"The general mass of people think that by chanting God's name and taking ablutions in the Ganges one acquires wealth and success in family life, and so they respect and take shelter of the Vedic injunctions; but the real result of such performance is that one quickly develops devotion to the Supreme Lord. And so the ignorant people who do not understand the purport of the Vedic injunctions reject the fruit that leads to devotional service to Kṛṣṇa and endeavor after materialistic pleasures. Please consider well all these points O Gosvāmī, because there is no goal or activity superior to devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa."

Thus the Supreme Lord, the supreme instructor—aiming these instructions toward the whole world—spoke to the *sannyāsī* and pointed out that devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate purpose of the *Vedas*. All these instructions of Lord Viṣvambhara are indeed the absolute truth, and those whose hearts are contaminated due to sinful activities cannot receive them to heart.

The householder *sannyāsī* smiled and thought to himself, "This young *brāhmaṇa* must have become a lunatic due to the effect of some mantra. It may also be that the person dressed as a *sannyāsī* who is accompanying Him has somehow mesmerized Him." The *sannyāsī* spoke out loud, "Finally it has happened. In front of a mere child, I suddenly know nothing. I have travelled around the world—Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Haridvāra, Badrikāśrama, Gujarat, Kāśī, Gayā, Vijayanagara, Ceylon, and to many other cities—and now I am not supposed to know any longer what is good and bad. I have to learn all this from a suckling baby."

Still smiling Lord Nityānanda replied, "Listen Gosvāmī, you don't have to unnecessarily argue with a mere child. I am well aware of your position and fame. Please just consider My proposal as I am older and forgive Us for whatever has happened."

Hearing his own praises being sung, he became once again amiable and requested his guests to take food. Lord Nityānanda said, "We must leave right away since more urgent business must be attended to, but you can pack some eatables for Us which We can eat after Our bath on the way.

The *sannyāsī* insisted, "Take Your bath here, take Your meal and after a cooling rest You can be on Your way again." The two Supreme Personalities have descended to this mortal world for the sole purpose of delivering the most fallen souls, and so They spent some time with the householder *sannyāsī*.

They washed away Their weariness in the cooling waters of the Ganges and then returned to the *sannyāsī*'s dwelling. They offered some ripe mangos, jackfruit, and milk to Lord Kṛṣṇa and then relished this *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* in the presence of

Their pleased host.

The *sannyāsī* was following some of the tantric practices of Śakti worship and he used to consuming liquor. The *sannyāsī* indirectly made this known to Lord Nityānanda. He said, “Listen Śrīpāda, shall I bring us some *ānanda*? How often will I get guests like You?” Lord Nityānanda who has Himself travelled widely and has seen much, understood that this *sannyāsī* was addicted to alcohol. The *sannyāsī* repeated several times whether he should bring *ānanda* or not, and Nityānanda replied each time, “We must leave right now.”

The *sannyāsī*'s wife was sitting inside looking at the two Lords, who she saw were more charming than Cupid. She stared at Them as if in meditation. She corrected her husband saying, “Why do you disturb Them during eating?”

Lord Viśvambhara inquired aside, “What is this *ānanda* he is talking about?” Lord Nityānanda replied, “I think he means liquor.”

Lord Caitanya immediately remembered Lord Viṣṇu and called out His name. Quickly rinsing His mouth and hands, They left the house. They walked to the riverbank and jumped into the water of the Ganges and swam all the way to Śāntipura to Advaita Ācārya's house.

The Lord shows His mercy to a licentious drunkard but annihilates Vedāntists if they are offensive to the devotees of the Lord and the Lord Himself. Although this so-called *sannyāsī* was a drunkard and intimately associated with women, still the Lord visited his dwelling. He conversed with the *sannyāsī*, gave him instructions, rested and ate in his house. This *sannyāsī* may not become fully purified in this life but has to wait for another birth; the agnostics who criticize the Lord and His devotees will never become eligible to receive the Lord's mercy. Even if one is a *sannyāsī* still that does not make him eligible to see or meet the Supreme Lord. This is evident from the incident which occurred in Vārāṇasī with the *sannyāsīs* there.

In the last section of this book it narrates that when Lord Caitanya went to Kāśī many residents and some *sannyāsīs* heard the news of His arrival. The *sannyāsīs* were joyful to receive the news and were eager to meet Him since they had heard much about His exceptional characteristics. These *sannyāsīs* were all Vedāntists impersonalists and were well versed in intellectual matters and in performing various austerities. As life long residents of Kāśī they were well-respected. All their impressive qualifications were undermined by a single fault—they taught and explained the Vedānta devoid of the science of devotion to Lord Viṣṇu. Lord Caitanya is the Supersoul within each individual's heart. He was aware of this and although He visited Kāśī He did not give these *sannyāsīs* the opportunity to meet Him.

In Vārāṇasī He stayed in Rāmacandra Purī's *maṭha* for two months without revealing His whereabouts, but spent most of His time in Candrasekhara's house. He left Vārāṇasī two days before the *viśvarūpa-kṣaura*, the special shaving ceremony on the full moon day during Caturmasya followed by Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs*. He left without public knowledge and only later the *sannyāsīs* came to know that they had missed seeing Him.

The offence of criticizing the Lord of His devotee even once steals a man's proper intelligence. The *sannyāsīs* did not feel any remorse at not meeting the Lord. Further to it they said, “We are all *sannyāsīs*. Why did He leave without first speaking to us? What was the reason He could not wait two days and perform the special shaving ceremony *viśvarūpa-kṣaura*? By doing this He has neglected the duties of His order.”

The intelligence of nondevotional people are spoilt in this manner and Lord Śiva never accepts worship from such offenders. In fact, Lord Śiva, the Lord of Kāśī, metes out punishment to such offenders of the Vaiṣṇavas and takes away whatever little devotion they may have.

Lord Gaurasundara has advented specifically to deliver all the fallen souls with the exception of those who find fault in the devotees of the Lord.

Thus Lord Caitanya ate and rested in a drunkard's home and avoided the company of the so-called learned Vedics *sannyāsīs* just to prove this point. One must be always careful to avoid the Lord's wrath, but those who flout the Lord will suffer eternal punishment in the hands of Yamarāja, the god of death.

Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Ananta Śeṣa, Kamala the universal mother, are constantly engaged in glorifying the Supreme Lord Gaurasundara. Thus if anyone is so unfortunate as not to be attracted by the sweet nectarean pastimes and qualities of Lord Caitanya, then all his Vedic learning and austerities as a *sannyāsī* are rendered useless.

Happily Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda proceeded towards Śāntipura along the bank of the Ganges. As they walked, Lord Caitanya loudly and repeatedly roared, “I am that person; I am that person. Nāda has awakened Me from sleep and brought Me here. He is, I believe, holding dissertations that camouflage the process of devotional service behind a facade of flowery words that present the speculative path of knowledge. Today I will punish him for this. Let the whole world see. I want everyone to see how He defends His bastion of speculative knowledge.” While the Lord thunderously rumbled on in this manner, Lord Nityānanda kept His silence, smiling in His mind.

As Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu swam in the waves of the Ganges, the author recalls to memory Lord Mukunda, Nārāyaṇa, reclining on Ananta Śeṣa lying on the milk ocean.

Advaita Ācārya, a stalwart amongst the followers of Lord Caitanya could understand from before, due to His high devotional merits, that the Lord would react angrily to His presenting the theory of speculative philosophy. So when he realized that Caitanya and Nityānanda had come to Śāntipura He began to speak more vociferously on impersonalistic knowledge. How can one really fathom the devotional mood and activities of the pure devotees of the Lord.

Lord Nityānanda accompanied the irate Lord Caitanya into Advaita's house. Advaita swayed in divine pleasure perfectly playing out His part as an impersonalist. Haridāsa Ṭhākura offered obeisances to the Lord, falling on the ground like a rod; Acyuta, Advaita's son, also offered his respectful obeisances. Advaita's wife, Sītādevī, offered obeisances to the Lord in her mind and felt very upset seeing the Lord's countenance. The Lord's face and expression aroused fear in everyone's heart.

Rumbling with anger, the Lord said, "Hey, You Nāḍā! Tell Me which is superior—speculative knowledge or devotional service?"

Advaita replied, "Speculative knowledge is always superior, for what is the use of devotional service if a person is devoid of impersonal knowledge?"

As soon as these words entered His ears, Lord Caitanya became inflamed and forgot His surroundings. He pulled Advaita out of His seat and dragged Him out to the patio. There he threw Him on the ground and struck Him again and again.

Advaita's wife, Sītādevī, is the universal mother who knows all these confidential topics, yet she could not restrain herself from trying to stop the Lord. "Stop! Stop!" she cried out. "He is just an old *brāhmaṇa*. For whose benefit do You chastise Him so heavily? He is so old that He may not survive Your harsh behavior and You will find it difficult to avoid the consequences of Your actions." Lord Nityānanda smiled at her words and Haridāsa Ṭhākura repeated Kṛṣṇa's name in great fear.

Lord Caitanya was so angry that He did not even hear Sītādevī's words. Roaring like angry thunder He spoke to Advaita, "I was gently relaxing on the milk ocean and You interrupted My sleep, calling Me to attend to Your work. You engineered the propagation of devotional service yet now You audaciously obscure the devotional process with Your circumvent explanation of impersonalism. If You had already made up Your mind to surreptitiously broadcast Your speculative theories, then why did You take the trouble of revealing Me to the world? I did not disregard Your desire and wishes, but You have deceived Me in all respects."

At long last, Caitanya stopped chastising Advaita and went to sit next to the doorway. He spoke loudly, revealing His real identity to all. He said, "O Nāḍā, You know everything. Behold, I am the one who slew Kaṁsa. Śiva, Brahmā, Ananta Śeṣa, and Lakṣmīdevī are all constantly engaged in serving Me. That imposter Vāsudeva met his end, vanquished by My Sudarśana cakra. That same disc reduced the entire city of Vārāṇasī to ashes. My arrow found its mark and killed the great demon king Rāvaṇa. My invincible Sudarśana severed the arms of Bana and destroyed the powerful demon Naraka. I lifted the Govardhana mountain with My left hand, and it is I who brought the heavenly parijata flower to earth. I tricked King Bali out of all his possessions and then benedicted him for his mood of surrender, and I also vanquished the terrible demon king Hiranyakasipu to favor My devotee Prahlaḍa." As the Lord revealed His various pastimes, Advaita felt gradually submerged in an ocean of ecstatic bliss.

Advaita was more than happy to receive His due punishment in this manner and He clapped His hands and pranced in joy feeling peace and humility within. He said, "My Lord, You have rightfully remonstrated Me, and I am lucky to get away with so little. Now I am clear about Your divine authority and I am feeling the renewed strength in My relationship with You as Your servant."

Advaita danced around in ecstasy and then creasing His eyebrows together He prayed to the Lord, "Now where are Your flattering words about Me? What has happened to all that deceit? I am not Durvāsā Muni that You can insult Me, whose remnants of rice You had smeared on Your body. Nor am I Bhṛgu Muni whose foot impression decorated Your breast and is known as the famous Śrīvatsa. My name is simply Advaita, Your eternal and humble servant purely and I am always hankering birth after birth to receive Your remnants. And by the effect of Your remnants or mercy I am unscathed by the ravages of Your illusory potency. The punishment is now over, so please give Me the shelter of Your lotus feet." Saying this, Advaita, the master of Śāntipura, fell to the ground and placed His head on the Lord's lotus feet.

Hastily and with due respect, Lord Viśvambhara picked up Advaita on His lap as tears flooded the Lord's eyes, cascading down unrestrained. Lord Nityānanda and Haridāsa Ṭhākura were unable to contain their ecstatic emotions at the sight of such a display of divine devotional fervor and tears flowed from their eyes in rivers. Sītādevī, Acyutananda, and the servants of the house were crying in intense joy. Advaita's whole house became immersed in love of Godhead.

Lord Viśvambhara now felt ashamed after having chastised Advaita so severely and so He wanted to compensate by

offering Him a boon. He said, "If anyone so much as takes a little shelter at Your feet, be he an insect, worm, animal or bird, and even if he commits a million offenses against Me, I will still grant him My mercy."

When Advaita heard this book He fell at the Lord's feet and crying like a meek child He said, "Whatever You have said My Lord is certainly true. Now please hear and grant Me one favor. If anyone tries to follow and worship Me but does not serve Your lotus feet, then let that so-called devotion to Me vanquish him. I cannot accept anyone who does not serve You. He may be My son or servant but I shall consider him a great offender and shall never see his face. Because I cannot bear to see anyone neglect Your lotus feet. Those who worship You automatically become My dearest friend.

Sometimes one may supersede Your worship and approach up to a million demigods, but those demigods will never entertain him. Instead they will surely squash him by some deception. All that I have said are not My own concoction but are the verdict of the scriptures. The story of Sudakṣiṇa's death from the *Purāṇas* is the proof.

Sudakṣiṇa was the son of the king of Kāśī. A great devotee of Lord Śiva, he was always immersed in meditation on his Lord. Being satisfied with his worship, Lord Śiva appeared to him and said, "Ask for a boon and I shall fulfil your heart's desire. Also, perform the special *yajña* of Abhicharyajña in order to master extraordinary powers, but be very cautious that you do not belittle or offend any devotee of the Lord. If you do you will be immolated."

Sudakṣiṇa had no way of detecting the intention behind Lord Śiva's words so he duly performed the Abhichara sacrifice according to his Lord's instructions. Out of the sacrificial fire appeared a terrifying form. Possessing three hands, three legs, and three heads and towering over him, it said, "Ask for your boon." The prince replied, "Go and burn down the city of Dvārakā." The giant creature became visibly sad and understood that the prince's desire could never be fulfilled. Nevertheless he went to Dvārakā on Sudakṣiṇa's request.

Upon his arrival, he was immediately attacked by the omnipresent and every watchful guard of Dvārakā, the Sudarśana disc. No one can escape the wrath of Sudarśana and so the giant submitted himself at the lotus feet of Sudarśana and said, "The powerful sage Durvāsā could not escape from you and neither could you be contained by such great personalities as Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva; what can and insignificant person as myself do against such an exalted Vaiṣṇava as you. Lord, I have no avenues of escape now, and You are free to do anything with me you like. All glories to you, my Lord who is famous as Sudarśana you are as powerful as my own Lord Śaṅkara and the abode of Kṛṣṇa. All glories to you who possess the form of a disc and is the best amongst the Vaiṣṇavas You instill fear in the hearts of the miscreants and protect the pious."

Sudarśana was appeased by the giant's prayers and he told him to return to the prince who had sent him and destroy him by fire. The terrifying giant returned to the prince of Kāśī and destroyed him.

Sudakṣiṇa tried to override You, My Lord, and tried to worship Lord Śiva with the *yajña*, but the result was that he met his death by this same sacrifice. Similarly, I saw that those who approach Me dismissing Your lotus feet, I destroy them. You are everything to Me; You are the Lord of My life, My most precious treasure, My father and My mother, My dearest friend. I cannot tolerate such offence at Your lotus feet.

There are many examples of this point in the scriptures. King Satrajit once met the sun-god and becoming attracted by his brilliance and personality began worshiping him. But then once he disobeyed Your orders and due to this offence he and his brother were killed and the sun-god saw all this with satisfaction since he had been very upset that Satrajit had disobeyed Your instructions. Duryodhana was a disciple of Lord Balarāma but because he disregarded You he and his entire race was eliminated. Hiranyakasipu became practically invincible by the boon of Lord Brahmā and this made him insolent and inimical towards You so he also died along with his race of demons. The ten-headed Rāvaṇa was the most powerful king of his time having received a boon from Lord Śiva. He was offensive to You and challenged You so he and his entire family was vanquished.

O Lord, You are the root cause and the Supreme Lord of all the demigods. Everything and everyone seen and unseen to human vision is Your servant. One who tries to worship the servant but disregards the Lord and master Himself, then the servant cannot tolerate this offense so he makes a show of accepting the worshipers' worship but finally he personally destroys him. Worshiping demigods like Śiva directly without worshiping You is like watering the branches instead of the root of the tree. You are the original cause of the *Vedas*, the *brāhmaṇas*, sacrifices, and religious practices; I despise that person who disregards Your lotus feet.

Lord Caitanya greatly appreciated Advaita's highly confidential and esoteric prayers and he spoke out in a voice that resembled a thunderclap. "Now listen to Me attentively, I say truly those who worship Me directly but neglect My servants and devotees are most despicable wretches who by doing so cut My body into pieces. Their worship is like burning cinders on My body. He who criticizes and offends My devotee, My name which fulfills all desires will vanquish him. In this way I show My compassion for him. Every living entity is My servant and so I cannot tolerate any violence to them. I destroy anyone who tries to hurt My servants. What to speak of You, Advaita. You are more dear to Me than My own body and any disrespect shown to You is dealt by Me with severity. Even if a *sannyāsī* offends a pure devotee he falls down from his vow and deviates from his religious practices."

Raising both His arms Lord Gauracandra declared to the world, "Give up the offensive attitude of criticizing Vaiṣṇavas and chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name. Anyone who practices this will surely be delivered by Me."

Lord Caitanya's words gripped the devotees in a wave of unrestrained joy and they broke out in chanting the Lord's name loudly. Advaita Ācārya wept in ecstasy catching the Lord's lotus feet and the Lord held Advaita in His endearing embrace and wept.

Advaita's loving devotion flooded the entire universe. Such is the wonderful character and activity of Advaita Ācārya. Advaita Ācārya is nondifferent from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Who, then, can really understand His words. The seemingly abusive exchange between Advaita and Lord Nityānanda can be perceived only by those elevated souls who have reached that state of bliss beyond material influences. The words and activities of the Supreme Lord and His pure devotees, the Vaiṣṇavas, can be understood and appreciated only by their mercy alone.

Discussions of such spiritual nature between Advaita, Nityānanda and other devotees can be realized by Lord Ananta alone, who then sings these with his innumerable mouths.

Lord Viśvambhara glanced at Advaita coming out of His ecstatic engrossment and spoke with a smile, "I have chastised You in a moment of childish frivolity." Advaita replied, "All such pastimes are not factual, but performed to delude us." The Lord said, "Listen Nityānanda, You must kindly forgive Me for My reckless act of immaturity." Nityānanda, Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and Advaita Ācārya exchanged glances amongst each other and then burst out in uncontrolled laughter.

Lord Viśvambhara always addressed Sitādevī, Advaita's wife, as mother; she was a symbol of chastity, always serving her husband to His full satisfaction. Now Lord Viśvambhara went to her saying, "Go quickly and prepare a sumptuous feast for Lord Kṛṣṇa and after offering it to Him, we shall partake of His remnants." The Lord then left to take His bath in Ganges along with Advaita, Haridāsa, Nityānanda, and others. Everyone was in a gay mood. Such unbounding joy and spiritual bliss seen in the Lord's nature is described in detail in the *Vedas*. On returning to the house from His bath, He washed His feet and prostrated Himself before Lord Kṛṣṇa. Seeing the Lord in a prostrated position, Advaita fell at the Lord's lotus feet and Haridāsa also in the ecstasy of devotee association fell at the feet of Advaita. Lord Nityānanda witnessed this wonderful scene with feelings of spiritual bliss surging within Him. Here then was the transcendental bridge of the three expansions of Godhead linked directly to the highest spiritual abode.

Rising from offering obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Viśvambhara noticed that Advaita Ācārya was at His feet and He became very embarrassed. He chanted, "Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu," in humility.

The Lord then took Advaita's hand and entered the eating room with Nityānanda in His familiar charming way. The three Supreme Personalities sat down to eat. Each one of Them was always animated with spiritual ecstasy, and Lord Nityānanda acted as was His nature, as a highly restless young boy. Sitting away from them by the door was Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was spiritually elevated enough to see these different transcendental pastimes. Sitā Ṭhākurānī, Advaita's wife, a most spiritually exalted and versatile lady was serving Them and remembering Lord Hari all the time. She served Them delicacies like flavored rice, ghee, milk, sweet rice, and They ate with pleasure and vivacity.

Advaita Ācārya began to laugh at Nityānanda. They are in fact both the same Supreme Personality, but have become two absolute entities to participate and assist in Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Just towards the end of Their meal Lord Nityānanda became overly restless like a child. He picked up the rice from His plate and threw it all around and then laughed out in childish glee. Lord Viśvambhara cried out in great concern. While Haridāsa Ṭhākura could not check his laughter. Advaita pretended to be inflamed into rage and revealed the truths about the absolute nature of Nityānanda. He angrily said, "This Nityānanda is a drunkard and His company has corrupted my caste. He cannot say who His guru is, nor the place of His birth. He simply introduces Himself as a *sannyāsī*. No one knows Him, His caste or His family. He always walks around swaying like a drunken mad elephant. Previously He was eating in the houses of aliens and now He has come here, trying to mix with the *brāhmaṇas*. I say thrice truly to you Haridāsa that this drunkard will destroy everything." Working himself into a fit of fake rage, Advaita threw off His clothes and clapping His hands, he pranced about in unrestrained glee.

Lord Viśvambhara started laughing at Advaita. Such was His nature that both old and young equally find His character stimulating. Nityānanda also shook with laughter pointing His fingers at Advaita, who was exhibiting such amusing postures in His pretended rage.

After a while when They were again well composed, They rinsed their mouths and hands and then They embraced each other in ecstatic bliss. Both Advaita and Nityānanda are like the two hands of Lord Caitanya. There is no enmity but everlasting anuity between Them. Their quarrels are simulated and meant to support Kṛṣṇa's pastimes; such are the childlike mannerisms of the Supreme Lord and His pure devotees.

Lord Caitanya passed His time in this manner in Advaita's house, engrossed in ecstatic bliss He performed *saṅkīrtana*. These supramundane activities can be understood by Lord Balarāma alone, others cannot fathom the absolute excellences

in the Supreme Lord's nature. By the blessings of Lord Balarāma one is able to repeat these pastimes of Lord Caitanya because Sarasvatidevī, the goddess of learning, seems to dance on His tongue.

I have compiled these pastimes with no idea of the chronological sequence. I have simply presented them as they appear to me and it was possible merely by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I therefore offer obeisances at the feet of all the beloved devotees of Lord Caitanya and beg their forgiveness of the offences I might have committed in this endeavor.

After a few days of sojourn in Advaita's house Lord Caitanya returned to Navadvīpa and His home accompanied by Lord Nityānanda, Advaita and Haridāsa. When the news of the Lord's return to Navadvīpa spread around all the Vaiṣṇavas hurriedly flocked to meet the Lord, bubbling delight was written on everyone's face. The sight of Lord Caitanya's moonlike face immediately dissipated their distress and they fell at His feet weeping. The Lord was their most precious soul; He lovingly embraced everyone who had come to meet Him. All His devotees were like His own expansions—compassionate and exalted Vaiṣṇavas. All the devotees then offered obeisances to Advaita who was the cause for Lord Caitanya's advent. Jubilantly they met each other and began to playfully and loudly talk about Kṛṣṇa's pastime with the Lord.

Mother Śacī was extremely happy to see her son again and together with Viṣṇupriyadevī offered grateful thanks to their deity. all these can fully be described by Lord Ananta alone; He is my life and soul. There is no difference between Lord Balarāma and Lord Nityānanda except Their names, just as the three different words *dvija*, *vipra* and *brāhmaṇa* mean one and the same thing. One who hears with devotion these pastimes of the Lord in Advaita's house, attains the highest bliss.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul. I, Vrindavana dāsa, humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 20

All glories to Gaurasimha, the son of mother Śacī. The shade of Your lotus feet drives away all distresses. You are the life and soul of Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Please be merciful to me so that my mind may remain fixed at Your lotus feet.

Lord Caitanya was now fully engaged in performing His wonderful pastimes with all His associates; sometimes dancing, sometimes singing, yet again crying or laughing, but all these were symptoms of ecstatic love of Godhead.

One day Lord Caitanya was visiting Śrīnivāsa Paṇḍita's house with Lord Nityānanda. As they were sitting, Murāri Gupta came and prostrated himself at the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya. He looked effulgent as he got up and then prostrated before Lord Nityānanda. Lord Caitanya was always pleased with Murāri Gupta, so now he spoke frankly to Murāri saying, "What you just now did by first offering obeisances to Me and then to Nityānanda was a violation of Vaiṣṇava etiquette. Why did you of all persons do this? You are supposed to teach others who are ignorant about these esoteric rules."

Murāri replied, "How can I know about this my Lord? You are in full control of my heart. I have acted according to Your desire."

The Lord then said, "Alright Murāri, go home now, tonight you will come to know everything and tomorrow we shall meet again."

Murāri became grave and, smiling hesitantly, he left for his home. That night, in a dream he saw Lord Nityānanda dressed like a kingly wrestler walking ahead; great hoods of snakes were above His head and in His hands He held the pestle and plough. Lord Nityānanda looked exactly like Lord Balarāma. Behind Him walked Viśvambhara who smiled and spoke in his dream, "Now do you understand Murāri, I am junior, consider this properly in your mind." Now both the supreme brothers smiled at Murāri and after thus instructing him They disappeared.

Murāri woke up immediately and began to shed tears; breathing heavily he kept repeating Lord Nityānanda's name. His chaste wife became worried and prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa chanting His name loudly. Murāri was now convinced that Lord Nityānanda was the elder brother and with this thought he happily hurried to meet the Lord.

He saw the lotus-eyed Lord Viśvambhara sitting with Lord Nityānanda sitting on His right, a benign smile adoring His lips. Murāri went first to Lord Nityānanda and offered obeisances at His lotus feet and then fell at Lord Viśvambhara's lotus feet.

The Lord smiled and inquired, "Murāri, why did you act in this manner?"

Murāri replied, "My Lord I acted according to Your sweet will; like a dry blade of grass is blown in the breeze all living beings perform by Your irresistible power."

Again the Lord said, “Murāri, you are very dear to Me, hence I have disclosed the confidential truth about Myself to you.”

Gadādhara, the Lord's beloved associate was seated on His left. He prepared tambula, pan for the Lord and gave it to Him. The Lord said, “Murāri, you are a stalwart amongst My devotees.” Saying this He gave him some of the chewed pan from His lotus mouth. Murāri received this on the open palms of his hands with eager respect and eating it he felt great ecstasy racing through his body and soul.

Lord Viśvambhara addressed Murāri, “Murāri, go wash your hands now,” but Murāri wiped his palms on his head. The Lord exclaimed, “Now you have lost your caste, you foolish fellow. You have become contaminated by wiping your hands on your head after taking My chewed remnants.

Suddenly, the Lord's mood changed. He became angry, grinding His teeth loudly He began to manifest His true supreme identity. He said, “A *sannyāsī* named Prakasananda, living in Benares has the audacity to try and inflict pain upon My person. He is a teacher of *Vedānta* philosophy but does not accept the existence of God or My supreme form. I have punished him by making him contract leprosy, and yet he fails to understand. The entire unlimited creation is a manifestation of My energy, yet he still impudently maintains that all this is false.

“Murāri, you are my trusted servitor so I am telling you the truth that those who do not respect My form or My personality inevitably perish. Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Lord Ananta, and all the demigods serve the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord as their very dearest object, and by the mere touch of the Lord's body one can be cleansed of all contamination, such a Lord's form is denied by these shameless rascals. Truly, I declare to you that I, the Supreme Lord, My dear servitors and their servants are all manifestations of the Absolute Truth. My transcendental abode and activities are the absolute reality, anyone denying Their existence and veracity verily inflicts countless wounds upon My body.

“Just by hearing the glories of the Supreme Lord, all nescience is nullified. Yet that sinful *Vedānta* teacher says they are unreal. Lord Śiva drinks the nectar of the glories of the Lord with his ears and becomes so intoxicated. That he is unaware of the loss of his clothing. That great Personality Lord Ananta Śeṣa Himself is forever engaged in singing the glories of the Lord. Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Nārada, and other exalted personalities become maddened by the sweetness of the Lord's glories. The four *Vedas* are simply explaining the esoteric nature of the Lord's transcendental glories. And so Murāri, anyone who disregards such super excellent activities and glories of the Lord can never appreciate the real purpose behind My advent.”

Thus addressing Murāri Gupta in this manner the Lord taught the entire world the cardinal truths about His Absolute nature; the Lord's form, devotees, pastimes and abode are all the absolute reality; the unfortunate nonbelievers will be annihilated.

After a while Lord Viśvambhara came out of His trance and became His usual humble self. He lovingly embraced Murāri calling him brother and spoke sweetly to him, “Murāri, indeed you are My pure devotee and thus you have come to perceive the transcendental nature and position of Lord Nityānanda. A person may claim to be My devotee but if he holds the slightest grudge against Lord Nityānanda then I do not favor him. Now go home Murāri, you have outright purchased Me.” Hanuman was the only other devotee of the Lord who had received such causeless mercy as Murāri.

Murāri Gupta, now fully immersed in an ocean of bliss, went home treasuring Lord Nityānanda and Lord Viśvambhara in the inner recesses of his heart. Murāri was drinking the nectar from within and his behavior was inconsistent. He would say one thing but do quite something else, loudly chuckling to himself. Exuberantly he called out to his chaste wife to bring his food and she hurriedly brought his plate.

Murāri Gupta, fully intoxicated with love of God mixed the rice with the ghee and calling out, “Kṛṣṇa, come eat, eat” took the mixed rice in his hand brought it up as if to give to someone and began to strew the rice all over the floor. His chaste wife stood there watching and laughed and kept supplying fresh rice to her husband. She knew well that her husband was a very exalted devotee of the Lord; she called out Kṛṣṇa's name reminding him to be careful.

Lord Caitanya, always attentive to His devotees wishes, accepted all the food offered to Him by Murāri, keeping His word to Murāri. The Lord then personally came to Murāri's house early next morning. Murāri was then constantly chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy name and as soon as the Lord came he paid his obeisances and offered the Lord a seat with great love.

After the Lord had seated Himself comfortably Murāri inquired, “What brings the Lord here?”

Lord Caitanya replied, “I have come to be treated for indigestion.”

Murāri asked, “what has caused this indigestion? what have You eaten yesterday?”

The Lord said, “My dear fellow! How will you know? I have taken all that you offered Me saying, “Eat, eat!” and threw the food on the ground. You have forgotten, but your wife knows everything. Since you offered it to Me, how could I refuse. Now you can treat Me for eating your rice or My inability to digest it, but the fact is that I am suffering from indigestion

because of eating your rice. I know that drinking sufficient water is a very good remedy, so since I have eaten your rice and become sick, your water is My medicine, I am going to drink your water.”

Saying this the Lord picked up Murāri's glass and drank the water from it. The Lord expressed full satisfaction drinking as if the nectar of His devotees pure devotion. When Murāri saw the Lord's infinite mercy he was so overwhelmed that he fell down unconscious. All of Murāri's servants and relatives began to weep in divine exhilaration. Everything was so wonderful the Lord, the ecstatic devotional feelings, and the pure devotees of the Lord; all such devotional mellows could be manifest by Lord Caitanya's causeless mercy alone.

The mercy and blessings that Murāri Gupta's servants received from the Lord was never seen or awarded to any of the so called *brāhmaṇa* scholars in Nadia. Material knowledge, wealth and distinction are futile, but by becoming a servant of the servant of the Lord one is rewarded with the greatest boon, loving devotion to the Lord. The servants of the Vaiṣṇava are not just anybody. The Vedic scriptures describe them as, “the most elevated souls” such were the extraordinary activities of Murāri Gupta. The Lord showered His blessings on Murāri constantly. Whosoever hears these transcendental activities of the pure devotee Murāri will indeed experience divine love.

On another occasion Lord Caitanya was in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house. Suddenly the Lord manifest His real form as the Supreme Godhead with four arms holding the conch shell, disc, mace, and lotus. He began to loudly call out, “Garuḍa, Garuḍa!”

Just then Murāri Gupta roaring loudly came running to Śrīvāsa's house in a devotional trance. His person became surcharged with the mood of Garuḍa and he said, “I am Garuḍa, that great devotee.” As the Lord called for Garuḍa again, Murāri Gupta replied, “I am here my Lord, Your servant.” The Lord said, “Yes, you are My carrier” and Murāri said, “Yes, yes my Lord.”

Murāri Gupta continued, “Have You forgotten my Lord, I carried You to the heavenly abodes and brought down the Parijata tree. Another time I carried You to Vanapura where I tore to pieces Skandha's peacock. Here again are my shoulders. I am at Your service, kindly climb on and order me. Which planet shall I go to?”

The Lord climbed onto Murāri's back and everyone cried out in joy at Śrīvāsa's house resounded with the glorifications of the Lord and His devotees. As the Lord of the goddess of fortune sat astride Murāri's shoulders. A blissful Murāri went around Śrīvāsa's compound with great speed. The ladies made auspicious sounds by moving their tongues and all the devotees were lifted on waves of ecstatic joy. They chanted the names of God, and some remarked, “I pray that I may never forget this scene.” Some of them clapped their hands and thighs and others laughed heartily saying, “What a wonderful Supreme Lord we have.” They all glorified the Lord saying, “All glories to Lord Viśvambhara and His carrier Murāri.”

So many of these extraordinary pastimes were being exhibited in Navadvīpa but persons too attached to sinful activities could not see these pastimes of Lord Caitanya. The Supreme Lord is out of reach for those intoxicated with wealth, luxury, power, and position. Lord Caitanya becomes purchased only by unalloyed devotional service. Those fortunate and pious souls who have been worshiping the Lord for many births now watch all these transcendental activities as His associates and servitors. And those who saw these pastimes, being compassionate, then narrated to others, but the agnostics and sinful persons could not believe in these transcendental activities. In the *Madhya-khaṇḍa* of this book we find the narration of the Supreme Lord Viśvambhara alighting on Murāri Gupta's shoulders but Murāri is an eternal servitor of the Lord and he is present as the Lord's servitor in every incarnation of the Lord. These pastimes have no beginning or end, according to the *Vedas* they are manifest and again they disappear.

Lord Gaurasundara came out of His trance and climbed down from Murāri's shoulders; Murāri also withdrew within himself Garuḍa's mood. These confidential pastimes are too esoteric to be comprehended by all. The Vaiṣṇavas who were present and saw the causeless mercy received by Murāri Gupta began to praise Him. Blessed truly is Murāri to be able to participate in the Lord's supramundane activities as His carrier, his devotion to the Supreme Lord has thus been crowned with success. These narrations on Murāri's activities are fully spiritual and endless.

One day Murāri Gupta was considering in his pure heart the activities of the different incarnations of the Supreme Lord. He thought, “I cannot understand the activities of the Lord, why He does certain things; sometimes He is protecting and at the same time He is annihilating. So now as long as the Lord is present with His associates and servitors I better think of a way for my own redress, for example the Lord destroyed Rāvaṇa and his entire dynasty and brought back His wife Sītādevī, and then again He rejected her; what logic can rule such an action? Then in another incarnation He saw the Yadu dynasty, who were His very dear relatives and friends, being destroyed, He saw and just let it happen. Therefore now, as the Lord is still present, I must make preparations to leave my body, the time is ripe; the Lord is still here.”

Thus influenced by such whimsical thoughts Murāri brought a very sharp shell-cutters saw and hid it in his house, telling himself, “Tonight I will get rid of this body with pleasure.” In the meanwhile, Lord Viśvambhara, who is the Supersoul residing in everyone's heart, came to know about Murāri Gupta's desire. He came immediately to Murāri's house. Murāri welcomed the Lord with great reverence, praying at His lotus feet, and offered Him a seat. The Lord sat and

spoke at length about the transcendental activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Murāri Gupta was pleased beyond words.

The Lord said, “Murāri, will you keep a request of Mine?”

Gupta replied, “Lord, this body and soul belongs to You.”

The Lord asked, “Is this really true?”

Murāri replied, “Indeed my Lord.”

The Lord then whispered into his ear, “Give Me that saw that you’ve brought to end your life with. You’ve kept it hidden in your house. Give it to Me.”

Murāri interjected in sheer dejection, “Alas, alas! Who could have told you such a lie?”

The Lord said, “Murāri, I see that you are very naive, you are saying that someone else has informed Me about this. I know everything: I know who has made this saw and where it is hidden now.”

Nothing is unknown to the omniscient Supreme Lord. He went inside the house and brought out the saw. The Lord said, “Murāri, just note how you are behaving with Me! What is My fault that you want to leave Me and go away? If you should go then who will be a partner in My pastimes? Where did you pick up these ideas that you have now? I therefore beg of you this, you must promise never to pursue such whimsical ideas.”

Lord Caitanya embraced Murāri and taking his hand placed it on His head, and said, “It is better that you eat My head, finish My head, if again you desire to leave your body.” Hastily Murāri threw himself to the ground and with tears of love he washed the Lord's lotus feet. Murāri held on tightly to the Lord's feet, but the Lord picked him up and taking him in His embrace He wept in love for His pure devotee.

It is impossible to calculate the extent of mercy that Murāri received from the Lord. Even Lakṣmīdevī, Lord Brahmā, Lord Ananta, Lord Śiva, and others are craving for it. These demigods are nondifferent from the Supreme Lord Caitanya; the *Vedas* are clear about this absolute oneness. Indeed, Lord Caitanya expands Himself and becomes Lord Ananta Śeṣa to support this entire material nature. He again expands Himself as Lord Brahmā to create this universe. The work of annihilating this cosmic manifestation is done by another of His expansions, Lord Śiva. As Lord Śeṣa, He glorifies His own unlimited pastimes. All these demigods are the manifestations of the Lord's potency, hence are nondifferent from Him. They are all serving Lord Caitanya's lotus feet.

Such is the potency of Lord Caitanya's name that even if a bird chants His holy name then he goes directly to the highest spiritual abode of Lord Caitanya. Whereas if a *saṁnyāsī*, though having taken a vow of celibacy and renunciation does not accept Lord Caitanya, then he will be born in total ignorance birth after birth. Such a *saṁnyāsī* is factually a dacoit in a renunciate's garb, for his activities are of a degraded nature. The *Vedas* describe him as malicious.

For the scriptures condemn such a malicious mentality. In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is said, “An easily identifiable and shameless sinner is in many respects better, because he alone slides down to the depths of depravity; whereas a sinful man posing to be a saint is worse because he drags himself as well as all his followers down to the darkest hell.”

Again, “Dacoits capture their victims in lonely spots and loot them by threatening them with weapons and other forms of trickery, but the hypocrite holyman uses sweet words plucking at the sentiments of people and then confuses them, and gradually they usurp them of their wealth.”

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (12.3.38), it is stated, “The *śudras* (in Kali-yuga) will make a living by putting on renunciate's clothes and receiving charity. Those who are ill-versed in the scriptures and spiritual knowledge will sit on the *vyāsāsana* and give instructions to people.”

The people eagerly hear spiritual instructions from a man judging him by his appearance merely, but instead unknowingly they hear from the imposter offensive words directed against a real saintly person and due to this offense they plunge into hell. The *Vedas* clearly describe that if one hears criticism of a devotee of the Lord, then he loses all his accumulated piety and is cast into abominable conditions of life, birth after birth. The dacoit suffers just one lifetime of hell, whereas the Vaiṣṇava offender goes through endless miseries. Therefore the dacoit is far better than one who is offensive to a Vaiṣṇava, and to Lord Viṣṇu Himself.

Everything, from the highest to the lowest living entities, is a manifestation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's energy, hence Kṛṣṇa cannot tolerate violence or offenses perpetrated against anyone. And if anyone chants Kṛṣṇa's name without offense, then Kṛṣṇa will certainly very soon liberate him from material bondage. A person may be well versed in all the four *Vedas* but still maintains an offensive attitude towards the Vaiṣṇavas then he is eternally doomed to the worst kind of hell.

A person may study the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* because of sense gratification, in this way becoming misguided he commits offenses at the holy feet of Lord Nityānanda thus bringing about a great disaster for himself. Lord Caitanya mercifully revealed His transcendental pastimes in Navadvīpa yet the offenders are not sufficiently fortunate to believe in them or understand them. As for those who are attracted to the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya, Their association is highly desirable. And equally undesirable is the company of those yogis, master of all the eight mystic perfections, if they are averse to surrender to Lord Caitanya's lotus feet.

Lord Caitanya finally pacified and satisfied Murāri Gupta and being thus pleased went home. In this way Murāri Gupta relished the Lord's association and pastimes. So wonderful were Murāri Gupta's experiences and fortune that I am unable to fully describe. It is by Lord Nityānanda's mercy alone that I have heard and realized a little about the glories of a Vaiṣṇava. May Lord Nityānanda be my eternal master. It is by His grace that I am able to develop attachment for Lord Caitanya. All glories to Lord Caitanya, the son of Jagannātha Miśra. May Your beloved Nityānanda be enthroned as the crest jewel of my heart. My greatest hope is that Lord Viśvambhara is most precious to my beloved Nityānanda Prabhu.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I Vṛndāvana das humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 21

All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the life of Nityānanda, the master of Gadādhara Paṇḍita, and the Lord of Advaita Ācārya! He is the most endearing object of Śrīnivasa and Haridāsa Ṭhākura's love, and the revered Lord of Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita and Vāsudeva. May the Lord be glorified along with all His eternal servitors and associates. One can easily attain pure devotion by properly hearing the wonderful pastimes of Lord Caitanya. Navadvīpa saw their Lord Viśvambhara performing His endless pastimes with Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Nityānanda Prabhu, and others.

One day the Lord was out walking with His associates. He decided to visit Maheśvara Viśārada who lived near the dam on the Ganges. Right next to this place was the residence of Devānanda Paṇḍita, an equipoised *brāhmaṇa* scholar, who was aspiring after liberation. He was learned, renounced and from his birth unattached to material life. He was also a teacher of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* but unfortunately devoid of any devotional fervor. People praised him as a being well-versed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, but factually he was acquainted with the real essence of the *Bhāgavatam* due to the fact that the latent devotional feelings for the Lord had not stirred within his heart. He still had the eligibility to perceive the transcendental truth in the *Bhāgavatam*. In spite of him reading the *Bhāgavatam* he was not situated in devotional service; only Kṛṣṇa knows what offenses caused such a mishap.

By some unknown coincidence the Lord and His associates were passing by Devānanda's house while he was lecturing on the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Lord Viśvambhara, the Supersoul in everyone's heart and the absolute omniscient Supreme Lord, overheard his explanations which were devoid of references to the process of devotional service. Enraged by this, the Lord said, "What does this foolish man say? He is completely ignorant about the essential teachings of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. What right does he have to speak on the *Bhāgavatam*? *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is the book incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The ultimate goal of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is devotional service to the Supreme Lord; the Vedic scriptures have declared that the *Bhāgavatam* unequivocally establishes the imperativeness of a loving relationship with the Supreme. The four *Vedas* are likened to a pot of yogurt, when churned it is converted to butter cream, which is the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. This yogurt was churned and served by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī and was relished by Parīkṣit Mahārāja. Śukadeva Gosvāmī is very dear to Me, and he is fully conversant with the esoteric truths revealed in it, which is complete with descriptions about My absolute position and nature as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Whosoever makes any differences between Me, My pure devotees, and the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is forever lost."

Although the Lord spoke these words in anger, still the assembled Vaiṣṇavas were greatly pleased to hear them. The Lord continued speaking, "This fool does not know anything about the *Bhāgavatam*. He tirelessly toils explaining the *Bhāgavatam* without mentioning devotional service. Today I will tear his book to shreds." An irate Lord Viśvambhara is seen rushing off to carry out His resolve and the Vaiṣṇavas collect around Him to dissuade Him.

The entire range of Vedic scriptures eulogize *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* as the most elevated theosophical literature: the esoteric truths contained in this great literature is unfathomable by mundane scholars and materialistic men. One who claims to fully understand the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* completely misses the truth this book is expounding. But one who understands that the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* speaks of the inconceivable Supreme Truth automatically perceives its essence of devotional service to the Supreme Lord. Devānanda Paṇḍita was a learned scholar to be equalled in erudition by only a handful. So all those who acknowledge such mundane scholars with no understanding of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* will also be punished by Yamarāja, the god of death. Even if one is a professor of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* teaching others he will become misled in spiritual understanding if he disrespects Lord Nityānanda, who is the ultimate shelter for the entire creation.

The Lord was fond of moving about Navadvīpa accompanied by His associates. One day He came to the outer precincts of the town and happened to pass by a drinking place. As He smelled the alcohol He was reminded of Barum, a similar

intoxicating drink made from honey that is such a favorite of Lord Balarāma. The Lord immediately was overcome with the emotions of Lord Balarāma. In a trance He loudly boomed to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, “Go inside.” When the Lord insisted Śrīvāsa fell to His feet and begged Him not to go inside.

The Lord said, “Do I also have to be restricted by rules and regulations?” But Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita continued to dissuade the Lord from His decision. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita explained, “You are the universal father and the perfect example, if You transgress the social laws then who is left to uphold them? And those who criticize You out of ignorance will certainly have to suffer lifetimes of misery. You are the emblem of eternal religious principles, who will be able to reason out the pastimes such as You were about to display. And even after this if You insist on going to the drinking house then I shall drown myself in the Ganges.”

The Lord never minimizes the promise of His devotees; now He benignly smiled hearing Śrīvāsa's words. The Lord said, “I do not want to act against your wish, I will not go inside.” The Lord gradually withdrew within Himself the mood of Lord Balarāma and continued on His way.

When the drunkards from inside the drinking house saw Nimāi, they became excited and called out loudly at Him, “Hari! Hari!” One of them said, “Yes, Nimāi Paṇḍita is a good and honorable person, I like His behavior and especially the way He sings and dances.” A few of them stood up swaying, and clapping their hands started to hop around making an attempt to dance; they tried to go out and meet Nimāi in the street. The drunks were now well worked up and they sang “Hari bol! Hari bol! Jaya Nārāyaṇa!” and danced about in great joy. The drinking place was the scene of loud joyous chanting of God's name, such reactions are understandable when anyone sees the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu and His pure devotees the Vaiṣṇavas. The Lord was pleased by the drunken efforts of the drunkards chanting the holy name and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's heart melted in tears of happiness, seeing such transcendental display of the Lord's potency.

The drunkards were very happy to see Lord Caitanya, but the envious people were finding faults and criticizing the Lord. Those who become displeased when they hear the glories of the Supreme Lord will never know any joy in any birth. Therefore, I offer my obeisances to the one who beholds the Supreme Lord with faith, be he a drunkard. The Lord blessed the drunks with His glance and went away.

After walking some distance the Lord saw Devānanda Paṇḍita coming from the opposite direction. Upon seeing him the Lord felt rage rising within. Lord Gauracandra remembered how sometime ago Devānanda Paṇḍita had committed a grievous offense against Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. (At the time when this incident had taken place Lord Viśvambhara had not yet revealed His *saṅkīrtana* pastimes. The world was then too engrossed in materialistic pursuits to cultivate the eternal loving relationship with the Supreme Lord; all the devotees of the Lord felt despondent because of it. Although some scholars were lecturing on the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā*, neither the lecturers nor the audience accepted or appreciated the devotional essence of these texts. Devānanda Paṇḍita was also lecturing on the *Bhāgavatam* in those days. He was very erudite and gentle, people respected him. He lectured continuously on the *Bhāgavatam* and maintained strict celibacy vows like a *sannyāsa*.)

One day while he was lecturing on the *Bhāgavatam* to a group of students, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita thirsting to hear the transcendental sound of the *Bhāgavatam* came and sat in the audience. Every syllable of the *Bhāgavatam* is steeped in the nectar of love of God; when they entered Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's ears his heart melted in loving ecstasy. He began to cry and sigh deeply the students around him were mundane, agnostic logicians who felt disturbed by Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, and they said, “This man is creating nuisance, we cannot study in this atmosphere, it is a waste of time for us.” Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita is very dear to Lord Gauracandra and a highly elevated Vaiṣṇava who can deliver the entire world, he was unaware of others comments, and unchecked tears streamed out in ecstatic love. The students then plotted amongst themselves and dragged Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita out of the house. Devānanda Paṇḍita did not utter a word in protest; when the teacher is bereft of devotional understanding his students are also expected to be the same. When Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita came out of his ecstatic trance he returned home, his feelings were hurt. The Supersoul, Lord Viśvambhara in everyone's heart took note of every thought and deed of everyone.

Now as Lord Viśvambhara saw Devānanda Paṇḍita approaching the entire episode raced through His mind. The Lord accosted him with angry words, “You there Devānanda! I hear you give discourses to many on the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. One devotee by the name of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita went to listen to your lecture one day but was dragged outside the premises by your students while he was engrossed in the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. What was his offense? One who is moved by spiritual emotions to cry listening to the *Bhāgavatam* appreciating the mellows of loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa, should he be treated with such contempt and be dragged out? This same devotee who is so eagerly sought after by Gaṅgādevī herself was maltreated in such an offensive manner by you and your agnostic students. You may be a teacher of the *Bhāgavatam* but you do not possess even an iota of piety required to understand the real purport of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. When a person has eaten to his full satisfaction only then does he feel amicably disposed to the world around him. As for you, although you teach others about the *Bhāgavatam* you yourself cannot relish its divine nectar that can give one unlimited pleasure.”

Devānanda Paṇḍita, who was indeed a learned *brāhmaṇa*, heard every word feeling very ashamed but did not speak. Lord Viśvambhara finished His chastisement and left, Devānanda Paṇḍita also left for his home feeling broken and dejected.

Although the Lord chastised Devānanda he is still a very fortunate soul, because to be chastised by Lord Caitanya is a rare blessing. Even those demons who are killed by the Lord attain the spiritual world. One who faithfully and sincerely accepts the Lord's chastisement is soon blessed with pure devotional service unto Him, while others who do not care for the Lord's wrath will perish to eternal damnation.

Lord Kṛṣṇa manifests Himself in four special forms such as the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Tulasī, the Ganges, and the pure Bhāgavata devotee. Kṛṣṇa is directly perceived in them in their original form. Whereas the deity form of the Lord has first to be installed with mantras whereby requesting the Lord to accept that deity form, only then do the deities become worshipable in the temple with the recommended rituals. The *Vedas* are clear on this point.

The pastimes of Lord Caitanya are causeless, without beginning or end; somehow I am trying to put them in some orderly sequence. I offer my obeisances to the feet of all the devotees of Lord Caitanya so that my offenses may be forgiven. All these pastimes of the Lord as they manifest in the pages of the *Madhya-khaṇḍa* are showers of nectar that can sweeten the bitterness of agnosticism within the heart. May Lord Nityānanda who is so dear to Lord Caitanya never take away the shelter of His lotus feet.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana dāsa humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 22

All glories to Lord Gauracandra who is an ocean of mercy! He is the beautiful son of mother Śacī and Śrī Jagannātha Miśra. He is known as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, and He has rained down showers of benediction upon the living entities by distributing the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

Navadvīpa saw the endless transcendental pastimes of the Lord as He manifested Them with His associates like Nityānanda Prabhu, Gadādhara Paṇḍita and others. Now the Lord returned home after chastising Devānanda Paṇḍita. Devānanda also returned home in a state of acute mental agony. The cause of his suffering was that he was associating too closely with the mundane students and scholars. Although the others considered Devānanda to be saintly, he had to flee from Lord Caitanya's presence—he was not pure enough to remain in the Lord's presence. The Supreme Lord Viśvambhara is attained only through the grace of saintly Vaiṣṇavas. One may chant the Lord's name and perform austerities but if such activities lack devotion then they are useless. A person may seem to be attracting the Lord's mercy in the eyes of the public by performing some devotional activities, but factually he is deprived from any spiritual ecstasy. These are not my words, I simply repeat what the *Vedas* declare, and Lord Caitanya Himself has given this verdict.

Mother Śacī, in whose womb the Supreme Lord Gauracandra appeared, was guilty of some previous offenses committed against a saintly Vaiṣṇava. The Lord personally exonerated His mother from this offense and instructed her in the science of loving devotional service to the Lord. Dear readers listen attentively to this wonderful narration and this will alleviate you from the sin of *vaiṣṇava-aparādhā*.

One day Lord Caitanya sat on the throne of the deities. He picked up the *śalagrāma-silā* forms of the Lord upon His lap and manifested His Supreme absolute form. He said, “I am the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, who in Kali-yuga appears in the form of the holy name; I bridged the ocean in My incarnation as Lord Rāmacandra. I was resting on the milk ocean on My bed of Ananta Śeṣa when the roaring sounds of Advaita Ācārya or Nāḍā's calling Me down to earth awakened Me. The reason for My advent in this incarnation is to freely distribute love of Godhead. O Nāḍā, and Śrīvāsa ask all you can I am here to give.”

When Lord Nityānanda saw this manifestation of the Lord He immediately held the opened umbrella above Lord Caitanya's head. Gadādhara Paṇḍita was busy preparing betel for the Lord and others began to fan the Lord with *cāmaras*.

The Lord distributed His causeless mercy to everyone and the devotees received it, each according to his heart's desire. Each devotee had a different reason for begging favor from the Lord. Someone said, “My father is mischievous. If he can be rectified, it will be a great relief to me.” Some wanted blessings for his guru, or disciples or son or wife. Lord Viśvambhara, who never disregards the sincere prayers of His devotees, fulfilled each of their desires with love of Godhead, smiling benignly upon them.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, that exalted personality then said, “My Lord, we greatly desire that You bless Śacīmātā with love of Godhead.”

The Lord replied, “Please do not make such a request, I cannot comply with it. She has committed an offense against a Vaiṣṇava, therefore she is deprived of love of Godhead.”

Again Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said, “Such words steal away our very life air, my Lord. She has borne You in her womb. You who are the Supreme Lord. I cannot fathom why she is refused Your favor. She is our very life and soul, the universal mother.

O Lord please discard Your deceiving and be merciful to her. You, my Lord, are her son and she is the mother of the entire existence, so how can a son consider the mother's action as offensive. And if she committed a mistake against a Vaiṣṇava, then absolve it and favor her."

The Lord replied, "I can instruct her properly, but I am unable to pardon her from *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. She has to be forgiven by that person alone to whom she was offensive, no one else can do that. You know well how Durvāsā Muni was forgiven for his offenses to King Ambarisa. She has committed an offense against Nāḍā, Advaita, so only He can forgive her if He wants to make her the recipient of the Lord's mercy. I can assure you that she will receive love of Godhead the very moment she takes the dust from Advaita Ācārya's lotus feet and smears it on her head."

Immediately the devotees accompanied mother Śacī to meet Advaita Ācārya, and explained everything to Him. When Advaita Ācārya heard them, He remembered Lord Viṣṇu to avoid disaster and retorted to them, "You want to smash My head open. She is the mother of My Lord and master. She is My mother as well. It is her foot dust which must decorate My head; she is not an ordinary person that I can even fathom her position. She is the embodiment of devotional service, the universal mother. How could you bring yourselves to say these words! If anyone takes her name even for some material reasons then he is relieved of all suffering. Mother Śacī is nondifferent from Gaṅgādevī, she is the same personality as mother Yaśodā and mother Devakī."

As Advaita was delineating the truth about mother Śacī, He fell unconscious to the ground in spiritual ecstasy. Realizing that the opportune moment had arrived, mother Śacī quickly came from the inner quarters and taking the dust from Advaita Ācārya's feet she placed it on her head.

Mother Śacī, a very exalted Vaiṣṇavī, endowed with perfect devotion, also fell down unconscious feeling divine bliss as she placed Advaita's feet dust on her head. All the devotees exclaimed joyously at being able to see such sublime spiritual reciprocations amongst exalted personalities.

The Lord watched the entire happening from His throne and was satisfied with His mother. He said, "Now that you are rid of your offenses to Advaita Ācārya you are blessed with love of Godhead." The devotees responded jubilantly to the Lord's words.

The Supreme Lord acts as the instructing spiritual master to warn everyone to avoid *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, He used His own mother as a vehicle to teach others. According to the scriptures even the most powerful person is destroyed by *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. If one disregards the instructions of the scriptures and commits *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* he has to suffer the hellish life of a sinner life after life. What to speak of others even the most powerful mother of Lord Caitanya's was personally taken to task for committing *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. If one analyses what was Śacidevī's *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, then she will be found innocent, yet the Lord found her guilty. Why do people call Him "Advaita" which means nondual; what prompted mother Śacī to call Him "Dvaita" or dual. This entire episode, which includes Viśvarūpa's transcendental pastimes.

Viśvarūpa was a very elevated personality, He was the Lord's elder brother. He possessed unsurpassing handsome looks, was radiant and powerful. Well versed in all branches of philosophy and scriptures, He was gentle and composed. He is nondifferent from Lord Nityānanda. No one could fathom His analysis and explanations of the scriptures, and yet He was playing the role of a child with other children.

One day Śrī Jagannātha Miśra was invited to an assembly of *brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas*. He took his son Viśvarūpa with him. All those attending were grey with erudition and tricky logic. They were stunned to see this young but beautiful and attractive child. His effulgent personality seemed to have stolen their gravity and cynicism. One of the *paṇḍitas* approached Him asking, "How far have you studied young lad?" Viśvarūpa replied, "A little of everything." The others did not mind His slightly insolent reply, but His father was embarrassed by it. As they were returning home from the assembly, Śrī Jagannātha Miśra slapped his son. Reprimanding Him he said, "Why did You not say clearly the names of the books You are studying, instead of talking in circles. You certainly made a fool of Yourself in that learned assembly and also spoilt my reputation." They returned home but Jagannātha Miśra was still in a fit of rage.

Viśvarūpa decided to go back to that assembly. He went alone, and said to the *brāhmaṇas*, "None of you asked Me any questions when I replied to your question; My father was very angry with My reply and your silence. So now please ask Me any question so that I may back up My answer to your inquiry.

The scholars laughed condescendingly at what they considered to be mere preciousness. One of them said, "Okay young lad! What did You study today?"

Viśvarūpa explained to them a few aphorisms from logic and they appreciated and understood His presentation. They said, "You have explained the aphorisms well."

Viśvarūpa replied, "It is a bluff. You have not understood anything." To the utter amazement of the scholars, He then refuted all the logical conclusions He had just established. He did this twice, each time presenting a new conclusion and then refuting it again

In a dazed state they acquiesced, “Yes, You are most intelligent.” But they were unable to know the truth about Him and His words by the influence of the Lord's illusory potency. Although Viśvarūpa was moving about in their midst, they were ignorant about Him. The entire society is so drunk with material activities that they are incapable of glorifying and appreciating a Vaiṣṇava's transcendental status. They are ready to spend handsomely for the mundane functions like their son's birthday or marriage but no one raises a finger to worship Kṛṣṇa or follow a Kṛṣṇa centered life. All the scholars and teachers prided themselves in their ability to argue based on logic and sophistry but not one of them endeavored to cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness or devotion to God. And if a few amongst them taught the *Bhagavad-Gītā* then instead of explaining its true essence, devotion to God, they spent time in dry speculations.

Viśvarūpa went from one assembly to another, one school to another but everywhere the subject of devotion to God was never discussed, throwing Him into depths of despondency.

Advaita Ācārya was then lecturing on the book "Yoga Vasistha"; though the book presents the impersonal philosophy, Advaita Ācārya explained everything in the light of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Who could comprehend Advaita's dissertation, hence he was accepted as the foremost amongst the Vaiṣṇavas. For Viśvarūpa, Advaita Ācārya's association was the only one that gave Him sublime satisfaction. Viśvarūpa spent as much time as He could with Advaita, and Advaita enjoyed Viśvarūpa's company exchanging devotional mellows with Him.

Viśvambhara was then a beautiful young boy, sprightly and radiant. One day mother Śacī sent Him to call Viśvarūpa, saying, “Go run and call Your brother to come immediately.” Viśvambhara ran swiftly to Advaita Ācārya's house. He found many exalted devotees, including Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, sitting around Advaita Ācārya. Smiling sweetly Viśvambhara said, “O brother, please come quickly and take Your lunch.” The little boy Viśvambhara was so attractive that everyone was bewitched by His extraordinary good looks, they forgot everything and drank into His beauty with their eyes. Everyday the little Viśvambhara would come on the pretext of calling His elder brother.

Seeing the Viśvambhara, Advaita Ācārya began to consider in His heart, “This beautiful lad steals My heart away. This must be the Lord of My heart who bewilders My mind with His exquisite beauty, no one else can do this to Me.” Lord Viśvambhara is the Supersoul within everyone's heart, so having understood Advaita's mind He quickly left.

Viśvarūpa began to spend more and more time in Advaita Ācārya's company, relishing the transcendental moments with Him free from all material encumbrances. Detailed narrations of Viśvarūpa's unlimited pastimes are mentioned earlier in the first volume. By the will of Providence, Viśvarūpa left home and took up the *sannyāsa* order of life. His name now became Śaṅkarāranya. Viśvarūpa embracing the renounced order left an indelible mark of acute separation in Śacīdevī's tender and vulnerable heart. When the throbbing pain of the first days of Viśvarūpa's departure had waned to a dull despondent ache, mother Śacī calmly considered the following thoughts, “Advaita, due to my son's close association with Him, must have influenced Viśvarūpa to take up the renounced order.” Mother Śacī never spoke these thoughts aloud, careful not to commit *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* she silently suffered her fate. Then gradually she started finding solace in little Viśvambhara, and He seeming to understand His mother's grief did much to give her joy, slowly filling up the emptiness Viśvarūpa left behind.

Then after sometime had passed and Viśvambhara had grown up to a young man. He also started to spend more time in Advaita Ācārya's company. He stayed little time at home with His young and patient Lakṣmīpriyā, but was for long hours in Advaita's house. The sad realizations dawned on mother Śacī that her son was hardly in the house and often to be seen in Advaita's house. She thought, “Advaita Ācārya will also take this son away from me.” So out of desperation and anguish mother Śacī burst out saying, “To the world He may be known as "Advaita" or nondual, but to me He is "Dvaita" or full of duplicity. He already drove out my moonlike effulgent son and now He does not have this young one in peace. I am a destitute mother, yet no one has any pity for me. This Advaita has deceived me.” This was all that mother Śacī had said that is supposed to be so offensive that the Lord deemed her unfit to render devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Some persons make the grave blunder for which they will soon have to suffer, trying to compare Vaiṣṇavas, calling one a bigger Vaiṣṇava than the other. Lord Caitanya made His own mother instrumental in teaching the whole world how to avoid and become free from *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. And if someone does not pay heed to Lord Caitanya's warning and teachings on *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* then he will remain completely ignorant about the offenses and thus suffer the terrible consequences. In this context a few words can be said why Lord Caitanya revealed this pastime.

Lord Caitanya the Supreme Lord is the knower of past, present, and future. He knew that in future some evil-minded persons will try to exploit this situation to their own selfish advantage. They will wrongly proclaim Advaita Ācārya to be the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa thus violating the instructions of the pure Vaiṣṇavas and committing a grievous offense. These miscreants will try to protect against those who rightly will declare that Advaita is a "pure Vaiṣṇava." Although they may claim to be the followers of Advaita Ācārya still no one will rescue them from the jaws of imminent destruction, not even Advaita Ācārya Himself.

Lord Caitanya knew that this will happen soon in the future so He punished His own mother in the presence of exalted Vaiṣṇavas like Advaita Ācārya. The spiritual master even cannot protect his own disciples against the wrath of the Lord if

his disciple commits *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. In fact the guru himself of such a disciple is hard pressed to protect himself from the reactions of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. And if the Guru is in a very elevated stage of devotion then he can protect himself alone, but if he is not so elevated then he along with the disciples sinks down into hell.

So, those who try to glorify Advaita Ācārya as the Supreme Lord instead of respecting Him as an exalted Vaiṣṇava in fact ends up criticizing Him and dishonoring Him. What greater glorification embellishes one than to be known as the associate of the Supreme Lord Caitanya. Lord Caitanya has of course declared in no uncertain terms about Lord Nityānanda that He is the Supreme Lord Himself. And one can know the Supreme Absolute position of Lord Caitanya only by Lord Nityānanda's mercy. And only by Lord Nityānanda's mercy can one recognize a true Vaiṣṇava and understand his transcendental position. Without Lord Nityānanda's sweet grace there's no way to deliver one from the punishment of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, and it is by His mercy alone that one develops the mood of loving devotion to the Supreme Lord. The true followers of Lord Nityānanda are free from fault-finding, they engage their full time blissfully in glorifying Lord Caitanya. They are always careful to avoid all the pitfalls in devotional life. They have made Lord Caitanya their very life and soul. No ordinary person with little piety can become a devotee of Lord Nityānanda, because to them is revealed the supramundane activities of Lord Caitanya. One who reads or hears this transcendental narration about Viśvarūpa becomes the servant of Lord Ananta and also very dear to Lord Nityānanda.

Lord Nityānanda and Viśvarūpa are one and the same personality. Mother Śacī is well aware of this esoteric truth; this truth is also known to others who are fixed in mature Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All glories to Lord Nityānanda, who is always taking shelter of Lord Gauracandra! You are the stalwart preacher of congregational chanting from Bengal, who can take shelter of Lord Caitanya without first receiving Your grace. If anyone falls from the favor and association of Lord Nityānanda then he can never ever experience actual bliss: will that day ever be mine when I shall see Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya together with all Their associates. My greatest source of strength and security is that Lord Caitanya is the Lord of my dear Lord Nityānanda. I also pray at the lotus feet of Advaita Ācārya Prabhu that may my natural attraction flow spontaneously to His lotus feet and to the feet of all His servitors.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, offer this humble song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 23

All glories to Lord Caitanya, who is an ocean of all transcendental excellences! All glories to He who is also known as Viśvambhara, the law giver of the entire material creation! You are very dear to Lord Nityānanda and You are the crest jewel of the brahminical race. All glories to Your dearmost devotees!

Lord Viśvambhara continued His transcendental activities in Navadvīpa, but not all could see them. As the supreme hero descended from Vaikuṇṭha, Lord Viśvambhara went about revealing His pastimes the sublime joy of the devotees also increased. His dearmost associate and brother, Lord Nityānanda, accompanied Him everywhere and relished the transcendental mellows with Him and His devotees. The Lord was always intoxicated drinking the nectar of His own transcendental name. Every night He was submerged in the congregational chanting of the Lord's name with only His devotees; the nondevotees were not allowed in these *kīrtanas*. No one could fathom the Lord's potencies or activities. The envious persons, not being allowed to join the *kīrtanas*, went around spreading bad rumors. Someone said, "Who can be a real Vaiṣṇava in Kali-yuga? All those people are doing this simply for their food." Someone else said, "If we could tie their hands and feet and throw them into the pond then we might enjoy quiet and peace." Yet another said, "Know one thing for certain friends! This Nimāi Paṇḍita will ruin this village."

These miscreants tried various means to enter the *kīrtana* hall while the *kīrtana* was in progress. They even reverted to threatening the devotees, but because their hearts were dried up of any piety they could not influence the devotees and so could not participate in the *kīrtanas*. Lord Caitanya performed these nocturnal *kīrtanas*, and purified the entire material existence. Many towns folk desired very much to see these *kīrtanas* but lamented bitterly: ascribing the reason for not being able to see the *kīrtanas* to their great misfortune. Some of them would approach one of the devotees and pray to them to first deliver them from their sins and then secretly smuggle them inside the *kīrtana* hall. But the devotees know that the Lord is the Omniscient Supersoul, He would immediately detect an unauthorized persons presence, so out of fear of inviting the Lord's wrath, the devotees refused to take anyone inside.

Once a *brahmacārī*, who was very peaceful, honest, and faultless, and who practiced penances by eating only milk and fruits, wanted to see the Lord's *kīrtana*. But the Lord personally shut the doors so that nondevotees may not enter. So this *brahmacārī* would visit Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita everyday and repeatedly request him to allow him inside the *kīrtana*. He would say, "If you kindly take me inside your house during the *kīrtana* then I can feast my eyes to the Paṇḍita's chanting and dancing, I will be ever grateful to you for this." Finally one day Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita replied, "I know you to be a good person, who spent a sinless life eating only fruits and milk, maintaining strict celibacy; I think you are eligible to see the Lord's *kīrtana* and dancing. But you have to remain hidden inside the house since the Lord's orders are that no one is allowed inside." He brought the *brahmacārī* inside, who then carefully concealed himself.

The *kīrtana* started and the Lord of the fourteen worlds, Viśvambhara began to dance. Lord Nityānanda and Gadādhara Paṇḍita danced around the Lord. While Advaita went dancing hither and thither floating on waves of joy. Everyone was drowned in an ocean of ecstasy becoming oblivious of the external world as the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha was lost in Himself, dancing to His devotees singing. The only sound that was heard were the Lord's names. And the Lord exhibited all the ecstatic symptoms in unlimited waves.

Although the omniscient Supreme Lord Viśvambhara was fully aware of the *brahmacārī*'s presence He did not openly reveal it. After a short time however, the Lord commented, "Today I do not feel the usual ecstasy while dancing. Can any of you explain this? Maybe someone is hiding inside the house. Please tell me the truth." Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita became very afraid, he said, "My Lord, I assure you there is no atheists or nonbeliever in this house, only *abrahmacārī*, a fully qualified *brāhmaṇa* who is sinless and drinks only milk and eats only fruits. He had a strong desire to see You dancing. You were very right my Lord, he is here now in hiding."

This information enraged the Lord, who said, "Right now, this very moment take him out of this house. What spiritual *sādhana* does he possess to enable him to see My dancing. How can he develop devotion to Me by drinking milk." The Lord dramatically raised His arms and pointing His finger to make a point, He continued, "Just by drinking milk no one can attain Me. Even a low caste dog-eater can claim Me if he takes full shelter of Me, then I will accept him. A person may be a renunciate, a *sannyāsī* without worldly attachments, but if he does not surrender to Me then I do not favor him. Tell me, how did Gajendra the elephant, or Hanumān the monkey, or the *gopīs*, the simple milkmaids of Vraja attain Me? What great austerities did they perform? Even the demons perform severe penances and austerities, but they are slain because they do not surrender to Me. I will not have any milk drinker here polluting everything, I will destroy everything."

The *brahmacārī* was by now trembling with fear. He came out of his concealment thinking, "It has been my great fortune to be able to see what I have seen, and I have also received the commensurate punishment for my misdeed. But what a wonderful dancing and singing I saw!" A devotee thinks and feels this way, and as the Lord's servant he is always willing to accept all chastisement from the Lord. The *brahmacārī* started to walk out of the house with these thoughts in his mind, which of course were already known to the Lord. The most merciful Lord then had the *brahmacārī* brought back to the house. He placed His lotus feet on his head and blessed him, the blessed Lord said, "Do not try to gain strength by performing austerities and penances. Render loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, for it is the highest of all other activities."

The *brahmacārī* began to weep in joy thinking constantly about the Lord's causeless mercy upon him. The devotees became jubilant and offered their obeisances to the Lord. The Lord then continued to dance ecstatically. One who hears this wonderful narration will certainly unite with Lord Caitanya in devotional service. I offer my prostrated obeisances at the feet of the *brahmacārī* who displayed such wonderful devotional understanding in accepting the Lord's chastisement.

Time passed and the Lord continued His nocturnal *kīrtana* sessions with His intimate devotees, barring everyone else to enter the premises. The pious population of Navadvīpa felt pained at being disallowed during these *kīrtana* pastimes of the Lord and they blamed the atheists and miscreants for this. They complained, "We cannot see this wonderful *kīrtana* which is like a grand celebration each evening because of these fault finding nondevotees. They only know one activity and that is to criticize others and so they are being deprived of seeing such an extraordinary *kīrtana* pastime of the Lord. And Nīmāi Paṇḍita has thus shut the doors to keep out these mischief mongers but unfortunately even the good people are kept from coming.

Everyone knows that Nīmāi Paṇḍita is a very exalted devotee of Kṛṣṇa, His heart is pure and faultless. And if we have full faith and devotion in Him then we will indeed see His *kīrtana* and dancing. One of the pious souls commented, "Let us just go sit there and then we can feast our eyes with Nīmāi's dancing. Nīmāi Paṇḍita has appeared in Navadvīpa to deliver the entire universe. I tell you that He will propagate the congregational chanting of the holy name of God in every house and in every town. In this way all the pious folks increased their good fortune and the impious ones multiplied their sufferings by criticizing the Lord.

With the approach of dawn all these devotees went to meet Nīmāi Paṇḍita. Everyone brought some gifts for the Lord like, new articles, bananas, fruits, yogurt, clarified butter, flower garlands etc. As soon as they saw the Lord they fell to the ground and prostrated obeisances. The Lord blessed them saying, "may you be blessed by developing love for Kṛṣṇa, do not waste time with gossip just chant Kṛṣṇa's holy name."

The Lord then instructed them on the holy name, "Now hear from Me the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Go and repeatedly chant this mantra a prescribed number of times. One can achieve all perfection from this chanting so go on repeating these names, for this chanting is not restricted by any rules. You can sit around together five or ten of you in your house and chant or sing this mantra accompanied by the clapping of hands or cymbals. When you are singing together then sing *haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yadavāya namaḥ / gopāla govinda rāma śrī madhusūdana*. This congregational chanting should be joined by one and all, father, brother, wife, son, all together.

Now that the devotees had directly received the mantra and the instructions to chant from the Lord, they went back to their homes happily after offering their obeisances to the Lord. They followed strictly the Lord's instructions and all the time chanted Kṛṣṇa's name, meditating on the Lord's lotus feet. And at the end of the day they assembled in their houses and loudly sang the holy names, gaily clapping their hands and cymbals in rhythm. In this manner Lord Caitanya began inspiring everyone to take up the congregational chanting of the holy name; He went about embracing the devotees encouraging their devotional zeal, placing His own garlands around them. In a most humble manner He went about requesting all, "My dear brothers please serve Kṛṣṇa."

Seeing the Lord in this mood, and emblem of humility the devotees become surcharged with spiritual sentiments and they began to weep and intensify their chanting. The whole town now became involved in congregational chanting, the devotees brought out their drums, conch shells and cymbals that they generally used to celebrate the worship of goddess Durgā during a big festival, and began to play accompanying the *kīrtana* with joyous sounds. The whole town was enveloped by the transcendental sound of the Lord's name.

Śrīdhara, the leaf-plate seller, happened to be walking down that way loudly singing Kṛṣṇa's name. When he heard that loud *kīrtana*, he began to dance in ecstasy. When the other devotees saw this dear devotee of Lord Caitanya dancing, they came and surrounded him and began to sing. Śrīdhara was overwhelmed with spiritual emotions, and he fell down and began rolling on the ground while chanting Kṛṣṇa's name. When the nondevotees saw this they started ridiculing him and laughing at him. They said, "Just see him! That fellow also has become a Vaiṣṇava. He can't afford clothes nor does he have money to eat and suddenly he is exhibiting all these ecstatic symptoms. This is all for show. They all live by begging, but now they have started an untimely festival. The atheists continued to hurl such insulting remarks at the devotees, but the pious devotees went on chanting Kṛṣṇa's name undeterred.

One day the Muslim magistrate, the Kazi was passing that way. He heard the tumult of singing, of the Lord's name accompanied by drums, cymbals and conch shell. He tried to remember the instruction in his own scripture about practice of other religions. The Kazi cried out, "Catch all of them, let us see what your teacher Nīmāi Paṇḍita does to stop me." All the devotees fled in fear of Muslim fanatics. The Kazi's men went about breaking the drums and beating up the devotees, spreading terror. He said, "It seems that there is sudden out burst of Hindu religious activities nowadays in Nadia, I will punish the culprits severely. Since it is already late and getting dark I am letting you off but if I see this again I will convert all of you to Islam." The evil Kazi would send his men everyday patrolling the town looking for any *kīrtana*. The devotees became despondent and they went into hiding fearing violent retaliation from the Kazi and his men.

The envious atheists were siding with the Kazi. They commented, "God's name should be chanted in the mind. Which scripture enjoins one to make a hue and cry in chanting God's name. This is a correct punishment they have received for transgressing the Vedic injunctions. They have no fear of flouting the social norms. That Nīmāi Paṇḍita who acts so proud will now be cowered by the Kazi. And that Nityānanda who roams about everywhere will soon see the end of all the fun. They call us atheists for speaking out the truth, at long last Nadia will be rid of these charlatans."

The devotees did not protest against the Kazi ban out of fear. They went to the Lord and reported to Him, "We have stopped our *kīrtana* out of fear for the Kazi, whose men in hundreds search the streets and houses. We will have to leave Navadvīpa and settle elsewhere, we have come to tell You this." When Lord Caitanya heard that someone was trying to stop the *saṅkīrtana* movement He became infuriated, He looked awesome, almost like Lord Śiva at the time of the cosmic annihilation. He roared loudly like the rumbling of thunder and the devotees afraid of this sudden change in the Lord held their ears as if begging forgiveness from the Lord for a mistake they had not committed.

The Lord said, "Nityānanda! Be prepared, go immediately to all the Vaiṣṇavas, and assemble them on the streets. I shall bring out a *kīrtana* party and take it all over Navadvīpa. I will see what anyone can do to Me. You will see how I burn the Kazi's house down. Today I shall shower incessant rains of love of Godhead on everyone. Today the atheist's will face the final hour. So do not waste a moment My brothers go and deliver this message to everyone. Tell them that if they are desirous of seeing Kṛṣṇa's mystic potency in action then let them bring a flaming torch with them. I will smash the Kazi's palace and I will do *kīrtana* all along. The entire creation is full of My devotees and when I am present here then what is there to fear! Go and put a stop to your anguish! Come and assemble in the afternoon after lunch."

The devotees dispersed right away, each going his way in great anticipation not caring about eating or anything. Excited talks filled every home that, "Nīmāi Paṇḍita will take out a *saṅkīrtana* and dance in the streets of Navadvīpa." For the many thousands who were lamenting for so long that they could not see Nīmāi Paṇḍita's dancing this news was cause of great rejoicing. So everyone prepared their own torch. Even if the father had made a torch the son made his own. They competed with each other to make the biggest torch. Huge barrels of oil were kept in readiness. Navadvīpa in those days was very thickly populated. The constant flow of people with torches poured out of the houses onto the streets. Who could count the millions of torches. The women, children, and old men were excited with great anticipation. Slowly the clusters of devotees moved towards Nīmāi Paṇḍita's house.

When Lord Caitanya heard that all the Vaiṣṇavas had assembled at His behest and were at His door steps. He went to meet them and began to organize them in groups. Advaita Ācārya was to head up a group and was the chief dancer and he would be supported by a *kīrtana* group. In another group Haridāsa was the dancer and he also was backed by a *kīrtana*

group. Yet another group was to be led by the main dancer Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. The Lord's eyes fell on Nityānanda and immediately He said, "I will not leave Your side My Lord. My only duty is to always be near You. I can never leave Your lotus feet imbedded in My heart. What power do I possess to dance independently away from You. My devotional service to You is I am always with You." When Lord Caitanya saw the streams of ecstasy flowing from Nityānanda's eyes He embraced Him and kept Him near Him. In this each had his desire fulfilled. Some went off with his group others stayed close to the Lord dancing and singing.

Now please listen attentively to the description of this "*nagara-kīrtana*" for this will cut asunder the bonds of karmic reactions. Here is the list of some of the main devotees who came. Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Vakreśvara, Murāri, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Gopīnātha, Jagadīśa, Vipra Gaṅgādāsa, Rāmāi, Govindānanda, Candraśekhara, Vāsudeva, Śrīgarbha, Mukunda, Śrīdhara, Govinda, Jagadānanda, Nandana Ācārya, Śuklāmbara. The devotees of Lord Caitanya are innumerable and I do not know all their names; Vedavyāsa will reveal all their names in the future in the *Purāṇas*. It is not humanly possible to describe how the Lord danced along with all His associates of different categories.

The *saṅkīrtana* pastimes of the Lord are unique, never were such pastimes revealed before in any other incarnation. As the *kīrtana* picked up gusto the Lord's joy also increased. The devotees were carried in waves of sublime joy. The Lord and husband of the goddess of fortune was dancing in the streets of Navadvīpa, and anyone who saw Him became free from all sorrows.

Soon it was dusk but the devotees were totally engrossed in the *kīrtana* oblivious of the material realm. Millions of men, women, and children lined the streets standing in doorways seeing the moving mass of men and their tumultuous singing of the Lord's holy name echoed and filled the cosmos. And above this tumult rang out loud and clear the Lords own thunderous voice. The devotees replied with equal gusto chanting Lord Hari's name. Then as if by previous arrangement all the torches were lit at the same time like magic. Millions of flaming torches lit up the darkened sky matched by the millions of hearts kindled by the magic of sublime bliss. Words fail to describe the marvelous sight. One could be easily confused whether it was a full moon night or broad daylight or had Kṛṣṇa Himself descended in the form of His *brahmajyoti*.

The Lord again called out loud the name of Lord Hari and the devotees became attentive. They surrounded the Lord with the *kīrtana*. All the devotees were decorated with flower garlands around their neck and their bodies were smeared with sandalwood paste and scented vermilion powder. Each one had some musical instrument or the other in their hands, and they looked more powerful than thousands of lions. The Lord looked around Him to see His devoted servitors eagerly waiting to render Him any service. He began to dance lifting the devotees in soaring heights of ecstasy. Everyone began chanting loudly and whoever saw the Lord's moonlike beautiful face were released from searing pain of material existence.

The Lord's charming looks overshadowed the attractiveness of millions of Cupids put together. I am at a loss to find the appropriate similes to describe the Lord's beauty, yet I venture to do so only by His mercy alone otherwise who can dare to attempt such an impossible task. He glowed like a mountain of gold, His body being smeared with sandal paste sometimes looked like the rising full moon. His curly dark tresses were decorated with the fragrant *mālātī* garlands; a sweet smile clung intimately to His lips that can win the hearts of all the muses. The clear markings of sandalwood *tilaka* with a red dot of vermilion adorned His beautiful broad forehead. He raised His arms up in the sky chanting the name of Hari and danced; the knee long flower garland around His neck swayed with each movement. His upraised arms glistened like fine tapering pillars of gold, His body became drenched with the incessant flow of ecstatic tears from His lotus petal eyes.

As His ecstatic feelings increased the hairs of His body stood on end like the ever fresh *kadamba* flower. The moist reddish lips so exquisite and when parted revealed a symmetrical set of pearl like white teeth; the long arched eyebrows languished almost all the way up to the beginning of His ears. His strong shoulders shamed the king of elephants and His chest was broad and full. The *brāhmaṇa* thread hung loosely across His chest. Lakṣmidevī and Tulasīdevī are constantly praying for the shelter of His lotus feet. That Supreme Lord wears His fine and clean clothes very artistically. The upturned nose is aristocratic and the sinewy tendons of His neck gives the impression of being the neck of the king of the forest, strong and powerful, He towers over the others, His long body well formed and proportionate whining like a mountain of mother gold.

Everyone looking at Him commented on His divine and beautiful presence. The millions who milled around for this momentous occasion were very fortunate in spite of their large number they all received the Lord's benedictions by being able to see the Lord's exquisite transcendental face. They simply stared at Him irresistibly drawn to His beauty and exclaimed out loud the Lord's name each time uncontrollable emotions welled within their hearts.

The citizens had nicely decorated their doorways with banana trees, water pots, mango leaves, and green coconuts. The ghee lamp flickered in every house and an offering plate sat on the altars with yogurt, grains, and dhruva grass. All this happened as if at the command of some unseen voice. Out on the street men, women children joined the congregation all intoxicated with sublime joy: oblivious to every other care. Seeing the carefree citizens leaving their house unguarded a thief thought to himself, "This is a good opportunity for me to clean out the people's belongings." But as time passed and the chanting entered his ears and took effect, the thief gave up his stealing tendencies and also joined in with the others, joyously chanting Lord Hari's sweet transcendental name.

The streets were strewn with puffed rice and coins thrown by the citizens as they watched the chanting procession passing by and then later they themselves joined up with the procession and so the marchers swelled in numbers. One should not consider these descriptions as exaggerations. Such happenings are common place when the Supreme Lord is present. When Lord Kṛṣṇa was in Dvārakā, it is described in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, that He made appear in a twinkling of an eye nine hundred thousand palaces all bedecked with jewels and marble. Again in the *Hari-vamśa* it is described that when Lord Kṛṣṇa was having water sports with the Yadus in the salt water ocean that surrounds Dvārakā the entire ocean in a moment turned nectarean sweet. And now that very same Supreme Lord is almost unconscious with sublime bliss dancing and chanting so naturally all auspicious happenings are occurring.

The ocean of people now surged forward in slow fluid motion like the Ganges's current that flowed besides them. They all danced and chanted surrounding the dancing golden form of the Lord. Advaita Ācārya, Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and other senior associates of the Lord led huge groups of dancing and chanting devotees, everyone exulting in the bliss of the Lord's presence. Those who could not sing were now singing with sweet melodious voices. The Lord was surrounded by the best singers like Murāri, Mukunda Datta, Rāmāi, Govinda, Vakreśvara, Vāsudeva, and others. Lord Nityānanda and Gadādhara Paṇḍita danced on either side to the Lord submerged in divine bliss. And always the dancing and prancing form of the Lord brought wonderment and exhilaration in the hearts of all those who beheld His golden form.

This was a magnificent sight; the dancers moved forward in rhythmic motions and the millions of burning torches were also in motion, their licking flames animated in a passionate dance. It was night, but the dancing figure of the Lord was clearly visible as if bathed in autumn full moonlight. Sometimes His body was covered with shining dust particles and at other times He bathed His transcendental form in the cascading tears of ecstasy. The different ecstatic symptoms appeared in His body, sometimes shivering, sometimes profuse perspiration, again at times horripilation, changing like the seasons.

The sound of the Lord's name reverberated throughout the universe, *hari haraye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yadavāya namaḥ / gopāla govinda rāma śrī madhusūdana* and *hari rāma, rāma hari*. Some devotees danced on their own but there were many large groups of devotees dancing together keeping time with clapping hands. Another wonderful sight was that those devotees carrying torches and oil containers together. Navadvīpa was ringing with sounds of sublime jubilation, as if the Lord's spiritual abode Vaikuṇṭha, had descended. The residents of Navadvīpa acquired the same characteristics as the residents of Vaikuṇṭha. They all manifested four-arms, but because they were so engrossed in the ecstasy of chanting and dancing that they did not even notice this divine transformation on their person. The ever increasing bliss of Vaikuṇṭha was now here. As they passed by the bank of the Ganges, Lord Caitanya dancing in the midst looked like Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja; a flute in His hand and the garland of wild flowers around His neck swayed.

The devotees had never experienced the ecstasy of such a massive congregational chanting. They forgot their bodily identity, their tribulation; they sang and danced and rolled on the ground. Many persons became emboldened and made their views heard to the public. One said, "Where did the rascal Kazi go now? If I just find him I will sever his head." Others shouted out aloud the names of certain atheistic persons and beat the ground, as if sealing their fate with a stroke, some of them even ran helter skelter trying to locate them. There was no accounting the number of people singing, or how many were playing on the *mṛdaṅga* drums. Navadvīpa was flooded with the nectarean showers of love of Godhead, so much so that even the eternal residents of Vaikuṇṭha were hankering for this bliss. Even Lord Ananta, Lord Śiva, and Lord Brahmā experience this kind of joy. Sublime bliss had descended over the entire planet as the Lord danced with His associates and devotees, and there was no place for anything inauspicious or impure. This was the Lord's first major *nagara-saṅkīrtana*.

The procession moved on but no one knew where they were going. There was just one resounding thunder of the Lord's name piercing the coverings of the material world that was all pervading. The demigods accompanied by their associates came to see the Lord. When they saw Him they alike the humans also became overwhelmed with transcendental joy. They mingled in with the crowd dressed as humans to avoid detection and joined in with gusto singing and dancing. All the demigods were present, Brahmā, Śiva, Varuṇa, Kuvera, Indra, Yamarāja, Soma the moongod, etc. They became aware that everyone present there was experiencing transcendental ecstasy so they went along with the devotees wanting more of the Lord's association. Thus the humans and the demigods were chanting the Lord's holy name together.

As the procession passed the uncountable houses all nicely decorated, the market places, the large squares one could understand that Navadvīpa was a very well populated and an opulent town. It was impossible to count the people that lived there. It seemed that because the Supreme Lord was to advent here that He had arranged for many people to live here and participate in His *saṅkīrtana* movement. Just the number of ladies who were chanting were so numerous that counting them would be futile.

Everyone who saw the Lord dancing and chanting like a golden flash could not contain their hearts and emotions. Even those with hearts of stone were moved to tears falling to the ground seeing how the Lord showered His causeless mercy and hearing the sighs and sobs of sublime ecstasy of the devotees. As the Lord danced repeating over and over again Lord Hari's name the garland of flower swayed wildly. His beauty was breath taking, the way the *brāhmaṇa* thread hung carelessly over His shoulders, the dhoti nicely pleated and tucked in place neatly, His golden frame covered with fine

glimmering dust. Tears flowed unrestrained from His lotus eyes like the languid flow of the Mandakini Ganges of his heavenly planets. Who would have liked to see the moon after having seen the blooming lotus face of the Lord. As some of the tear drops clung to the cleft of His fine nose they shone like a string of white pearls. His glossy black locks entwined with the garlands around His head made a fine sight. The devotees prayed, "O Lord please grant us this one desire that we may hold within our hearts this pastime birth after birth." The devotees were asking in this manner for benedictions from the Lord as the Lord continued His extraordinary dancing pastime, surrounded by His intimate associates. The Lord knew how to inspire devotees to come and join and He danced always reciprocating the mood and movement of the devotees. the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha danced as the devotees sang, "Come and sing Hari, Hari all of you, fear not for the Holy name even though not chanted purely will deliver you from death."

The author humbly describes in poetry the description of Lord Caitanya as He danced. Lord Viśvambhara the Lord of the Universe danced along the bank of the Ganges. The devotees eagerly covered themselves with the earth having the impressions of His lotus feet. Wonderful ecstatic symptoms manifested on His person and tears like nectar cascaded from His eyes; with a voice like the rumble of thunder He chanted Lord Hari's name. Smiling sweetly He raised His arms and sang. His golden form was much more enchanting than Cupid. Charmingly dressed His black curly hair was decorated with fresh and fragrant flower garlands; such beauty sent the mind reeling as if when a person is afflicted by the five amorous arrows of Cupid. In complete bliss Viśvambhara moved about in a restless dance, He was intoxicated with the holy name. His body and limbs were perfectly shaped and beautiful being nicely smeared with sandal paste. The garland around His neck matched His love agitated movements. The arch of His eyebrows were like Cupid's bow shooting arrows of enchantment. His teeth were whit and glistening like pearls, His benign face was an ocean of mercy. How can I describe the many hundreds of ecstatic emotions that manifested in Him, sometimes tears, or shivering, or perspiration etc. At times He bent His body in three places just like Kṛṣṇa and played flute on His finger. He moved about like a maddened elephant, He was the cynosure of every eye. His *brāhmaṇa* thread decorated His broad chest as if Ananta Śeṣa had taken that thin form to serve His Lord. Lord Nityānanda and Gadādhara and all the other intimate devotees danced by His side and each time they looked at the Lord they saw the Lord smiling back at them. Lord Śiva by chanting the name of this Lord becomes mad and goes about naked, that same Lord is now going on the streets of Navadvīpa performing congregational chanting, Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune, is hankering always to touch and dress this Supreme Lord's black curly locks and is so attracted by His dress, that self same Supreme Lord is so engrossed in singing and dancing that He rolls in the dust in ecstasy. Following Him are His devotees carrying millions of flaming torches lighting up the world like the full moon and not a soul could refrain from chanting the Lord's holy name. this was such a marvel that Navadvīpa had never witnessed, the residents looked at each other and chanted "Hari, Hari."

Lord Nityānanda was always by the Lord's side knowing Viśvambhara's every mood, so whenever the Lord swooned in ecstasy He held out His hands to hold Him. As He Held Him this time Viśvambhara slowly sat down in a meditative pose and clapping His hand gleefully began to loudly chant "hari, hari." Then He began to speak with childlike innocence, "I am the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa, I killed that demon Kāṁsa and I deceived Bali Mahārāja. I constructed that bridge over the ocean to Śrī Lanka and killed the demon Rāvaṇa, I am Lord Rāmacandra." In this manner He revealed His real Supreme identity. Not everyone could understand this esoteric truth for it is inconceivable by human mind. And in the next moment to increase their confusion the Lord changed His mood completely and said with utmost humility and meekness, "O Lord, please grant Me devotion at Your lotus feet."

Whichever way the Lord acted were all so mind robbing, even when He put His toe to His mouth. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Lord Viśvambhara was dancing all over the Navadvīpa town. this town is actually the Svetadvīpa of the spiritual world which will be later explained in the *Vedas*. Amidst the *mr̥danga*, conch shell, cymbals whose number is countless and the chanting of the holy name danced the Lord like the crest jewel in the crown.

All glories to the congregational chanting of the holy names! All glories to Lord Viśvambhara! All glories to the devotees of the Lord! Whichever way I look I see Lord Viśvambhara drowning everyone in the nectar ocean of love of Godhead.

The procession sometimes moved fast sometimes much slower depending on how long the Lord danced in one place. The chanting was jubilant and echoed in the spiritual abode of Vaikuṇṭha. The Lord, the cynosure of everyone, moved about like a mad lion intoxicated with the Holy name. The procession passed many bathing places and proceeded towards Simulia. No one was tired, millions were singing and dancing and a million flaming torches made it difficult discern whether it was midday or night. The people welcomed the procession with flowers and doorway decoration as they passed each house; the demigods rained a confetti of fragrant flowers. Mother Earth was thrilled with ecstasy as the Lord walked and danced. She wanted the Lord to walk on a soft surface so she had as if collected the strewn flowers and the pathway looked like her delicate tongue.

Śrīvāsa, Advaita, Haridāsa were dancing in groups of their own going ahead of Lord Viśvambhara. As in groups of their own going ahead of Lord Viśvambhara. As the procession entered each new locality people left their homes and ran to see the Lord. They forgot all other duties and relatives they were all eager to see that beatific moonlike face of the Supreme soul of the entire creation. Without consciously realizing they were all being drawn into this congregational chanting. Without being aware they were all becoming intoxicated with holy name of Kṛṣṇa. They began manifesting symptoms of supramundane joy. Some rolled on the ground, some made sounds with their mouth as if playing a musical instrument. Others were embracing anyone they met. They had become so inebriated by the chanting and dancing that many were

seen just offering prostrated obeisances falling to the ground like a rod, and there were others who were catching the devotees feet and simply crying in ecstasy.

One could hear many comments from different people. Someone said, "I am this Nimāi Paṇḍita. I have been assigned to deliver the world." Another commented, "I am a Vaiṣṇava from Svetadvīpa." Yet another remarked, "I am an eternal resident of Vaikuṇṭha." Again someone said, "Where is that rascal Kazi. I will crush his head if I could lay my hands on him." Incited by such comments some ran to try to capture an atheist and climbed up a tree and then jumped down angrily shouting, "I am death to twelve atheists." Another said, "Can you hear me O God of Death! tell me where is your son, the sun-god?" The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha appearing as Śacī's son was now and here chanting and dancing. the floodgates of the Holy name was flung open by Him. The holy names, which gave the god of death, Yamarāja, the name Dharmarāja, or the upholder of religious principles, and the holy name that saved the worst of sinners Ajāmila from the jaws of doom, was now being freely distributed by the Lord Himself, Those who could not chant the name could at least hear it chanted and reap the transcendental benefits. Citragupta, the compiler of man's good and evil deeds in life has to be immediately informed that his records of evil deeds have to be thrown away. I cannot be blamed if I take stern action against him if he disobeys since now every living entity is delivered.

That holy name has converted Vārāṇasī into one of the most important places of pilgrimage because Lord Śiva is constantly chanting that holy name of Kṛṣṇa. This holy name is always chanted by the purest of devotees who are the eternal residents of the spiritual abode. Lord Śiva has become worshipable by all the demigods and humans because he is relishing every moment the sweet nectar of the holy name. This very name is now being heard by every living entity. So the devotees warned all the atheists that if they do not discard their evil ways and take up the chanting of the Holy name and the worship of Lord Viśvambhara then they will destroy them, the devotees loudly challenged the atheists to now come forward and desist their chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name. They beat the earth with great force as if beating to pulp a recalcitrant atheist. the effects of chanting the holy name had so divinely maddened them that they were not aware of what they did or said.

When the atheist saw that citizens of Navadvīpa had all become mad with ecstasy they were bathing inside with hate and envy. They got together and began conspiring. They said, "if the Kazi was to come right now then I would like to see where that Nimāi Paṇḍita will run to. What will happen to all their fanfare dancing and singing. Where will they hide their banana trees, mango leaves and rest of the decorations. As soon as Kazi hears their great commotion and sees their lit torches he will immediately come and they will have to jump into the Ganges to escape his wrath." One of them said, "Then I will place myself near to a group and in the stampede I will tie their necks together." Another said, "Then let us go and inform the Kazi." Someone objected to this saying, "I see no logic in doing that." Another made his point strongly, "I can see only one logical thing to do, that is let us go all together to those sentimentalists and loudly shout, "The Kazi and his men are here," then they will quickly disperse." This way the atheists were eating their jealous heart out while the devotees floated on clouds of ecstatic chanting and dancing.

The devotees were looking so effulgent. They were decorated with sandalwood paste and flower garlands. They were so fully engrossed in the Holy name that they became oblivious to everything. The *saṅkīrtana* proceeded towards Simulīa. As the devotees chanted and danced the Lord also chanted and danced right in their midst. the activities of devotees increased the Lord's ecstasy. no one could imagine how much water was contained in the Lord's lotus eyes. Incessant tears cascaded in rivulets of pure nectarean water. Sometimes shivering overcame Him that He lay on the ground, even Nityānanda Prabhu was lamenting because He could not hold Him still. And when at the pinnacle of ecstasy He fell unconscious then no force of life was found in Him for a long time. this was the wonder of wonders.

Excited talks went around amongst the citizens. They said, "This person must be the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself." Another said, "He is so much like Nārada or Prahlāda or even Śukadeva Gosvāmī." "Whoever He may be, He is certainly not an ordinary human being." The more critical and calculating ones said, "He is indeed a great devotee." Each one commented according to the level of one's understanding. Lord Nimāi was oblivious of anything. He was engrossed in the ecstasy of the holy name, and as He lifted His arms chanting "Hari, Hari!" everyone around by hearing the Lord felt irresistibly drawn to Him and they all echoed loudly after Him the Lord's name. Whichever direction the Lord chose the entire congregation moved that way. The Lord was now heading towards the Kazi's house. the sound of chanting and revelry became clearly audible to the inmates of Kazi's palace.

When Kazi heard the loud clamor of chanting, he inquired, "Can you hear that sound of music and singing? Is that a marriage party, or is it some weird incarnations of strange beings. Have they disobeyed my orders and again started their Hindu practices out in the streets? Go quickly and find out all the details, after you return with information I shall personally go." Kazi's spy left immediately and arrived at the scene of the massive congregational *kīrtana*. they were overawed at the sight of the huge mass of people shouting, "kill the Kazi" and murmuring verses from the Koran for protection they fled in terror.

They came running to the Kazi and spoke rapidly in gulps, "What are we doing here, let us quickly escape. That Nimāi Ācārya is coming with thousands and thousands of men. They are carrying thousands and thousands of flaming torches all singing their Hindu God's name. The citizens have decorated their houses and doorways welcoming this immense and incredible procession. The roads are covered with flower petals and puffed rice. The sound of their singing is so loud that I

felt that my eardrums will burst. i have never seen such a sight. even the coming of our royal monarch never draws such incredulous crowds. Nimāi is their leader dancing in the middle and everyone is simply following Him. The singers we had attacked the other day are also there. They are all shouting, “Kill the Kazi!” And Nimāi is the gang leader who is stirring them up. I wonder why this *brāhmaṇa* fellow Nimāi weeps so much, the tears spout out like two rivers.” The other spy replied, “I think He may have some relative somewhere. So He is crying because He is missing him.” The other replied, “I am afraid to even look at Him, He looks like He is coming to gobble you up.” Kazi said, “Is that really Nimāi Paṇḍita? Maybe He is going to get married. I cannot imagine that anyone will try to disregard my orders. If they do, then I will convert them to Muslim.” As they were discussing the sound of the *kirtana* came closer and closer.

The huge mass of congregation arrived in the locality of Kazi's palace. The crest jewel amongst them all, Lord Viśvambhara, led them up dancing. the sound of their chanting boomed through out the entire universe echoing in the vaults of heaven, earth and hell. The chanting became unbearably loud for the Kazi and his men, and they made haste to escape fearing the worst for them. Like a mouse running for his life from the snake's mouth. But in the commotion and bustle they were confused, and lost the way. So many of the Kazi's men spread open their rolled up head cloth and hung it over their heads, so as not to be recognized, and joined in with the dancing, but with a thumping heart. The bearded compatriots of Kazi hung their heads down so that their give away beard remained unexposed. There were so many people that it would be impossible for one to know everyone by face and besides the people were so excited that they were not aware of even their own persons. Everyone was lost in dancing and singing.

Lord Viśvambhara stood before Kazi's palace doors, His rising anger visible, with a voice like thunder He said, “Where is that mischief monger, Kazi, bring him right this minute to Me and cut his head off. I will obliterate the entire yavana race from the face of this earth, like I have previously done. Break open and smash everything. Break it! Break it!” These were the orders of the Supreme Lord, who could disobey. The congregation was already exuberant and inebriated with the association of Lord Caitanya and the holy name, so such a command from the Lord was immediately put into action with great enthusiasm. They ransacked the entire property. they went through the house and indiscriminantly broke anything that came their way. The garden lay limp and ravaged as if after a hurricane. Banana trees lay uprooted; broken branches hung from mango trees; the flower garden was stamped to the ground. Lakhs and lakhs of people overran the palace rooms and the grounds. Through out the entire operation the congregation was chanting, “Hari! Hari!” The holy name was their constant companion. They punctuated every move with Lord Hari's name.

Lord Viśvambhara then said, “Now burn down everything. Put fire in the house, let the Kazi and all his men burn to death. I want to see what his king will do to Me. I also want to see who has the audacity to check Me. The god of death, time and death all are servants of my devoted servitors; they are created by my glance over material nature. I have advented mainly to propagate the congregational chanting of the Holy name, if any one so much as tries to cause obstruction then I will annihilate him. And even if the most lowly sinner participates in the chanting of the Lord's name then he shall be remembered by Me and saved. On the other hand even if, persons are performing austerity, renunciation, Vedic studies, yoga yet do not join the *saṅkīrtana* movement they will certainly perish. So now do not fear, put fire to the house, I will bring about the total devastation of the entire race of *yavanas*.”

When they saw the Lord's wrath, the devotees fell on their knees and raising their arms prayed to Him, “One of Your principle expansions is Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa. He never manifests His anger untimely. When the time is ready for the destruction of the material world, then Rudra appears as Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa's incarnation and expansion. And after Rudra completes the work of annihilation or *pralaya* he again returns into Your transcendental body. The work of annihilation is carried out by the expansion of Your expansion, so if you are angry then who can check Your wrath. The *Vedas* glorify You as “free from anger and eternally blissful.” Our hearts cannot see You as minimizing the Vedic injunction. Even Lord Brahmā never attracts Your anger; creation, maintenance and annihilation of the material world are simply Your transcendental pastimes. Today You have sufficiently chastised that Kazi and if next time he does anything again then You can destroy him. All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the Supreme Lord of all lords! All glories to Lord Gaurasundara the Lord of the universe, the Lord of Lakṣmīdevī, and who rests on Lord Ananta Śeṣa.

Lord Caitanya smiled after listening to their choice prayers, and then He began to dance and chant with everyone. The Kazi was justly dealt with; the Lord was pacified that congregational chanting in public will continue. He now led the procession back towards the town. Chanting and dancing began again with previous jubilation and exuberance. Joy once more filled the atmosphere. the devotees were now free from any fear or inhibition. they could chant their beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa's name at anytime. The atheists were subdued, their spirit broken and the devotees were victorious and jubilant. They again became submerged in the ecstasy of chanting and dancing. Now all the devotees went ahead dancing and chanting and the Lord came up from behind. Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Lord Ananta and all the other demigods enjoying themselves participating in the congregational chanting.

The procession entered the locality of traders who deal with conch shells and other connected items. All the residents came out in the best and welcomed the congregation with the necessary Vedic rituals known as *asṭurna-kumbha*. The roads were strewn with flowers and lamps were lit up in the house. Then they went through the weaver's locality. A great sound of jubilation and chanting of the Lord's name greeted the approaching congregation. Everywhere they went people were mad with joy. they were relishing their well earned victory over despotism. Lord Caitanya was very happy to see that all were chanting the Lord's holy name.

Lord Caitanya dancing in mad ecstasy went to Śrīdhara's house. Śrīdhara lived in a small broken hut. He had practically no possessions. A metal pot stood outside his door. The pot was dented and old. It was repaired so many times that even a thief would not think of stealing it. The Lord was dancing in front of Śrīdhara's house when He saw that the only visible metal pot was filled with water. Desiring to teach the human society that how much He loved and cared for His devotees the Supreme Lord Viśvambhara picked up Śrīdhara's worn out waterpot and proceeded to drink water from it with great pleasure. Even if someone wanted to stop Him, who could do that. When Śrīdhara saw what Viśvambhara was doing he came running, shouting, "O death, I am finished!" I know You have come to my house to destroy me!" So saying, Śrīdhara the most saintly personality, fainted on the ground out of great spiritual perturbation. Lord Viśvambhara with utmost satisfaction said, "My whole being has now become purified. Today finally I have attained devotion to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa simply by drinking water from Śrīdhara's pot." Saying this the Lord shed tears of divine ecstasy. The lesson the Lord taught everyone through this pastime was that by drinking water from a pure devotee's water pot one immediately develops attachment to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

In the *Padma Purāṇa*, *Adi khaṇḍa* 31.112 it is stated, "The wise devotee who is desirous of purifying himself completely of all sinful reactions should specifically approach a pure Vaiṣṇava and beg from him his food remnants. If all this is not available then at least he should beg some of his water remnants, or drink the water that has washed his feet."

The devotees began to cry in great joy to see the Supreme Lord manifest such mercy and special affection towards His devotee. Nityānanda, Gadādhara, Advaita, and Śrīvāsa fell down to the ground and began to roll and cry. Haridāsa, Vakreśvara, Candraśekhara, Jagadānanda and the numerous other close associates of the Lord, were unable to contain their spiritual emotions, they burst out in tears of exultation. They cried out Kṛṣṇa's sweet name. Śrīdhara's house became the blessed exhibition site for the highest form of spiritual ecstasy in love of Godhead. The whole universe exulted with the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy name; Lord Gauracandra smiled benignly His mission was accomplished.

Just behold the glories of this devotee's devotion, the Supreme Lord reciprocated his devotion with His full mercy. The Lord drank water with infinite pleasure from Śrīdhara's waterpot made of a base metal. The pot was full of repairs and dents, a pot that was used for many purposes. The Lord enjoyed drinking from this pot because He was drinking Śrīdhara's transcendental devotion to Him and so the common liquid water was immediately transformed into divine ambrosia. Thus the Lord taught that everything in relation to a pure devotee is transcendental.

The Supreme Lord, on the other hand, ignores the valuable gem-studded waterpot of insolent materialists. he accepts any offering from His surrendered devotees, irrespective of any rules and regulations for offering. If His devotee has little and ordinary food then He forcibly takes it from him, as He has displayed this quality in Dvārakā with Sudāmā Vipra. It has been seen that the Lord sells Himself to His devotees. When the Pāṇḍavas were banished to the forest, Lord Kṛṣṇa relished a simple offering of leafy vegetables from Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja. The pure devotees are Kṛṣṇa's father, mother, wife, brother; Lord Kṛṣṇa sees His surrendered devotees as His own kith and kin, but not otherwise. Lord Kṛṣṇa manifests Himself to His devotees according to the desire and mellow of the devotees; Lord Kṛṣṇa allows Himself to be sold or purchased by His unalloyed devotees. All the scriptures have described this wonderful quality of Lord Kṛṣṇa that He specially favors His pure devotees and is always protecting them personally from all calamities.

One should see the magnanimous position of a pure devotee and thus be inspired to develop spiritual attachment for Kṛṣṇa. the position of Lord Kṛṣṇa's servant is never to be viewed deprecatingly; Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Godhead never accepts as His servant a person of little spiritual calibre. After having performed his prescribed duties for many millions of lifetimes, leading a pious life of nonviolence and humility, and praying constantly and sincerely to the Supreme Lord a person is awarded the opportunity at his time of death. Ganges water to him and the chanting of Lord Nārāyaṇa's Holy name. This will certainly afford him liberation from all material bondage, only then can he be blessed to become a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. All the commentators of *Bhāgavatam* have clearly indicated that the liberated souls can render full devotional service to the Supreme Lord, performer of transcendental pastimes. Therefore the devotees position is almost equal to the Lord Himself, and the Lord always sees His devotees in a more exalted position than Himself even. The innumerable eulogies that have been compiled since time immemorial about the divine excellences of a pure devotee is inadequate to describe him perfectly. Lord Śiva, and Lord Brahmā are very happy to be called Lord Kṛṣṇa's servants, and Ananta Śeṣa is always hankering to serve Him. Although the pure devotees are almost equal to the Lord Himself, yet they are constantly wanting to serve Him in loving attachment.

Advaita Ācārya is such an elevated devotee, many persons do not know his real mood and position and so they are discounted, when Advaita Ācārya is glorified as a devotee of Lord Caitanya. Lord Kṛṣṇa is greatly pleased when anyone calls Him a 'devotee' because who besides Lord Kṛṣṇa knows perfectly well who is a pure devotee. The most abominable sinners proclaim themselves as 'God' only to ensure a full belly regularly. Gathering around him a crowd of asinine disciples the imposter poses himself as the Lord of the Universe. Although the body of such a cheater, is only fit for the dogs meals he still becomes deluded by the external energy of Lord Viṣṇu to think that he is the Supreme controller. And now just behold the opulence of the Lord of all lords. Lord Gauracandra, simply by His desire millions of people converged with millions of burning torches to begin a historic march against oppression; all the way they were greeted with decorated doorways and showers of floral confetti from the heavenly denizens.

It was difficult to understand the transformation that took place in the Lord after He drank water from Śrīdhara's waterpot. All the devotees began to shed tears of joy seeing the special mercy that the Supreme Lord showered upon His pure devotee. Śrīdhara was thunderstruck and with tears brimming over in his eyes holding straw in the teeth in utter humility he knelt before the Lord chanting His holy name and said, "What have You done my Lord, what water have You drunk?" But Lord Viśvambhara's bliss was uncheckable after having drunk water from His devotees water vessel, He danced in ecstasy surrounded by all His associates who sang and danced along with Him. Nityānanda Prabhu and Gadādhara Paṇḍita were always like two jewels decorating the Lord's either side.

Kholaveca Śrīdhara's fortune is indeed so great that even Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā are moved to tears of joy and appreciation. The Supreme Lord Caitanya is unattainable by wealth, fame or erudition, but He is captivated by unalloyed devotion. After the water drinking incident the Lord moved on from Śrīdhara's place towards the town. Navadvīpa became the most hallowed place in the entire creation as Lord Caitanya and His associates danced and sang in ecstasy the Lord's holy name. Only the sound of the Lord's name echoed in concave extremities of the universe. The divine exultation that is experienced by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Nārada Muni, Lord Śiva, and others on hearing the holy name was now being experienced by the residents of Navadvīpa as they passed through the different localities in Navadvīpa. Although the *kīrtana* was going on for a whole night one should not think that this was just one night, rather several yugas passed in that time unknown to anyone. Nothing is impossible for Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Lord to accomplish, a mere raising of His eyebrow annihilates the entire universe. Only the most fortunate and pious souls can comprehend such esoteric truths about the Absolute: a dry mental speculator is not eligible for such revelations.

The townspeople were enraptured beyond comprehension by Lord Caitanya's beautiful dancing, loud thunderous shouts of joy and the profuse flowing of divine nectar in the form of the chanting of the holy name. People thanked mother Śaci for carrying in her womb such a child as Lord Viśvambhara; they blessed Jagannātha Miśra for being a good father to the Lord. They were grateful for the good fortune that descended upon the residents of Navadvīpa. They all wished that this night never ends as the Lord performed His pastimes for many yugas. These pastimes of the Lord has no beginning or end. They 'appear' and then of a certain time they 'disappear', the Lord manifests Himself to the devotee according to the desire and mood of the devotee. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.9.11) it says, "You are so merciful to Your devotees that You manifest Yourself in the particular eternal form of transcendence in which they always think of You."

Lord Caitanya is even to this day performing His eternal pastimes, those who are pure in heart can see them. the Lord descends only to please His devotees. One may perform austerities and sacrifices for millions of lifetimes but without devotional service all his performances will be futile. And devotional service means to serve the pure devotee of the Lord, this is the verdict of all the scriptures.

I offer my obeisances to Lord Nityānanda. All glories to Him, for only with His mercy one can glorify Lord Caitanya. Many persons see Lord Nityānanda differently, some say He is Balarāma, or He is very dear to Lord Caitanya, or He is the expansion of the omnipotent Lord; many say they do not know who He really is. Each one see Him according to his realization. Whoever He maybe He is very special to Lord Caitanya and may His lotus feet be the only treasure of my heart. Let all the atheist who criticize Lord Nityānanda be very careful lest they be kicked in the head. I offer my obeisances at the feet of this dearmost devotee of Lord Caitanya may He be my Lord and master. I can know Lord Nityānanda only by Lord Caitanya's mercy and I can know Lord Caitanya only if Lord Nityānanda shows me. Lord Caitanya is Lord Rāma and Nityānanda is Lakṣmaṇa, Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa and Nityānanda is Saṅkarṣaṇa. Lord Nityānanda possesses the power to fully satisfy Lord Caitanya with His transcendental service. the intimate associates of Lord Caitanya are in full knowledge of Lord Nityānanda's extraordinary position. But at times one may see a certain elevated devotee quarreling with other devotees; this is all transcendental and is happening by the desire of Lord Kṛṣṇa. No one should side with any party, because they are all most elevated Vaiṣṇavas and in doing so one will certainly make offenses against the Vaiṣṇava. One can become a true Vaiṣṇava by serving Lord Kṛṣṇa and by not finding faults in others.

Now I offer my obeisances at the lotus feet of Advaita Ācārya, may I remain attached to his dear servitors. All glories to Lord Caitanya along with all His associates! These narrations about His pastimes rewards one with the highest devotional mood. If one sides with Advaita against Gadādhara Paṇḍita then due to this imbecile act that person is never allowed shelter by Advaita Ācārya as his devotee.

The transcendental pastimes of Lord Caitanya are the purest from of divine ambrosia, I pray that these unlimited pastimes increasingly appear in the minds of all living beings. One who desires joy from hearing these narrations will surely see the beautiful face of Lord Caitanya directly. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana Dāsa, offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 24

All glories to Lord Caitanya, who is the epitome of divine peace! He protects the pious and annihilates the miscreants. All glories to the son of Jagannātha Miśra and Śacīmātā, who is glorified with choice verses! All glories to the life of Jagadānanda Paṇḍita and Haridāsa and to the purest treasure of Kāśīśvara's heart! You are an ocean of mercy, the friend of the poor, and the maintainer of all living entities. Whoever surrenders unto You, You accept and become his master.

Lord Caitanya could not stay without *kīrtana* as He passed time in Navadvīpa. The *kīrtana* started having such an effect on Him that as soon as He heard the holy name He fell down in ecstasy in whatever place He was. Tears flowed profusely from His eyes. He became saturated with love of Godhead. If anyone for any reason said aloud the Lord's name Lord Caitanya swooned to the ground and the symptoms of ecstasy started to manifest on His person as He rolled on the ground. Such displays of spiritual ecstasy was indeed very rare, even Lord Brahmā would consider himself blessed if he could see this; yet the residents of Navadvīpa saw all these transcendental activities enacted often right on the streets. And when sometimes the Lord experienced intense ecstasy He would become unconscious. His body numbed into stillness; on these occasions the devotees would carry Him away, themselves feeling sublime joy. Then bringing Him in an unconscious state behind closed doors they again started up the *kīrtana* which submerged the entire universe in waves of spiritual bliss. The different devotional ecstasies that manifested on the Lord's person are all inexplicable and often unrecognizable by anyone of its esoteric significance. Sometimes the Lord spoke out saying, "I am Madan Gopāla" and then with a sudden change of mood He will say, "I am an eternal servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa." On certain days He would incessantly repeat, "*Gopī, gopī, gopī!*" thinking of the damsels of Vṛndāvana and if He as much as heard Kṛṣṇa's name, He burned inside with increasing anger and said, "where is this Kṛṣṇa of yours coming from, this big rogue; He is a cheat, cunning and a hypocrite, who can think of worshipping Him. He wins the heart of the ladies and then once they trust Him He drops off their ears and nose. He is so greedy He almost snatches their lives from them. I do not care to hear about this thief." In this manner He would speak out angrily to anyone who repeated Kṛṣṇa's name in His presence.

Again on other days He would call out "Vṛndāvana" or "Gokula" or "Mathurā" in great joy, and then on other occasions He would draw on the earth with His nails. Sometimes drawing a standing form of a person bent in three places and looking at it He would weep so bitterly as if the entire world would drown in His tears. He would at times say, "I see a huge dense forest full of lions, tigers and bears." Like this the Lord was totally absorbed in the mood of sublime devotion where night became day and day became night for Him. The devotees who watched these were overcome with great spiritual emotions and they embraced each other. What these devotees saw so easily of the Lord's ecstatic manifestation even Lord Brahmā would constantly pray for such a favor.

The Lord was now spending almost all His time outside His own house, in the residences of the different devotees. He gave up all His familial and external responsibilities; only sometimes He would do something to please His mother. The devotees were now always feeling intense joy having the Lord always with them, their bliss in *kīrtana* increased. Nityānanda, Advaita, Gadādhara never left the Lord's association, always participating in His never-ending transcendental activities.

One day Advaita Ācārya was overcome by the mood of the *gopīs* and began to dance, while all the devotees sang with intense feelings. He danced in joy and at the same moment in great humility and distress he fell to the ground holding a straw in his teeth and began to roll as if intoxicated by the divine nectar of love of Godhead. Advaita continued to dance for several hours, but the other devotees were exhausted unable to keep up with Him. Then finally the devotees quieted him, making him sit down, and they sat around him. Finding Advaita somewhat tranquil Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Rāmāi and a few others went for their baths. But soon again Advaita was overcome with feeling distress and as it gradually increased in intensity he began to roll in Śrīvāsa's courtyard. Lord Caitanya after some work was resting in His house. Advaita's feelings of humility and distress became known to the Lord.

The Lord always soothes away His devotees distress and worries. So Lord Caitanya came to see Advaita. Seeing Advaita supine in Śrīvāsa's courtyard He took Him by the hand leading Him into the temple and shut the doors. Giving Advaita a consoling smile the Lord said, "Listen Ācārya! Tell Me what is Your desire right now, what is to be done?"

Advaita said, "O Lord, You are essence of all the *Vedas*. I want only You. What else is there to want?"

The Lord laughed slightly and said, "Here I am in person, what more do You want?"

Advaita insisted, "What you say is true. Here You are before Me, the Absolute truth, yet I would like to see some of Your mystic opulences."

The Lord softly asked, "Tell Me what You desire."

Advaita said, "My Lord, I intensely desire to see what Arjuna had seen long ago."

As soon as Advaita had spoken these words Advaita saw a chariot in the midst of a raging battlefield, millions of soldiers were engaged in combat all around the chariot. Sitting inside this chariot was the beautiful blackish four-handed form of Lord Kṛṣṇa holding conch, mace, lotus, and disc in each of His hands. Advaita was bright then beholding the universal form of Lord Kṛṣṇa. All the planets and stars like sun, moon, and mountains, rivers, oceans, forests well visible within this wondrous manifestation of Kṛṣṇa. He saw Arjuna standing before this universal form with folded hands offering words of prayer and praise.

He saw millions of pairs of eyes, and millions of open mouths with huge licking flames exuding out of them. All the

atheists and sinful demons were being sucked into this mighty conflagration to be consumed. The fault finders, and the heartless ones who perpetrate violence on others all burned in the flames from the mouth of Lord Caitanya. Advaita was blessed with the Lord's special mercy and therefore he could see this marvelous Universal form of Lord Caitanya. As Advaita saw this Universal form he began to cry in great ecstasy due to his intense love for the Lord and falling to his knees in great humility he begged the Lord for His eternal association as his Lord and master.

While Advaita was seeing Lord Caitanya manifest His universal form Lord Nityānanda was roaming the streets of Navadvīpa absorbed in divine bliss, as was His usual vocation, Lord Nityānanda, because of His supramundane position could immediately know that Lord Caitanya was showing His special universal form to Advaita. He quickly went to Śrīvāsa's house and headed straight to the temple room. Lord Caitanya also knew that Nityānanda was coming. Shutting the doors behind Him. Lord Nityānanda saw this unlimited form of the Lord before Him and falling down like a stick He offered His obeisances and closed His eyes.

The Lord spoke, "Arise O Nityānanda! You are as dear to Me as My own life. You know everything about Me. Anyone who is attached to You in loving devotion I make him My own. No one is more dear to Me than You. And anyone who tries to see differences in You and Advaita will never gain the proper knowledge to understand the Supreme God or Me in this incarnation." Nityānanda and Advaita began to dance jubilantly. Lord Caitanya responded with a thunderous voice saying, "Just look at Yourself!" Nityānanda and Advaita overwhelmed with joy started glorifying the Lord with beautiful prayers. Lord Viśvabhāra smiled upon Them with great appreciation. Although all these transcendental incidences were being enacted in Śrīvāsa's residence none of the others could see.

These narrations are from the lotus mouth of Advaita Ācārya, those who do not have faith in them are the most abominable of sinners And those who do not glorify Lord Caitanya as the Supreme Absolute Lord are evil hearted men who are avoided by saintly personalities. My greatest hope and assurance is that Lord Caitanya is the master of my dear master, Nityānanda. The Lord chose Navadvīpa to reveal His pastimes openly before the public eye yet only the devotees could comprehend its esoteric content. The most valuable wealth anyone can possess is the wealth of devotional service to the Supreme and the zenith of devotion is when one weeps in ecstatic bliss remembering the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. One cannot develop love of Godhead by material means, only be sincerely calling out to Kṛṣṇa can one at the end chant Kṛṣṇa's name purely. One can also easily attain this state of perfect joy if one hears with implicit faith the narrations of Lord Caitanya exhibiting His universal form to Advaita Ācārya and Nityānanda Prabhu.

Finally Lord Caitanya left for His residence with all the other devotees. Lord Nityānanda and Advaita did not inform another soul about seeing the Lord manifest His universal form; they were still mad with joy and they rolled about on the ground sometimes singing, dancing and clapping hands. As they were thus engrossed in merriment soon they began to argue and abuse each other. Advaita said, "You simpleton, drunkard, who asked You to come to this place? Why did You force Your way in here? And whosoever calls You a *sannyāsī*. No one knows Your family background, or caste, and as for known You eat in anyone's house from any caste. How does a mad intoxicated person like Yourself find Himself in the company of Vaiṣṇavas? If you do not leave right away then You will find Yourself in real trouble."

Lord Nityānanda replied, "You baldy fellow! You would be wise to sit quietly! I will first show you My power and strength with a few blows. You foggy old *brāhmaṇa*, you have no fear? I am an *avadhūta* renunciate, and the Lord's brother. You are a householder totally engrossed in family life, whereas I am a fully renounced and realized soul. If I strike you cannot say or do anything, yet without reason you are trying to show off in front of Me." These words incensed Advaita with burning rage, he flung his clothes in all directions and began to severely chastise Nityānanda. He said, "You fish eater, You meat eater, how do You call Yourself a *sannyāsī*. I have undressed myself before You in sheer disgust. Who knows you, what about Your parents, Your house, nothing is known to anyone, let anyone come forward and identify You and recognize You. You are just a thief wanting to eat everything, gobble up anything and destroy all! You claim to be a *sannyāsī*, a *sannyāsī* does not demand anything, but You fill Your belly three times a day. This Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita cannot discriminate between the people of different castes, that is why he has allowed this *avadhūta* to join this company of Vaiṣṇavas. He does not understand that this so called *avadhūta* will ruin everyone's caste and reputation, what a menace this drunkard is." It is difficult for ordinary folks to understand this exchange of spiritual love between the two which sounds like a pernicious verbal fight. No one would commit the spiritual blunder of supporting one against the other. The deep spiritual significance of such abusive exchanges between devotees are unfathomable to most. And due to ignorance of this fact if someone glorifies Advaita and denounces say Gadādhara Paṇḍita then he will be doomed and certainly he will not be considered a devotee of Advaita either. The activities of the Supreme Lord and the Vaiṣṇavas are all transcendental, incomprehensible to the materialist. An atheist can never understand that both the Lord and His pure devotees are on the same transcendental plane.

One who worships Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet seeing all Vaiṣṇavas to be dear to the Lord will indeed cross over this ocean of material nescience. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul. I Vṛndāvana Dāsa humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

All glories to Lord Gauracandra, the Lord of the entire universe! He is the crown jewel of the *brāhmaṇas*, the Supreme amongst all the Vedic personalities, and the perfect renunciate. He is an ocean of compassion appeared like a brilliant gem out of the womb of the blessed mother Śacī. All glories to Lord Viśvambhara and Lord Nityānanda! All glories to His devotees and associates! One attains the highest perfection of life by constantly hearing the narrations of Lord Caitanya's transcendental pastimes. These topics of the Navadvīpa līlā as recorded in the *Madhya-khaṇḍa* is like an ocean of nectar. The Lord was always engrossed in *sankīrtana* relishing the taste of His own transcendental name, and thus intoxicated He exhibited the symptoms of ecstasy and also revealed His supramundane opulences.

The sweet ambrosia of love of Godhead led the Lord to act like a mad man. the Lord whose body was the object of even Lord Brahmā's worship was besmeared with dust from rolling on the ground. The devotees satiated Their vision seeing the Lord submerged in an ocean of divine bliss. And in those times when He emerged out of the blissful state of unconsciousness, He would sometimes sit surrounded by His associates; other times go to the Ganges to take a bath. On some occasions after dancing for a long time the Lord would come and sit with His devotees, who would then give Him a shower in the house with Ganges water.

One of the maidservants of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita named Dukhi would carry all the Ganges water for the Lord's bath while the Lord was still engaged in dancing. She would watch the beautiful form of the Lord dancing in spiritual exultation and tears would well out in drops, and then she went out again to bring more pots of Ganges water for His bath. When the Lord saw the water pots full of Ganges water neatly arranged in rows He was very pleased. He inquired about this from Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, "who brings the Ganges water daily?" Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita replied, "Dukhi, the maidservant brings them daily." The Lord said, "Then you all should name her 'Sukhi' or happy instead of 'Dukhi' which means 'sad.' The name 'Dukhi' is not fitting to her. I think 'Sukhi' is the most appropriate name for her."

The devotees were moved to tears seeing the unlimited mercy of the Lord upon this poor maidservant. they began to call her now as 'Sukhi' and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita now stopped seeing her and treating her as a maidservant. This shows that one can easily attain Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet by loving devotional service to Him; one cannot avoid the jaws of death merely by shaving one's head as a mark of renunciation. Material knowledge, high birth, beauty or wealth are useless if not used for Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction with attachment. Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Lord incarnated to play the part of an ideal personality. All his actions conform exactly to the Vedic injunctions. The blessings this maidservant Dukhi received from the Lord is never seen by those who are blinded by false pride. One can imagine the Divinity grace on Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita whose servants and maidservants are so fortunate.

One day, as was usual, the Lord was dancing in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house. The devotees, including Śrīvāsa surrounded the Lord and sang and danced. Just then in the inner quarters of the house Śrīvāsa's son passed away due to some illness: the ladies helplessly looked on. Outside the *kīrtana* was in full progress and the Lord danced in ecstasy. Suddenly sounds of loud wailing filled the air. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita hurried inside the house and saw his son lying dead on the bed. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita was a very elevated devotee, grave and knowledgeable; he took charge of the situation and forbade the ladies to lament so bitterly. He said, "you are all aware of Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental potencies, hence restrain your tears and contain the sorrow in your heart. The Lord, whose holy name is capable of purifying even the most dreadful sinner just on a simple utterance and elevates him to the spiritual world, is now present here in person and dancing in ecstasy with His servitors who are each one of them like Lord Brahmā himself. And in this auspicious moment if someone leaves his body why should anyone lament. I would consider myself very fortunate if I had the same fate as this boy. Although you are unable to gain distance from the attachments of family life, you should at least stop your crying. Nobody else should learn about this incident lest this raises an alarm and disturbs the Lord's bliss in dancing and if this happens then I shall certainly throw myself into the Ganges." These words had a sobering effect on the women and they stopped crying; Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita went back to join the *kīrtana*. He was soon heaved high in the waves of divine bliss generated by the *kīrtana* and the Lord's presence. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita was very exalted and rare, and such are indeed the characteristics of a servant of Lord Caitanya.

The Lord danced for a while relishing the bliss of dancing. Soon the news of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's son's passing away reached the devotees. Still no one openly expressed anything, but were profoundly moved within. Lord Caitanya, the omniscient Supreme Personality knew everyone's heart; He inquired, "Today something perturbs My thoughts, what distress has cast its dark shadow in your house Paṇḍita?" Śrīvāsa replied, "My Lord, what distress can effect me, since Your benign smiling face illuminates my house." Finally the leading devotees informed the Lord about Śrīvāsa's son's demise. Gravely the Lord asked, "When did this happen?" and was told that it occurred in the early past of the evening at about four. The Lord was told, "You were not informed of this matter because Śrīvāsa was concerned about disturbing Your dancing. His son passed away about two and a half hours earlier and with Your permission we can begin the necessary last rites now. When Lord Caitanya heard this wonderful story about Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, He was amazed.

He said, "How can I ever live without such an extraordinary companion?" and began to weep. He said, "How am I going to leave such a saintly person's association who is unaffected by the demise of his son due to his love for Me?" Speaking in this manner the Lord broke down and wept bitterly. The devotees were perplexed to hear the Lord's words which indicated He was going away. it did not make much sense to them for none of them knew that in the future the Lord would leave home to embrace the mendicant's life of a *sannyāsa*.

When the Lord calmed Himself He took all the devotees to attend to the dead boy. In the presence of all the devotees Lord addressed the deceased son of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, “What reasons made you leave Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house?” The devotees were indeed surprised that the Lord was speaking to a dead body; their surprise turned to sheer wonderment when the deceased young boy spoke up saying, “My Lord everything happens according to Your will alone, who can influence Your will?” The devotees listened attentively to each word. The boy continued, “I have enjoyed in this body for the prescribed time. Now that the time period is over, I am leaving to take up another body. And, my Lord, although I must leave my present body please be merciful to me so that I may never forget You. Who is one's father, and who is one's son? Everyone is here to act on the result of one's individual karma. As long as my destiny allowed me to remain in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house, I have stayed. But now I must leave for yet another residence. My Lord I offer my humble obeisances unto You and Your dear associates. Please forgive all my offenses and permit me to take Your leave.” With these parting words the child lay still.

This wonderful miracle of the dead boy speaking such words of wisdom was a crowning experience for the devotees, they were reaching heights of exultation; the entire family of Śrīvāsa was now carried on the waves of ecstasy and their lamentation became a passing dream. Experiencing the bliss of love of Godhead, they threw themselves at the Lord's lotus feet and said, “O Lord birth after birth You are the father, mother, and son; may we never forget the shade of Your lotus feet. Let us take birth in any condition and place but please let our devotion at Your lotus feet be unflinching.” Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and his three brothers prayed earnestly to the Lord and all the devotees cried out in appreciation and joy.

The Lord said, “Listen to Me Śrīvāsa! You are well conversant with the knowledge of family and material life. You are unaffected by the distressful conditions of family life. Not only that, you are so elevated that anyone who sees you will also become free from this entanglement.. Nityānanda and Myself are Your two sons, so remove the pain of separation in your heart.” The devotees jubilantly greeted these words of divine compassion and love from the Lord.

The Lord accompanied all the devotees as they carried Śrīvāsa's son to the Ganges; performing *kīrtana* all the way. The required rites completed, they all bathed in the Ganges and each went his way home, chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīvāsa's family went back satisfied with the last rites. All these confidential pastimes of the Lord are extraordinary and faithful hearing of these narrations gives love of Godhead. And I offer my obeisances at the lotus feet of Śrīvāsa, whose sons are none other than my Lord Nityānanda and Gauracandra.”

These were the wonderful pastimes being enacted in Navadvīpa and they are known and seen only by devotees. *Madhya-khaṇḍa* has tried to describe the pastime of the dead boy speaking words of wisdom to the best of the author's ability.

The Lord was so deeply immersed in the ocean of love of Godhead that He had no attraction for family life. He could not even properly perform worship of the deities what to speak of doing other activities. As the Lord would sit down to worship the deities after bathing His clothes would become drenched with tears of love of Godhead. Unrestrained they flowed from His eyes, such were the surging within His spiritual emotions. He immediately came out of the deity room and changed into fresh clothes. Again in a matter of moments His clothes became soaked with tears of spiritual love. In this way He was unable to perform any worship of the deity. Ultimately He requested Gadādhara Paṇḍita to offer worship to the deity saying to him that He was not fortunate enough to worship the deity. Such were the supra mundane activities of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha as He relished the nectar of love of Godhead.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana dāsa humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 26

All glories to Lord Gauracandra, the supreme purifier of the entire world! Please offer me Your lotus feet on the seat of my heart.

One day the Lord went to Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī's and begged food from him to show His mercy upon him. The Lord said, “I feel an uncontrollable desire to eat your food, and believe Me there is no reason for you to be afraid.” The Lord persistently requested Śuklāmbara and so Śuklāmbara pleaded with the Lord saying, “O Lord, I am a most sinful person, despicable and worse, and You are the symbol of religious principles. Now You are to shelter me? I am no better than an insignificant insect caught up in this material illusion.”

The Lord replied, “Do not consider My request to be an illusion. I very much want to eat food cooked by you. Go quickly and arrange for everything at midday I will come to your house.”

Śuklāmbara was still quite in anxiety and so he approached other devotees for comfort. They spoke reassuringly, “Why should you be afraid. He is none other than the Supreme Lord. It is His nature to search out devotees who worship Him with single mindedness and from them He likes to beg food. Remember He ate at Vidura's house, who was a sudra's son. Therefore, you quickly go to your house and prepare to cook for the Lord with care and devotion. Even after this if you are

still afraid, then try to cook without directly touching the food. You are very fortunate, to have received this wonderful opportunity from the Lord.” The *brāhmaṇa* Śuklāmbara hurried home feeling exceedingly elated.

Feeling clean after bathing Śuklāmbara put scented water on the fire for cooking rice. He also began to cook a delicacy prepared from the pith of banana tree trunk. While this cooking was in progress Śuklāmbara folded his hands and began to sing the names of the Lord, praising Him and invoking His grace. Attracted by Śuklāmbara's devotion, Lakṣmidevī, the universal mother and the goddess of fortune blessed the *brāhmaṇa*'s endeavor with her favorable glance; the delectable taste of ambrosia immediately mixed in with the food.

Meanwhile, Lord Viśvambhara had completed His bath and came to Śuklāmbara's house in dripping clothes. Śuklāmbara's humble dwelling was situated on the banks of the Ganges. Lord Viśvambhara was accompanied by Nityānanda Prabhu and some of His associates. He changed to dry clothes and sat down to eat. The Lord served Himself according to His wish, as Śuklāmbara watched Him with intense pleasure. As the Lord relished the food all the devotees looked on with delight. The Supreme Lord Gaurāṅga is the receiver and enjoyer of all pure oblations offered in sacrifices by no less than Lord Brahmā and others of his stature, but now the Lord was thoroughly relishing Śuklāmbara's cooking prepared from rice that he had begged, this is certainly very rare.

The blessed Lord said, “I have never tasted anything so delicious in My life. The rice and thor are so palatable that I find no words to describe. How did you cook this to get such a taste. Actually you are My eternal associate as a friend. I have advented only for Your sake and for the sake of others like you.”

All the devotees present began to shed tears of joy as their Lord showered mercy upon Śuklāmbara. In this way the Lord relished His food and enjoyed the company of His devotees. Let the atheistic people blinded with sinful activities open their eyes and see how Śuklāmbara was blessed by the Supreme Lord. Lord Caitanya is unapproachable to those who are puffed up with wealth, following, learning, etc.; the scriptures declare that the Supreme Lord is easily won over by surrender in loving devotion.”

Finishing His meal the Lord sat down in a relaxed manner chewing on a betel pan, and smiled gently. The devotees rushed to have remnants from the Lord's eating plate He just left behind. The Lord's remnants are so rare that Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā would feel extremely blessed to receive some and would carry the plate on their heads, but now it was so easily available to all the devotees of the Lord. Such a wonderful pastime was taking place in a beggar's house, this is the transcendental arrangement of the Lord.

The Lord engaged everyone in discussing the transcendental topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes for a while and then lay down to rest. The devotees following their Lord also lay down. One amongst the devotees of the Lord, Śrī Vijaya dāsa, an exalted soul, had a wonderful vision. There were very few in Navadvīpa whose handwriting could compare with Vijaya's, and he had copied many of Lord Caitanya's books. People simply knew him as 'Vijaya the artist' but were unable to gain his spiritual depth due to their lack of devotion. As they all lay next to the Lord, the Lord placed His hand gently on Vijaya's body, and Vijaya began to see marvelous sights. He saw the Lord's hand glistening like a golden pillar, long and graceful; the entire arm was covered in brilliant gems and jewelry. the fingers of the hand were bedecked with rings full of priceless gems which shone with the dazzle of a thousand suns and moons. The marvellous radiance spread to the abode of Lord Brahmā, the highest planet of the universe. Vijaya was overcome with joyous amazement. He opened his mouth and was about to exclaim when suddenly he felt the Lord's hand covering his mouth. The Lord smilingly said, “As long as I am present in Navadvīpa you should not speak about this to anyone.”

Hearing these words, Vijaya jumped up from his position with a roaring sound, waking up all the devotees. The devotees saw Vijaya in an excited state and tried to calm him down unsuccessfully. after a spell of excitement and temporary madness that great soul fell down in a swoon of ecstasy. Seeing these symptoms the devotees realized that Vijaya had seen transcendental visions and feeling great joy for him began to cry and share his ecstasy.

The Lord inquired from everyone, “What has happened to Vijaya? Quite suddenly he started making these thunderous sounds. I know, he has a special sentiment for mother Ganges and being so near mother Ganges must have affected him. Otherwise it must be the presence of the deities in Śuklāmbara's house, or maybe he has seen Lord Kṛṣṇa here.” Saying this Lord Caitanya placed His hand on Vijaya and brought him back to consciousness: the devotees were relieved and happy.

Although Vijaya regained consciousness and was up and moving he was still silent, without responding like a stone. For seven days he roamed all over Nadia without food, sleep, or any bodily care. People would not understand Vijaya's spiritual trauma. After some days Vijaya returned to his normal self. These were extraordinary activities the Lord performed in Śuklāmbara's house. Who can enumerate the extent of Śuklāmbara's fortune. The Lord chose to sanctify Śuklāmbara's house with His presence and the presence of His intimate associates. He even ate food cooked by Śuklāmbara. One who hears with faith these supramundane narrations of how the Lord graced Vijaya and Śuklāmbara will develop unalloyed devotion to the Supreme Lord, this is the dear verdict of the scriptures.

Everyday Lord Caitanya accompanied by Lord Nityānanda visited different Vaiṣṇava's houses and manifest His

transcendental pastimes. Lord Caitanya was constantly steeped in ecstatic *prema-rasa*, manifesting the mood and behavior of different incarnations. Matsya, Kūrma, Nṛsimha, Varāha, Vāmana, Raghunātha, Buddha, Kalki, Kṛṣṇa all these moods were displayed by Him as and when He desired; they came and He quickly hid Them.

But somehow Lord Balarāma's mood returned repeatedly to Him and He kept manifesting it.

As Haladhara, Balarāma, Lord Caitanya would become very excited and agitated, shouting loudly, "Bring Me wine, bring wine!" Lord Nityānanda always knew the Lord's different moods, He would immediately fetch a potful of Ganges water. Such was the volume of His voice that the entire creation shook and when He danced in that mood it was as if the earth would shatter to pieces and all the three worlds swayed precariously. The devotees were frightened to see such violent dancing and they sang songs glorifying the pastimes of Lord Balarāma; these songs greatly pleased the Lord bringing Him to a state of supreme ecstasy. In this state He moved about like a madman, walking and swaying like a drunk. Yet the beauty of His face was indescribable, one's eyes never satiated from drinking into the exquisiteness of His face, the more one looked the desire to see His moonlike face increased. He constantly called out 'Nityānanda! Nityānanda!' and at short spells when He came out of His trance, He would say things like, "Oh! life ebbs out of Me."

Then changing His mood Lord Caitanya said, "O Kṛṣṇa! You are my father, You protect Me, and Balarāma My uncle educated Me with a stick." The Lord was so overwhelmed with spiritual ecstasy that it unnerved the devotees to see Their Lord in such a trance; They cried out in fear. All the activities of the Lord are so extraordinary. Sometimes He felt the mood of intense separation from Kṛṣṇa that tears flowed in streams. His wailing pierced everyone's heart. Esoterically, He was feeling separation from Himself. As the *gopīs* or the cowherd damsels of Vṛndāvana felt intense separation from Kṛṣṇa, loosing their minds in His absence, then seeing the rising moon and mistaking it for Kṛṣṇa's glowing face they almost died due to mixed emotions, similarly all these ecstatic devotions possessed Lord Caitanya and He rushed to His devotees clinging to their necks weeping continuously. Mother Śacī filled with consternation to see her son in that state. How can mere humans describe the wonderful ecstatic 'prema' the Lord exhibited. Such displays of the highest order of devotional love was a daily occurrence with the Lord.

One day the Supreme Lord Caitanya was immersed in the pastimes of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana. He was incessantly chanting, "*Gopī, gopī!*" Along came a student scholar from somewhere and without understanding His mood said to Him, "O Nīmāi Paṇḍita why are You chanting *gopī! gopī!* You should better chant Kṛṣṇa's name. What pious gain is there in chanting *gopī gopī?*" But according to the *Vedas* one's piety increases many times by chanting Kṛṣṇa's name!" An ignorant man can never comprehend the Lord's spiritual state. The Lord said, "Kṛṣṇa! He is a plunderer! Who worships Him? That ungrateful Kṛṣṇa killed the innocent Bali and although His winsome looks and strength has won many women He deliberately cuts off a woman's nose. Again, He begs everything from Bali Mahārāja leaving him with nothing and then sends him down to help. What will I gain chanting His name?" Saying this Lord Caitanya picked up a stick and still immersed in *prema-bhāva* He rushed towards the student menacingly. The student jumped up and ran out with the Lord close behind in hot pursuit, raving and ranting. The student ran in fear of his life not understanding the Lord's real mood.

The devotees ran after their Lord, and catching up with Him brought Him back and pacified Him. The student in the meanwhile made good his escape. Panting heavily and drenched with perspiration he went to his friends. They were all curious to see his plight and inquired the reason for his fright. He replied, "Do not inquire further! I am lucky to be here alive and breathing. Everyone says, "Nīmāi Paṇḍita is very saintly, but today when I visited Him I found Him chanting *gopī, gopī*. He is only chanting these names day and night. So I told Him, "O learned man, what are You doing? You should chant Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, as recommended in the scriptures. These words enraged Him to such an extent that He came charging at me with a stick. Not only that, He was even cursing and abusing Kṛṣṇa, in a way I am afraid to repeat. Only destiny could have intervened to save my life today."

The students began to laugh foolishly and air their vacuous views. One said, "The people say He is a good Vaiṣṇava, then why does He come chasing a *brāhmaṇa* with violent intentions." Another offered, "How can you call Him a Vaiṣṇava if He refuses to utter Kṛṣṇa's name?" Yet another remarked, "It sounds very strange that a Vaiṣṇava is chanting only *gopī, gopī!*" Another said forcefully, "Why should we feel cowered and shrivel in this hovel. Don't we also possess that power so characteristic of *brāhmaṇas*. He maybe a *brāhmaṇa*, but we are also learned in the scriptures. Why should we tolerate His threatenings. He is not a king or officer that He can punish us. Let us group together and next time He tries to intimidate us we will thwart Him. He may be the son of the learned Jagannātha Miśra but our parents are no less worthy. Just see how yesterday we were studying together as mates and today He has suddenly become the big 'master'.

In this way the offenders and atheists spoke scornfully against Him. However Lord Caitanya, the Supersoul residing in everyone's heart, knew everything. One day He was sitting with all His devotees when suddenly He made a mysterious remark, whose meaning was too shrouded for anyone to understand. He said, "The medicine 'pippalikhandā' was prepared to cure the excess phlegm, but instead it increased the phlegm in the body." Saying this the Lord began laughing loudly musing over something incomprehensible to all, the devotees became very concerned.

Lord Nityānanda knew the inner meaning of the Lord's statement and the Lord's confidential mood. He thought, "Soon the Lord will leave home and take *sannyāsa*." Lord Nityānanda fell into deep despair. The life air seemed to leave His body

at the thought of seeing His beloved Lord Caitanya, beautiful as He is to be shorn of those lovely locks of hair.

Lord Caitanya suddenly clasped Lord Nityānanda's hand taking Him away to a quiet and lonely spot. Lord Caitanya said, "Listen, dear Nityānanda, I am revealing My heart to You. The purpose of My advent was to deliver the entire world, but instead of delivering the living entities it seems I have to ultimately destroy them. The people are supposed to attain salvation just by seeing Me, whereas now their material bonds become stronger. As soon as they contemplated on beating Me they became tightly chained to eternal bondage. I incarnated with the intention of liberating the good and innocent mass but now I have spoiled everything and am leading the people to their doom. Therefore, I have decided to shave off My head and take to the renounced life of a *sannyāsī*, and go begging door to door. I will stand at the doors of those who wanted to attack Me with a begging bowl, then these same aggressors will fall at My feet and in this way I will deliver the whole universe. Everyone respects a *sannyāsī*, no one will ever think of harming a *sannyāsī*. Tomorrow when I take up begging as a *sannyāsī* I can go safe anywhere. I have fully decided to take up the *sannyāsa* order and leave My home and family. Please do not feel sad due to this, rather please give Me permission to take up the renounced life. Whatever is Your desire I will certainly act in accordance, but You should consider that I have taken this incarnation for a specific reason and so require Your permission in this matter. If you really want to see that everyone in the world becomes liberated then you must not stop Me from My decision. And You are the last person to lament over this because You know the confidential reason for My advent."

When Nityānanda heard from His dear Lord that He was shaving His beautiful locks and entering the renounced order, Nityānanda's heart shattered to pieces in grief. He did not know what to say to Lord Caitanya, but He was sure that the Lord will go ahead with His decision.

Lord Nityānanda replied, "My dear Lord, You are absolutely independent. Whatever You wish must be executed. Who can desist You or go against Your wishes, whatever You have decided is surely to happen. You are the maintainer and protector of this cosmic manifestation, Your wishes are always for the good of the people. Who but You can conceive the best method for liberating the conditioned souls. You are perfectly free to act in any way You think best. And yet I think You may present these facts to all the Vaiṣṇavas and ask their opinion. After hearing them You may do whatever You think is necessary."

Lord Nityānanda's words satisfied Lord Caitanya and He embraced Nityānanda again and again. Thus advised, Lord Caitanya went to meet the assembly of Vaiṣṇavas. The paralysing thought that Lord Caitanya will take *sannyāsa* echoed in grey emptiness in Lord Nityānanda's mind. He walked about normally but within Him raged a fitful storm. "How will Śacīmātā contain her grief stricken life once her Nīmāi abandons home." He thought, "How will she live through the long lonely days and nights without Him?" Each time these thoughts raised through His mind He felt devastated with despair and finding a secluded corner wept bitterly because He could not bear to think what will happen to Śacīmātā.

Lord Caitanya came to Mukunda's house. Mukunda was overjoyed to see his beloved Lord coming personally to his house. The Lord said, "Sing something about Kṛṣṇa." Mukunda began to sing and the Lord listened to the transcendental sweetness of Mukunda's singing. Withdrawing the ecstasy within Himself the Lord calmed Himself and spoke to Mukunda. The Lord said, "Mukunda, please listen to Me, I have decided to leave My family and home to join the *sannyāsa* order. Shaving My hair I shall travel all over." The Lord's words crushed Mukunda's joy he had felt earlier on seeing the Lord. Piteously he begged the Lord, "My Lord since You are firm in Your resolve to become a mendicant, it must happen, but wait a little longer and stay with us and pass time in 'Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana*' then do what You have to."

Lord Caitanya left Mukunda's home and went to see Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Gadādhara offered obeisances to his Lord, praying at His lotus feet. The Lord addressed Gadādhara, "I want you to hear Me carefully please. Gadādhara, I have to leave My family and home for the sake of My Lord Kṛṣṇa. I shall shave My head and as a mendicant go wherever the road leads." Gadādhara remained motionless, thunderstruck. Feeling a burning grief swallowing him within, he replied, "Your words are very strange My Lord. You mean to say that one can attain Kṛṣṇa simply by shaving the head and leaving home, and not by staying in the householder life? What spiritual gain is there in shaving one's head, all this may be Your opinion, but certainly not found anywhere in the Vedic scriptures. How do You propose to leave a widowed mother all alone? At the very outset You will be burdened with the sin of bringing about Your mother's death. You are her life, a dream. If You are gone what reason will she have to remain alive? Is one not dear to the Supreme Lord if one remains in the house? In fact a householder is liked by everyone. And in spite of everything I told You, You still want to cling on to Your decision, then do what You like."

Like this the Lord visited all His dear and near ones and told everyone of His plan to take *sannyāsa*. Whoever heard this was shocked with grief. They wept bitterly at the thought of seeing their beloved Lord, beautiful as the springtime full moon, shorn off all His black cascading curls. They lamented, "What will be the use then to string a garland for His curly locks." Yet another said, "How will I live without seeing His delightful locks." Yet another said beating his head, "I will never be able to smell the transcendental aroma from His hair anymore." The devotees were wailing in grief, tossed about in an ocean of despair, loudly they wailed, for they were going to lose their beloved Lord.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana dāsa offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 27

All glories to Lord Viśvambhara, the son of mother Śacī! Our Lord is bold as a lion, and He is the deliverer of the fallen souls.

All the devotees were very much perturbed and grief stricken, and feeling already the pangs of separation from their beloved Lord Caitanya, they cried piteously. They said amongst themselves, “Where will He go after taking *sannyāsa*? Where will we see Him again? Surely, He is not going to return to this village after accepting a mendicant's robe, there is no way of finding out where He will be and which direction He will travel in.” The devotees were constantly worrying in this manner, Their hearts filled with consternation that they may never see their most precious Lord again, no one took interest in food and sleep any longer.

The Lord could not bear the pain His devotees were suffering. Smiling pleasantly to alleviate their distress the Lord assured them, “Why do you unnecessarily vex yourselves? I am always present with you. It is wrong of you to think that once I have taken *sannyāsa* I will leave all of you and go far away. Not for a moment can I leave you. All of you are My eternal associates. Not just for this birth, but birth after birth. Those of you who are associated with Me in this incarnation will eternally remain with Me in the mellow of congregational chanting of the holy name. In every millennium I advent and in every one of My innumerable incarnations you have participated in My pastimes. With this advent I have come with two incarnations, one is the congregational chanting and the other is My transcendental deity form full of bliss. In both these incarnations you must participate in My pastimes with full vigor and joy, chanting with Me in ecstasy. I am taking *sannyāsa* only to educate humanity, therefore please allay your fears and worries.”

Placating the distressed devotees with His sweet words He embraced each one of them again and again. Lord's words had a pacifying effect on the devotees, and feeling more assured they allowed their beloved master to leave. Word spread swiftly everywhere that Nīmāi was going to embrace the mendicants life. When Śacīdevī heard this news her heart almost stopped. Her grief was so intense that the pain of the entire universe seemed like nothing. She fell to the ground unconscious, tears flowing in torrents and remained lying on the floor, a heart rending sight, the lotus eyed Lord saw all this sitting very still and grave.

Śacīmātā cried out to Nīmāi saying, “My darling son, please do not leave Your mother and go, all of us are simply depending on seeing Your divine lotus face. Your lotus eyes and moon-like glowing face, ruby lips and pearly jasmine white teeth, words like showers of ambrosia, graceful gentle elephants gait, are impossible to live without. Your constant followers Advaita and Śrīvāsa and Your bosom friend Nityānanda and Gadādhara are always there, just stay home and perform Your congregational chanting. You have incarnated to teach everyone the principles of religion, then what religion teaches one to leave one's mother. You embody the religious principles and if You forsake Your mother then how will You teach the world about religion?” Laden with immense love for her son Śacīdevī waited out these words, and the Lord heard all this quietly, unable to speak, His voice choked with intense love for His mother.

She continued, “Your elder brother left sometime ago and then Your father left for the Lord's eternal abode, only You remained, and looking at You I could forget my pains of separation; now If You leave I will certainly give up my life. My dearest son, just see the pitiful sight of Your lonely widowed mother, how can You leave me. Stay home, Nityānanda is always here, You can perform *kīrtana* in Your own house with all the devotees. You are everything to me. Your eyes are full of love and compassion and Your long hands are exquisite, Your words are cascades of nectar. My darkened house without a lamp is illuminated by Your presence, and Your lotus feet is the source of life giving elixir.”

Silently Viśvambhara sat and listened, bearing the deep pain within as His mother out of intense love spoke painful words of separation; like Kauśalyā trying to reason with Lord Rāmacandra. Śacīdevī spoke on unable to calm herself, the Lord still remained silently listening. She felt drained out, rampaged by the storm of grief, food and sleep were to her now a curse.

The Lord seeing His mother's condition, revealed to her some secrets that might pacify her. He said, “Mother, please calm yourself and listen, I have been your son since many births. You were once Pṛśnī and I was your son. Again you became Aditi in another life and you were residing then in the heavenly planets and I became your son Vāmana. Then once again I became your son Kapila when you were Devahūti. When you were Kauśalyā I was your son Rāma. Another time you were Devakī in Mathurā imprisoned in the dungeons of the cruel King Kamsa, and I became your son Kṛṣṇa. In this present incarnation I will be your son twice. As the earth, you will be the mother of My incarnation as the Deity; and as the tongue, you will be the mother of My incarnation as the holy name. Mother, like this you have had Me as your son eternally, I can never leave you mother. I revealed this to you very confidentially. Now mother, please allay your fears and grief. Śacīdevī on hearing this esoteric narration was somewhat calmed.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul, I Vṛndāvana dāsa humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 28

All glories to Śrī Gaurāṅga, the Lord of Viṣṇupriya! Please bestow Your auspicious glance on the living entities.

In this way Śrī Viśvambhara passed His time in the ecstasy of *sankīrtana*. No one can understand the activities of the Lord, who is the fully independent Lord of all. The Lord always enjoys performing *kīrtana* along with His devotees. All the devotees were so fully absorbed in transcendental ecstasy that they forgot themselves completely. The fortunate devotees enjoyed pastimes with the Lord, whom the *Vedas* personified desire to see.

One day the Lord secretly told Nityānanda which day He would leave home to take *sannyāsa*. O Nityānanda, please listen! This may be disclosed to only five persons. On the coming Makara Sankranti day I will certainly leave home and take *sannyāsa*. There is a village named Katwa near Indrani. At that place lives the pure soul, Keśava Bhāratī. I will certainly take *sannyāsa* from him. The five persons You may tell are, My mother, Gadādhara, Brahmānanda Bhāratī, Śrī Candrasekhara Ācārya, and Mukunda.

The Lord spoke this to Nityānanda in private, so no one else knew. Then Nityānanda Prabhu told the five persons about the Lord's coming departure.

That day the Lord spent engaged in *sankīrtana* along with the Vaiṣṇavas. After happily taking His noon meal, the Lord went to see the Ganges in the evening. He offered obeisances, sat on the bank for some time and then returned home.

Śrī Gaurasundara sat at home surrounded by His followers. No one knew of the Lord's desire to leave home and take *sannyāsa*, therefore everyone happily enjoyed the company of the Lord.

The lotus-eyed Lord sat there with His limbs decorated with a beautiful flower garland and scented sandalwood pulp. Whatever Vaiṣṇava who came to see Him brought along sandal pulp and flower garland.

The Lord attracted so many people that no one knew from where they all came. Even Lord Brahma had no power to count the number of persons who came to see the Lord.

Whoever came fell flat offering obeisances and gazed on the beautiful face of the Lord. Lord Gaurāṅga then gave them a garland from His neck and instructed them, "Chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Worship Kṛṣṇa, and don't think of anything other than Kṛṣṇa. If you have any affection for Me, then don't speak about any topics other than Kṛṣṇa. Whether you are sleeping, eating, or waking, always think of Kṛṣṇa day and night and chant His name."

In this way the Lord cast His compassionate glance on whoever came and then He sent them home. In this way so many people came and went without knowing each other. The beautiful body of the Lord, decorated with sandal pulp and flower garlands, could not be compared to the insignificant beauty of the full moon.

After receiving the Lord's mercy, all the people became ecstatic and left loudly chanting, "Hari! Hari!".

At that time the pious Śrīdhara came bringing a loki in his hand. Seeing the loki the Lord inquired, "Where did you get that?". The Lord however thought, "Tomorrow I will leave, therefore I'll not be able to eat this. Whatever is brought by Śrīdhara cannot be wasted, so I must eat this today."

Thinking like this, in order to maintain His affection for His devotees, He requested His mother to cook the loki.

Just at that time someone else came with a pot of milk. The Lord smilingly told His mother, "This is very nice. Please cook these together. Mother Śacī immediately went to cook in great satisfaction.

In this way the son of Śacī is so affectionate to His devotees. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha thus happily spent the evening.

After seeing everyone off, Lord Viśvambhara came to take His dinner. When He finished eating Lord Gaurāṅga washed His mouth and went to His bedroom. There He slept under the influence of His *yoga-māyā* along with Gadādhara and Haridāsa.

Mother Śacī, knowing that the Lord would depart, was unable to sleep and remained awake weeping. The Lord awoke for leaving during the *brahma-muhurta*. He understood the auspicious time for His departure had come by observing His breathing.

Gadādhara and Haridāsa also awoke, and Gadādhara told the Lord, "I will accompany You." The Lord however, replied, "I am fully independent, one without a second. This is My pastime."

Mother Śacī then came and sat at the doorway to see the Lord's departure. Seeing His mother, the Lord held her hands and solaced her in various ways. "You have maintained Me very nicely. Because of you I have studied and learned. You have not cared for your personal happiness, but you have increased My pleasure throughout My life.

“The amount of affection you have shown towards Me in each moment, is more than I can repay in millions of kalpas. Only by your mercy will I be relieved of My debt. Still, however, I will remain indebted to you lifetime after lifetime.

“Please listen, dear mother, this entire creation is under the control of the Supreme Lord. No one has the strength to be independent. Who can understand His will by which living entities sometimes meet and sometimes separate.

“Whether I leave now or after ten days, you should not lament. Your loving dealings with Me are very pleasing, therefore I take full responsibility for you.”

Placing His hand on mother Śacī's chest, the Lord repeatedly solaced her, saying, “I will take full care of you.” Whatever the Lord spoke, mother Śacī quietly heard as she constantly wept.

Thus mother Śacī, the mother of the universe, became as grave and quiet as mother Earth. Who can understand the inconceivable pastimes of Kṛṣṇa?

The Lord then took the dust of His mother's feet and after circumambulating her, He immediately departed. The Lord, who is the hero of Vaikuṇṭha, left home to take *sannyāsa* in order to deliver the fallen souls.

O brothers! Listen to the story of the Lord's acceptance of *sannyāsa*. By hearing this narration all bondage of the world will be destroyed.

When the Lord left, the universal mother, Śacī, became almost inert and was unable to speak. All the devotees, after taking their morning bath, arrived at the Lord's house unaware of the Lord's departure.

Although they came to offer obeisances to the Lord, they were only able to find mother Śacī sitting outside the doorway. The magnanimous Śrīvāsa was the first to inquire, “O mother, why are you sitting at the doorway?”

The almost inert mother Śacī was unable to reply, only tears flowed continually from her eyes. After some time She said, “Please listen all of you. All the Vaiṣṇavas are eligible to share the property of the Lord.

“Whatever things are left by Him, you may all distribute amongst yourselves. This is the verdict of the *śāstras*. So be satisfied, do as you please and let me go from here.”

Hearing about the Lord's departure, all the devotees fell the ground unconscious. Filled with agony, they all cried loudly. Placing their arms around each other's necks, they all lamented in various ways. “O Gopīnātha, what a terrible night we have passed!”

Holding their heads they all wept. “How will we live without seeing that moonlike face? What is the use to continue this sinful life?”

Speaking in this way, some of them rolled on the ground, and some of them beat their chests. The Lord's house resounded as the devotees cried uncontrollably. Whatever devotee came to see the Lord, all were drawn in an ocean of separation.

Constantly weeping, the devotees fell on the ground saying, “The merciful Lord of the forlorn left us to take *sannyāsa*, thus throwing us in an ocean of lamentation.”

All the devotees cried and fell unconscious. They loudly chanted, “Hari! Hari! What is the use of our wealth, our families or even our lives, when the Lord has left?

They cried and rolled on the ground of the Lord's courtyard beating their chests and exclaiming, “O Lord Hari! O Viśvambhara! You have left to take *sannyāsa* without telling us!”

Mukunda, Murāri, Śrīdhara, Gadādhara, Gaṅgādāsa, Śrīvāsa and his family, Candraśekhara, and Haridāsa all continually cried in this way.

Hearing the crying of the devotees, the people of Nadia rushed to see what has happened. By not seeing the Lord's face, they too were stricken with grief and also began to cry. Whether young or old, whatever devotee came from the town, they all cried incessantly. The atheists, however, laughed saying, “Now we'll not see Nimāi again.”

After some time the devotees became pacified and sat around mother Śacī. Meanwhile, the news of the Lord's departure for taking *sannyāsa* soon spread throughout the Navadvīpa.

Hearing the news, all the people were struck with wonder and came to the Lord's house. When they saw the Lord's house empty, they also began to cry.

Hearing the people lament, even the offenders and atheists became aggrieved. “We are very sinful, therefore we could not recognize Him. They repented in this way and they also began to cry.

The people of the town cried and rolled on the ground lamenting, “We’ll not see the Lord’s moonlike face again!”

Someone said, “Let us burn our houses and wearing earrings we’ll leave home and become yogis.”

Someone else said, “When the Lord Himself has left Navadvīpa, then why are we still breathing?” In this way all the men and women of Nadia could not think of anything, but simply lamented.

The independent Lord however, knew when and how to deliver the fallen living entities. Those who were filled with offenses and envy were also bitten by the snake of the Lord’s separation. All glories to the merciful Lord Gaurasundara, the Lord of all! He expertly delivered everyone.

Please listen to this description of the Lord’s acceptance of *sannyāsa*. Hearing this narration will destroy one’s bondage due to fruitive activities.

Śrī Gaurāṅga, after crossing the Ganges, arrived at Kantaka Nagara (Katwa) that very day. Instructed previously by the Lord, Nityānanda Prabhu, Gadādhara, Mukunda, Candrasekhara and Brahmānanda Bhārati each arrived there separately.

Along with His intimate associates, the Lord, like a maddened lion, arrived there to meet Keśava Bhārati. Upon seeing the Lord’s wonderful bodily effulgence, the pious Keśava Bhārati stood up.

The Lord fell flat offering obeisances and folding His hands, He offered prayers, “O master please be merciful on Me. You are most compassionate, the deliverer of the fallen. Lord Kṛṣṇa always sits in your heart, therefore you are qualified to give Kṛṣṇa to Me. I have no other desire than the service of Kṛṣṇa. Please instruct Me accordingly.”

The Lord’s body seemed to float in the water of ecstatic love.
The Lord then began to dance and cry out loudly. Mukunda and the other devotees began to sing while the son of Śaci danced in His own mood.

Millions and millions of people gathered there<197>from where no one knew. With unblinking eyes, they all drank the beauty of the Lord’s form.

The flow of tears from the Lord’s eyes was beyond the description of even Lord Ananta. As the Lord danced in a circle His tears bathed everyone who was gathered around Him. Thus soaked in the waters of love of God, everyone—man and woman, young and old—all chanted, “Hari! Hari!”

The Lord sometimes shivered, sometimes perspired, and sometimes fell unconscious. The people were frightened seeing the Lord fall to the ground.

Taking a straw in His teeth, the Lord, who is the proprietor of unlimited universes, begged everyone for the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Seeing the Lord’s humility everyone cried in grief.

“How will His mother survive? What a terrible night she must have passed! What pious activity His wife performed to obtain the Lord as her husband? And by what misfortune she lost Him? How will His mother and wife survive when even our hearts are broken?” In this way the ladies wept with sorrow completely bound in the ropes of Śrī Caitanya.

After sometime Śrī Viśvambhara controlled Himself and sat down surrounded by His associates. Keśava Bhārati was absorbed in an ocean of bliss after seeing the devotional sentiments displayed by the Lord. He then offered his prayers to the Lord, “The devotion which I have seen with my eyes today is not found except in the Lord Himself. I have certainly understood that You alone are the spiritual master of the entire world, therefore no one is qualified to become Your guru. I think that in order to teach the people in general You will accept me as Your guru.”

“Please don’t deceive Me. Give Me initiation so that I may become a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa.” Speaking in this way, the Lord spent that night engaged in *kṛṣṇa-kathā*.

Early the next morning the protector of all planets rose and instructed Candrasekhara, “You are practiced in the performance of all the Vedic rituals, therefore I appoint you as My representative.” Candrasekhara began to perform the required Vedic ceremonies.

Various items such as milk, yogurt, butter, betel, sandalwood flowers, a sacred thread, and cloth were all brought by people from surrounding villages. Various eatables were also brought, although no one knew who brought everything or where everything was coming from. Everyone who came chanted the holy name, “Hari! Hari!” Indeed, no other sound

could be heard.

Then Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the life of all, sat down to have His head shaved (including sikha). However, just as the barber came to shave the Lord, at that moment the sound of weeping was heard. The barber hesitated to shave the beautiful hair of the Lord, rather he also began to cry.

The devotees headed by Nityānanda all started weeping and rolling on the ground. What to speak of the devotees even the people in general all began to cry in grief. One woman said, “Who has invented this system of *sannyāsa*?” Speaking like this the ladies all sighed deeply.

Hidden from view all the demigods also cried. In this way the entire world was filled with the sound of crying.

Such compassion was shown by Śrī Gauracandra that even dry wood and stone could melt. This pastime of the Lord was displayed for the deliverance of the living entities and the weeping was evidence for this.

Śrī Gauracandra was greatly agitated by the mellows of love. He was constantly shedding tears and His body trembled. Lord Viśvambhara got up and started dancing, continuously chanting, “Hari Bol!”

As Mukunda sang the Lord was unable to remain steady even while sitting, but due to ecstatic love He trembled and tears flowed from His eyes. In this way the Lord constantly shouted, “Hari Bol!” The barber was therefore unable to do his work.

At the end of the day the shaving of the Lord's head was finally performed. Thereafter the Lord of all took His bath in the Ganges and sat for His *sannyāsa* ceremony.

Śrī Gauracandra, who is declared in the *Vedas* as the spiritual master of all, deceptively spoke something to Keśava Bhāratī, “In a dream some *mahājana* appeared to Me and spoke some *sannyāsa* mantra in My ear. Please examine whether it is appropriate or not.”

Speaking in this way, the Lord spoke the mantra in Keśava Bhāratī's ear. Thus the Lord by trickery made Keśava Bhāratī His disciple.

Keśava Bhāratī was struck with great wonder and said, “This is the best amongst all mantras. By the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, what is unknown to You?”

According to the instructions of the Lord, the broad-minded Keśava Bhāratī then spoke that very mantra in the ear of the Lord. The auspicious sound of the holy names was heard in the four directions as the jewel of Vaikuṇṭha accepted the order of *sannyāsa*.

The Lord then put on the enchanting saffron dress and appeared as beautiful as millions of cupids. His beautiful body was decorated with sandalwood pulp and flower garlands. Holding His *daṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu* in His hands, the Lord was overwhelmed in ecstatic love. The beautiful face of the Lord was more attractive than millions of moons and His two eyes were filled with tears of love. Later that form the Lord manifested as a *sannyāsī* will be elaborately described by Vedavyāsa.

Śrī Vedavyāsa has given description in his *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* that the Lord would advent as a *sannyāsī*. Now this statement has been fulfilled by the best of the *brāhmaṇas*. This secret is well-known to the society of Vaiṣṇavas.

sannyāsa kṛcchamaḥ śānto niṣṭhā- śānti parāyaṇaḥ

“That Lord, Viṣṇu, who will accept *sannyāsa*, will be fully surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. He will be fixed in determination, engaged in the performance of hari-nāma yajña, and He will destroy the nondevotee followers of impersonalism. He will be fully peaceful and possessed of *mahābhāva*.”

Keśava Bhāratī then began to think of a name to give the Lord, “I cannot find such a Vaiṣṇava in the fourteen worlds. This is my conviction. Therefore I will give a name that is not previously heard, then my desire will be fulfilled. Although the disciple of a Bhāratī should be named Bhāratī, that name is not appropriate.”

As the fortunate Keśava Bhāratī was thinking like this, Sudha Sarasvatī, the transcendental goddess of learning, appeared on his tongue. Finding the suitable name, the pure-hearted Keśava Bhāratī placed his hand on the chest of the Lord and said, “You have induced the worlds to chant the name of Kṛṣṇa and by inaugurating the movement of *saṅkīrtana*, You have roused people's consciousness. Therefore Your name will be Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Because of You, everyone will be grateful.”

When Keśava Bhāratī spoke this, everyone chanted, “Jaya! Jaya!” and flowers showered on them. The Vaiṣṇavas floated in waves of transcendental happiness and began to chant, “Hari! Hari!” The devotees then offered obeisances to Keśava Bhāratī, and the Lord felt satisfied on receiving His name.

In this way as the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya was manifest, all the devotees fell flat offering obeisances. By accepting *sannyāsa*, the merciful Lord thus became famous as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. The Lord, Śrī Caitanya, eternally performs His pastimes, which those who have received His mercy can see.

Many other pastimes took place there, however only Nityānanda knows them all. By the merciful instructions of Nityānanda, I am writing only a few sutras in this book.

I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaiṣṇavas so they may disregard my offenses. Millions of Vedavyāsa will describe these pastimes of the Lord in the *Vedas*.

Thus the Lord's acceptance of *sannyāsa* was described in this *Madhya-khaṇḍa*. Whoever hears this pastime will certainly become a servant of Śrī Caitanya. By hearing this pastime of the Lord's acceptance of *sannyāsa* in this *Madhya-khaṇḍa*, one will achieve the wealth of Kṛṣṇa-prema. O Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu! Let me not forget this desire of mine.

O Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu! Will that day come when I will be able to see You surrounded by Your associates? Śrī Gaurasundara is the Lord of my Lord, therefore this great hope is there in my heart.

Whoever says, "I am the servant of Nityānanda," will certainly attain Śrī Caitanya, for Lord Nityānanda is most dear to Śrī Caitanya. O Lord! Please do not neglect me, Your servant.

Lord Nityānanda is the giver of love to the entire universe, therefore let me worship Śrī Gauracandra through Him. Whoever wants to cross the ocean of birth and death and drown in the ocean of devotion service, let him worship Lord Nityānanda.

Just as puppets are made to dance by the puppet master, in this way Lord Gauracandra is making me speak. Just as a bird cannot reach the end of the sky, but flies only as far as its strength allows, in the same way there is no end to the topics of *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, one can only narrate them as far as his strength allows.

I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, offer this humble song at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Śrī Nityānanda Candra Prabhu, who are my life and soul.

O Lord Śrī Caitanyacandra! I offer my repeated obeisances unto You, who are the personified form of the mellows of the ecstatic pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Your beautiful golden form is beyond material perception. You have given the whole universe the glorious gift of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Antya-khaṇḍa

Chapter 1

I worship the two brothers, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who are the embodiments of magnanimity. They are transcendently situated, and They possess inconceivable spiritual potency. These two supreme controllers have now descended to the material world.

O Lord! You are the eternal truth—past, present, and future—and You have appeared as the son of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra. I offer my repeated obeisances unto You along with Your inseparable servitors, Your unalloyed devotees, Your sons, and Your consorts.

All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the beloved Lord of Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune! Lord Nityānanda is very dear to Him. All glories to the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha and the best amongst the *sannyāsīs*! All glories to His illustrious devotees! Lord Gauracandra is the friend of the fallen souls. Please place Your lotus feet on the throne of my heart. Please hear attentively the topics described in the *Antya-khaṇḍa* dealing with the Lord's activities after taking *sannyāsa* and His traveling to Jagannātha Purī.

Lord Caitanya remained in Katwa on the night of His *sannyāsa* initiation. Immediately after the completion of the *sannyāsa* ceremony, the Lord instructed Mukunda to sing. As Lord Caitanya stood up and began to dance, the devotees surrounded Him and joined in the chanting. The Lord was immediately overcome with ecstasy. As the Lord danced He experienced heavy breathing, laughter, perspiration, shivering, horripilation, and roaring. Then with a roar like the roaring of a million lions, He crashed to the ground. The impact of His fall caused the spectators to become fearful. The *kamaṇḍalu* flew out of His hand to one side, and the *sannyāsa-daṇḍa* went in another direction. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha became maddened with His own love. While dancing, the Lord went to His guru and embraced Him with great

satisfaction.

In the Lord's merciful embrace, Keśava Bhāratī was enlightened with love of God. The pious Keśava Bhāratī took his *kamaṇḍalu* and *daṇḍa* and, twirling around, he threw them far away. He then began dancing and chanting, "Hari! Hari!" He became completely intoxicated with *prema* and oblivious to the external world. As he rolled on the ground, he was unaware that his clothes no longer covered his body.

*When everyone saw the Lord's mercy on Keśava Bhāratī they all chanting, "Hari! Hari!" The Lord danced with His guru in great satisfaction. Seeing this, the devotees happily chanted the holy names.

I offer my obeisances at the feet of Keśava Bhāratī, the most stalwart *sannyāsī*, for he danced with the Supreme Lord, who is difficult to meet even for the personified *Vedas*. His disciple is the Lord of innumerable universes.

In this way the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha danced throughout the night with His guru. At dawn the Lord regained external consciousness and begged leave of Keśava Bhāratī saying, "I must enter the forest to find the Lord of My heart, Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra.

His guru replied, "I will accompany You and relish the ecstasy of *saṅkīrtana* with You."

The Lord blessed His guru by consenting and requested him to walk in front while He followed behind.

As the Lord was preparing to leave, He embraced Candrasekhara Ācārya and began to cry loudly. Lord Caitanya said, "Please return home to all the Vaiṣṇavas and tell them that I have left for the forest. Please go back without the slightest remorse. I am always imprisoned in your heart. You are My father, and I am your son. Birth after birth you are My beloved associate."

The Lord then left. Candrasekhara Ācārya was overpowered by strong emotions and fell unconscious. No one can understand the Lord's inconceivable potencies, which allow one to remain alive even in the unbearable pain of separation.

After some time, when he regained consciousness, Candrasekhara Ācārya left for Navadvīpa. He informed everyone in Navadvīpa that the Lord had taken *sannyāsa* and entered the forest. This news deeply pained all the devotees, and they cried out in the agony of separation. The devotees' lamentation could not be described even with millions of mouths. Advaita Ācārya cried out, "I cannot live!" His pathetic cry made even wood and stone break in pieces. Just by hearing the news, Advaita Ācārya fell to the ground unconscious as if devoid of life. Śacidevī stood motionless like a wooden doll, shocked by the news. The other ladies fell to the ground wailing piteously.

When Advaita Ācārya regained consciousness, He exclaimed, "What further use do I have for this life now that My Lord has gone away? I will throw Myself into the Ganges, and if you restrain Me I shall do it in the darkness of night." The throbbing pain of separation rendered everyone restless and gloomy. They felt sick, uneasy, and ready to finish their lives. Although most of them were grave and learned persons, they were now anxious and their minds were in turmoil.

As the devotees were preparing to end their lives and their unbearable misery, they suddenly heard a voice from the sky saying, "O Advaita Ācārya, O devotees, do not be sad! Go worship Kṛṣṇa happily. Your Lord will return in a few days and be with you again. Give up the idea of taking your own lives because you can be with the Lord just as before." Hearing this heavenly message, the devotees forgot about giving up their lives and stayed near Śacidevī singing the Lord's glories.

Lord Gauracandra, the best of *sannyāsīs*, now traveled with Nityānanda, Gadādhara, and Mukunda towards the west, all the time chanting the holy name. Keśava Bhāratī went in front of the Lord, and Govinda followed behind. The Lord walked like the king of the forest, and thousands of people cried as they followed behind. All around the people trampled down the forest in order to follow the Lord. Filled with compassion, the Lord turned to them and said, "All of you go home and chant Kṛṣṇa's holy name. May you soon be blessed to have Kṛṣṇa as your life's priceless treasure. May that devotional mellow which is desired by Śiva, Brahmā, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and others appear in your hearts." The devotees loudly voiced their appreciation and joy and returned home as if in trance.

The Lord walked into Rāḍhadeśa and blessed the entire tract of land. This district is pleasant, with *aśvattha* trees everywhere. Cows were grazing peacefully in the beautiful natural setting, and the Lord felt blissful upon seeing this scene. The Lord then began to dance and chant, "Hari, Hari!" and the devotees gathered around Him and joined the chanting. The Lord's roaring voice filled the universe, and whoever heard it was purified of all material contamination. In this way the Lord graced the residents of Rāḍhadeśa as He danced along the way.

The Lord said, "I want to stay in the forest where the Vakreśvara Deity is. It is quiet and lonely there." The Lord then continued on His way accompanied by His followers, dancing and singing ecstatically. The local residents ran out to see the Lord and His wonderful dancing. Although *saṅkīrtana* had never been performed in that area before and no one had even seen the effects of *kṛṣṇa-prema* manifest in a devotee, now everyone offered obeisances to the Lord as He danced and wept in ecstasy. This was a rare experience for them.

Amongst them were a few fallen sinners who asked, “Why is He crying so much?” But even those fallen souls were affected by the scene, and by the Lord's mercy they also began to roll on the ground crying. The entire universe was now echoing the Lord's name. Yet there remained a few who refused to chant. Anyone who is against the chanting of the Lord's name is indeed the worst kind of sinner. Finally at the day's end the Lord with all His followers came to a village and spent the night in a pious *brāhmaṇa*'s house.

The Lord took His meal and went to sleep. The devotees slept all around the Lord. Just a few hours before dawn, Lord Caitanya stole away quietly from the rest of the devotees and left for an unknown destination. When the devotees awoke early in morning, they found the Lord missing. Again they were swept away in waves of despair and melancholia and began to weep bitterly. They searched for Him everywhere inquiring from everyone in the village, but to no avail. They left the roads and paths and went into the fields.

The Lord was absorbed in the transcendental ecstasy of love of Godhead. He walked in the middle of the expansive meadows and wept and wailed loudly. He loudly called out, “O Kṛṣṇa! My Lord! My father!” The Lord of *Vaikuṇṭha*, the Supreme Lord of all living entities and best of the *sannyāsīs* wept openly. He cried so loudly that He could be heard several miles away. The devotees were searching for the Lord quite a distance away when they heard a strange crying. They began to follow the sound and soon they saw it was the Lord crying loudly. Seeing their beloved Lord weeping, the devotees also began to cry. Finally Mukunda started to sing. When the Lord heard *kīrtana*, He began to dance, and all the devotees surrounded their Lord and happily joined the *kīrtana*. The Lord then continued His journey westward, dancing on the way, with the devotees following singing *kīrtana*.

When they were only eight miles from *Vakreśvara*, the Lord decided to change direction. He turned around and went east, still absorbed in the ecstasy of dancing. He was blissful and laughed to Himself. Finally He revealed the mystery behind His laughter and change of direction. He said, “I am going to *Nilācala*, *Purī*, because Lord *Jagannātha* has instructed Me, ‘You should come to *Purī* immediately.’” The devotees were elated to hear of the Lord's plan.

No one can know the workings of the Lord's mind besides His intimate devotees, and then only by His mercy can they know His inner desires. Who can fathom why the Lord was first going to *Vakreśvara* and then why finally He did not go? It seems that the Lord in a deceptive way was purifying the residents of the district of *Rāḍhadeśa* by His presence. There was no other reason for Him going to *Rāḍhadeśa*.

The Lord now journeyed towards the Ganges which lay at a distance. He was always engrossed in the ecstasy of love of Godhead, yet He saw that the residents of the tract of land through which He was passing were disinterested in devotional life. No one chanted Kṛṣṇa's name; Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana* was alien to them. Pained, the Lord said, “Why did I come to such a place as this? I will give up My body right now.”

Just then a group of little cowherd lads who were grazing their cows passed by. One of them was a very pious boy, and he suddenly began chanting Kṛṣṇa's name. The Lord was extremely happy to hear the holy name from the mouth of this little boy. Joyfully He relished the moment and said, “The last few days I passed through many villages and nowhere was Kṛṣṇa's name being chanted. Now unexpectedly a young lad is chanting the holy name. Tell me what could be the reason?”

The Lord spoke again, “How far is the Ganges from here?” The devotees replied, “About an hour's walk.” The Lord continued, “This is the greatness of mother Ganges. Due to her influence one hears the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name here. The breezes from the Ganges have purified this place.” Glorifying *Gaṅgādevī* in this manner, the Lord increased everyone's reverence towards her. The Lord spoke again, “Today I will cleanse Myself completely in the Ganges,” and again He started on His journey.

The Lord walked with the pace and grace of a maddened lion. The devotees ran to catch up with Him. The Lord's eagerness to see *Gaṅgādevī* quickened His steps and the devotees found it impossible to keep up with Him. Only Lord *Nityānanda*, also walking like a lion, accompanied Him. They reached the banks of *Gaṅgādevī* early in the evening. Lord Caitanya and Lord *Nityānanda* entered her waters with relish and thoroughly washed Themselves, profusely praising the Ganges with selected verses. They drank her cooling waters and offered repeated prayers and obeisances to her.

The Lord prayed, “O *Gaṅgādevī*, your waters are the ambrosia of love of Godhead. Lord *Śiva* is conversant with the truth about you. Such is your potency that the mere utterance of your name invokes devotional service to Lord *Viṣṇu*, so the result of drinking your water is even greater. By your mercy the living entities acquire a taste for chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy name. Because of your influence, even the beasts and birds that live close to your waters become more fortunate than wealthy men who live far away from you. No one is more potent than you in purifying sins. In fact, you have descended to this material plane only to alleviate the sins of the living entities.”

As the Lord glorified *Gaṅgādevī* in this manner, she became bashful. That Supreme Lord whose feet are the source of *Gaṅgādevī* was now eulogizing her. How wonderful was the incarnation of the Supreme Godhead in the form of Lord Caitanya. One who hears these verses in praise of *Gaṅgādevī* with faith will certainly develop attachment for Lord

Caitanya.

That night, the Lord and Nityānanda Prabhu stayed in a righteous *brāhmaṇa*'s house. The next day, the rest of the devotees arrived and found Lord Caitanya. Together they again proceeded towards Nīlācala, Purī. Lord Caitanya said to Nityānanda Prabhu, “My dear magnanimous Nityānanda Prabhu, You must immediately leave for Navadvīpa. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and the other devotees are grievously afflicted due to My departure. You must alleviate their pain. Tell them that I am on My way to see Lord Jagannātha in Nīlācala. I will be waiting for them in Śāntipura in the house of Advaita Ācārya. You bring them there right away. I am going to Phulia to see Haridāsa.” Sending off Nityānanda, Lord Caitanya then headed for the village of Phulia.

Having received His orders from Lord Caitanya, Nityānanda Prabhu journeyed toward Navadvīpa in exultation. Lord Nityānanda is always absorbed in the bliss of love of Godhead, His voice booming like thunder in ecstasy. Now He traveled almost like a maddened lion, oblivious of everything around Him, no rules or regulations restricted His actions.

He stopped under a *kadamba* tree for a while. Standing with His body bending in three places, He began to play the flute rapturously. When He saw cows grazing, He rolled on the earth, and moving like a calf, He sucked milk from cows. He would break out into a dance while walking, unaware of His surroundings and always submerged in bliss. At other times, He just sat down on the road and wept so bitterly that it would pain one to see Him in that condition. Sometimes He would suddenly stop and start shaking with peals of laughter. Then again He would take the clothing covering His body and wrap it around His head leaving Him naked. At times He would remember His identity and float in the waves of the Ganges like a serpent in the mood of Ananta Śeṣa. Lord Nityānanda looked most enchanting as He floated in the Ganges in the mood of Ananta. Lord Nityānanda's glories are inconceivable and mysterious and His limitless compassion is unmatched in the three worlds.

In this way Lord Nityānanda swam in the Ganges all the way to Navadvīpa, where He got out at Mahāprabhu's *ghāṭa*. Withdrawing His mood as Ananta, He went straight to the Lord's house. What He saw pained Him greatly. Śacīdevī had been totally fasting for twelve days. Life remained in her only on the strength of her devotional service. But she was completely imbued with mother Yaśodā's mood of yearning for her son, and tears rained down from her eyes. Whoever she met she would eagerly ask, “Are you from Mathurā? What is the news of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma?” Then she would swoon in ecstatic spiritual bliss. Gradually she would again start speaking, “There! I can hear Their flutes and horns. Is Akrūra coming to get Them?” Submerged in this manner in the mood of intense separation, she forgot her physical cares.

Lord Nityānanda fell at Śacīdevī's feet, offering His obeisances. The devotees greeted Him enthusiastically, but His presence merely intensified their yearning, and they began to weep. Mother Śacī cried out, “My son! My darling boy!” and swooned. The devotees felt a surge of new emotions ripping through their hearts. They embraced Nityānanda, and were bathed with His tears of ecstasy. He calmed them down and told them the good news. He said, “You must come immediately. The Lord is awaiting us in Advaita Ācārya's house in Śāntipura. I have come here to take you there.” The devotees, who had become lean and weak due to intensely missing their Lord, now received new life. They were jubilant and loudly chanted Kṛṣṇa's name.

Śacīdevī had not touched food or water for twelve days since Nimāi had left her house to take *sannyāsa*. Only thoughts of Nimāi could sustain her life. Her condition was unbearable for Nityānanda. He spoke soft reassuring words to her, “Nothing is unknown to you about the mysterious activities of Kṛṣṇa. What knowledge can I give you about Kṛṣṇa? Do not burden your heart with despair. Even the *Vedas* personified cannot receive the grace and good fortune already in your possession. That supreme object sought by the *Vedas* is your son. He is the life and soul of every living entity. That same Supreme Personality has accepted all your spiritual and material responsibilities. He made this promise with His hand on His chest. The Lord always knows what is best for everyone. You should simply surrender everything at His feet and live happily and peacefully. Now, mother, please go and cook for Kṛṣṇa, then all the devotees will feel satisfaction. Everyone is eager to taste your cooking. If you remain fasting then Kṛṣṇa has to fast also. I am extremely desirous of relishing the offerings prepared for Kṛṣṇa by you.

Nityānanda's sweet words were like soothing balm to her afflicted heart. She got up and went to make necessary arrangements for the cooking. First she fed Nityānanda Prabhu, and then she fed all the Vaiṣṇavas. She saw to it that everyone was fully satisfied, and then she sat down to eat herself. The devotees were pleased that Śacīdevī had broken her twelve day fast. Enlivened by the *prasāda*, the Vaiṣṇavas prepared to go meet their beloved Lord with Nityānanda Prabhu. The residents of Navadvīpa were by now familiar with the details of Nimāi's *sannyāsa* ceremony. The Lord's wonderful *sannyāsa* name, Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, had a miraculous effect on them. They chanted out loud the Lord's name and glorified Him.

When the people of Navadvīpa came to know that the Lord was presently in Phulia village, they became elated and decided to go to see Him. Old, young, men, women and children—all hastened to Phulia jubilantly chanting, “Hari! Hari!” Those atheists and faultfinders who had previously slandered the Lord were also now eager to reach Phulia with their friends. They said, “He was born in Navadvīpa, but His real identity remained a secret. Out of ignorance we maligned His work and spiritual mission. Now we must fall at His feet and beg forgiveness. Only then will all our offenses be absolved.” Thinking like this they went along in great bliss. It was difficult to say how many people were running on the

path.

Unlimited people all arrived together at the boat *ghāṭa* creating a dilemma for the boatmen. Everyone wanted to go first, and they could not risk crossing the river with overloaded boats. Many found their own means to cross the river. Some went in small dinghies, while others tied themselves to upturned earthen water vessels which made them float easily. Someone used a raft made out of banana tree trunks which was also very handy. Even pregnant women dared the crowd and jostling. Breathing heavily from exertion, they simply chanted Lord Caitanya's name and made the journey. For the blind ones and lame ones the way became suddenly broad and facile just by remembering Caitanya's name. A boat carrying hundreds found it impossible to make the other bank and capsized in midstream. This of course did not deter the people. They jubilantly chanted the Lord's name and floated downstream. The people's hearts were so infected with joy that it seemed they actually floated in an ocean of divine mirth.

Those who did not know how to swim seemed to have miraculously become buoyant. By the grace of the Lord, they also were able to cross the river without difficulty. The sky reverberated with ecstatic sounds of the holy name. The people had only one thought in their minds—to reach Phulia. Disregarding all comfort and bodily needs, they joined the mass chanting with careless happy abandon. Their loud cries of "Hari!" echoed in the vaults of the cosmic creation as they reached Phulia.

This wonderful sound of many people chanting reached the Lord. He came out to greet them. The people saw Him and held their breath. His exquisite appearance as a *sannyāsi* and His extraordinarily beautiful face which eclipsed the beauty of millions of moons were a memorable vision for all. The Lord was continuously chanting the holy name as tears of ecstasy cascaded down His cheeks. Everyone was now falling to the ground to offer their obeisances. People fell on top of each other in their fervor to show respect to their Lord. They did not care if there were thorns on the ground. They were all boundlessly happy. They lifted their hands and prayed to the Lord for His protection and shelter, crying out, "Save us! Save us!" The village of Phulia was now teeming with millions of people who were captivated by the infinitely charming face of the Lord. The fields and roads were overflowing with people who had no intention of returning to their houses, for they had even for a moment beheld the lustrous benign face of the Lord.

The Lord blessed them all with His merciful glance and proceeded towards Śāntipura. When He arrived in Advaita Ācārya's house, Advaita Prabhu fell at His beloved Lord's lotus feet. He began to weep, relieved of the miserable pain of separation. He remained prostrate, His arms curled around the Lord's lotus feet. He bathed them with His tears of love. At last Lord Caitanya bent down and lifted Advaita Ācārya into His warm embrace. Advaita, now soaked by the ecstatic tears of the Lord, again fell to His lotus feet in spiritual perturbation. Calming Himself and Advaita, the Lord sat down. Advaita's house was vibrating with loud exultation.

Acyutānanda was Advaita's son. He was a charming and effulgent little child endowed with extraordinary intelligence and supreme influence. Naked as usual for that age and covered in dust, Acyutānanda came running to greet the Lord. His great fortune was that he was Advaita's son. He was blissful and smiling for he knew the identity of Lord Caitanya. He fell at the Lord's feet full of respect. The Lord lovingly took him into His arms in spite of the dust smeared on his small frame. The Lord said, "Acyuta, you know that Advaita Ācārya is also My father, hence this makes us brothers. Little Acyuta replied, "You are the well-wishing friend of all living entities. The *Vedas* describe that You are the original father of everyone." This greatly pleased and amused the Lord, and He smiled knowingly. The Vaiṣṇavas were amazed at his words. They said, "These words are not the babblings of a mere child, but actually carry deep import. Acyuta must be a great personality."

At that moment, Nityānanda Prabhu arrived with all the devotees and intimate servitors of the Lord from Navadvīpa. When Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and the other devotees saw their dear Lord, they began loudly chanting and fell flat on the ground offering prayers and tears at the Lord's lotus feet. These devotees were as precious to the Lord as His very life. He lovingly embraced each one of them. The devotees cried out in the pain of ecstasy and separation. Their cries purified the entire earth. To hear pure devotees weeping in love of Godhead can cut asunder the bondage of birth and death of all living entities. This wonderful opportunity was now made available to everyone by the mercy of Lord Caitanya. Even Lord Brahmā rarely receives such favors.

Seeing His beloved associates from Navadvīpa again after an absence, the Lord began to dance in ecstatic love of Himself, for He is the Supreme Lord. The devotees began to sing and the Lord encouraged them calling out, "Bo! Bo!" The Lord caught Nityānanda Prabhu by the hand and spun around in ecstatic joy. Advaita Ācārya stealthily took the dust from the Lord's feet. The Lord's dancing postures were enchanting as He manifest various devotional ecstasies like weeping, shivering, horripilation, mirth, and so on. The movements of His feet and hands were an expressive composition of some divine love poetry. As He raised His arms in exultation and chanted, "Hari! Hari!" He enchanted the devotees and submerged them in an ocean of indescribable bliss.

The devotees were just recently deprived of their Lord's presence and now to be again in His company by His mercy was certainly cause for extreme exhilaration and celebration. They surrounded their Lord and danced and pranced oblivious of everything else. They fell on each other, bumped against each other, and rolled on the ground smearing their bodies with the dust of everyone's feet. Someone pressed another devotee's feet against his chest and remained saturated in bliss, tears

of joy flowing unrestrained from his eyes. The devotees could not contain their happiness having regained their beloved Lord and master. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha dancing free from all care with His associates is indeed an extraordinary sight.

Above the sounds of dancing, the singing of the Lord's name rang out loud and clear. Advaita Ācārya's house resounded with sounds of mirth, of which only Nityānanda Prabhu was fully aware. Lord Caitanya went around embracing His loving associates and infusing them with love of Godhead. Receiving the Lord's divine touch, the devotees became mad with joy. In a loud voice that resembled the rumbling of thunder they expressed their boundless bliss. This further increased the pleasure of others. As the Lord danced with His associates, mother earth seemed to sway and tilt. Nityānanda, Advaita, and the others were all caught in a tumult of infinite ecstasy, and they freely allowed their limbs and bodies to express their unending happiness. After awhile the Lord stopped dancing and, entering a mood of divine Lordship, He sat down upon the throne of Lord Viṣṇu.

The devotees stood around Him in great awe and reverence with folded palms as the Lord began to reveal His real identity as the Supreme Lord. He said, “I am Kṛṣṇa, I am Rāma, I am Nārāyaṇa, and I am Matsya. I am Kūrma, Varāha, Vāmana, Buddha, and I am Kalki. I am Haṁsa, and I am Haladhara. I am Pṛśnigarbha, Hayagrīva, and I am the Supreme Lord of lords. I am the moon of Nīlācala, Lord Jagannātha. I am Kapila and Nṛsiṁha.

“All living entities visible and invisible are My servitors. The *Vedas* sing of My supramundane excellences, and I am served by the endless planetary systems. I am time, the destroyer of everything except My devotees. All dangers are easily eradicated simply by remembering Me. I rescued Draupadī from great public shame and insult. I also saved the Pāṇḍavas from the fire trap in the house of lac. I protected Śiva by slaying the terrible demon Vṛkāsura. I liberated My servant, Gajendra the elephant, from excruciating death pains. I stood by Prahlaḍa in all his tortures. I protected the cowherd boys from all kinds of harm and attacks. I churned the milk ocean to extract the nectar of immortality. I deprived the demons of that nectar and gave it to the demigods, thus aiding them to victory. I slew the obnoxious demon Kamsa, who was threatening My devotees. I finished the demon King Rāvaṇa, destroying his entire race. I lifted Govardhana Hill with My left hand, and I tamed the vicious snake-demon Kālīyā.

“I appeared in Satya-yuga to propagate the practice of austerity and meditation and in Tretā-yuga to introduce the performance of sacrifices. In Dvāpara-yuga My purpose was to establish proper procedures of temple worship. Presently in Kali-yuga I have come to promulgate the congregational chanting of the holy names of God. Even the *Vedas* fail to enumerate all My incarnations. In Kali-yuga by participating in this *saṅkīrtana* movement every sincere soul will taste the nectar of love of Godhead. This is the reason for My appearance in this yuga.

“The entire Vedic literature instructs the searching soul to seek My shelter, but I am always to be found in the company of My surrendered devotees. They are everything to Me—father, mother, friend, son, brother. Although I am absolutely independent, My nature is to be captivated by My devotees' pure love for Me. All of you are My eternal associates. All My incarnations are only for your pleasure and protection. Know for certain that I cannot remain even for a moment bereft of your association.”

Out of His causeless mercy for His devotees and all living entities, the Lord revealed confidential knowledge about Himself. The devotees were jubilant. They fell flat on the ground offering obeisances. They were so devotionally agitated that they were unable to do anything. They prayed and rolled on the ground, relishing the highest nectar of love of Godhead. The Lord's associates were now saturated, their previous heartaches due to separation from the Lord were now cured. The compassionate Lord is expert in alleviating everyone's grief, so why should suffering humanity not take shelter of the Lord? Lord Gauracandra is an ocean of mercy. He always discounts the wayward soul's faults and sees his goodness.

Thereafter, withdrawing His mood of supreme opulence and absolute autocracy, the Lord was back to His normal self, calm and composed. He led everyone down to the Ganges to bathe. He played and frolicked in the waters with the devotees. On returning, He watered the *tulasī* plant, indicating the others should follow, and circumambulated her. Then they all went to the temple room, offered obeisances to Lord Viṣṇu, and circumambulated the Lord. Lord Gaurahari called everyone, and they sat down together to eat. The Lord sat down beside Lord Nityānanda amidst happy and cheerful devotees. With His smiling face and golden body covered with sandalwood paste, the Lord was the cynosure of all eyes. The devotees sitting around the Lord with Nityānanda Prabhu sitting beside Him was an exact replica of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma sitting in the forest of Vṛndāvana surrounded by Their cowherd boyfriends having a picnic with Their packed lunches. Who can fully describe this wonderful happening?

As soon as the Lord finished eating and left, the devotees jumped up and grabbed His remnants from His plate. Even the old men acted like little boys; such is the transformation that takes place due to contact with the Lord's divine potency. One who hears these pastimes of the Lord and His associates—their reunion, *saṅkīrtana*, and eating together—will certainly attain Lord Caitanya's mercy and relish love of Godhead.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 2

All glories to Lord Gauracandra, the life and soul of all living beings! He is terror personified for the miscreants and the protector of the devotees. He is the Lord and master of Ananta Śeṣa, Lakṣmīdevī, Brahmā, and Śiva; and the friend of the poor. He is an ocean of benevolence and the best of all *sannyāsīs*. All glories to the Lord and His associates! May He shower benedictions upon me so my mind may remain in eternal meditation on His lotus feet.

The Lord passed that night in Advaita's house relishing unlimited spiritual bliss. He and His loving associates relished confidential talks about His transcendental activities. In the morning, after completing His daily morning duties, the Lord sat down with the Vaiṣṇavas. He said, "I am going to Nilācala, but you should not become despondent because of this. After offering My obeisances to Lord Jagannātha, I will return to be amongst you again. Return to your houses and blissfully engage in performing *kirtana*, for you are My eternal associates and are more dear to Me than My own life."

The devotees replied, "As You wish, O Lord. No one can divert You from Your decision. Yet it must be mentioned that at the present time it is unsafe for travel to Orrisa. The kingdoms of Bengal and Orrisa are on the verge of war. The way is infested with dacoits. Please consider waiting until the situation improves." The Lord said, "Obstacles may be there, but I must go."

Advaita Ācārya could understand the Lord's heart. He was bent on going to Nilācala. Advaita approached the Lord with folded hands and said truthfully to Him, "Who can obstruct Your path? All hindrances are Your slaves, so who has the power to stop You? Once You have made up Your mind to go to Nilācala, then You can leave at Your own sweet will." The Lord was pleased to hear the truth spoken so plainly from Advaita, and He acknowledged it by loudly chanting, "Hari! Hari!"

The Lord set out towards Nilācala. His gait was that of a stalking maddened lion. The devotees ran after Him, unable to control their emotions and tears. After a distance, the Lord turned to them and spoke sweet loving words, "Please do not be sad, I will never leave you. Go home now and take shelter of the holy name. I will return in a few days." He embraced everyone one by one and soaked them with His tears of love. It was a moving scene as the Lord and the devotees cried in each others' arms. Finally pacifying and reassuring everyone, the Lord traveled south. But the devotees were not to be consoled so easily. As the Lord disappeared from their sight they fell to the ground crying piteously.

Just as the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana had wept bitterly as if thrown into an ocean of endless woe when Kṛṣṇa was journeying to Mathurā leaving Vṛndāvana. The same mood of separation was now being experienced by the devotees of Lord Caitanya. The situation and mood in Kṛṣṇa's pastime was the same now in Lord Caitanya's pastime. Life and death are entirely controlled by Kṛṣṇa. It is of no consequence if one consumes poison or the elixir of immortality, only what Kṛṣṇa wants will happen. If He wants someone will die, if He wants someone will go on living.

The Lord travelled happily towards Nilācala with Nityānanda, Gadādhara, Mukunda, Govinda, Jagadānanda, and Brahmānanda. The Lord wanted to test His devotees. He inquired, "Please tell Me frankly if anyone has brought any necessary things for the journey."

They replied, "No one has the power to act independently, my Lord. Without Your permission, we did not bring anything."

The Lord was greatly pleased at their reply. The Lord now spoke, delineating the import of this seemingly simple question. He said, "You have made Me very happy by not bringing anything with you. Everyone is liable to enjoy only what is destined to him. Even if he is in the forest, that which is due to him through destiny will find him. If Providence wills that someone goes without food, then even if he is a prince he will have to fast. The prince's larder may be filled with food, but if the Lord so wills, he cannot eat. He might suddenly get into a quarrel with someone and out of anger refuse to eat and remain sulking. He may also, without warning, be attacked by high fever, in which case there is no question of eating anything. This is all happening in truth by the Lord's sweet will. The entire universe is Lord Kṛṣṇa's storehouse filled with grains and foodstuff. If the Lord desires, we can get food anywhere and everywhere."

The Lord was teaching everyone the Absolute Truth. One who accepts to heart these instructions becomes perfectly happy in life. One may try very carefully to do something, but the result of that endeavor depends entirely on the Lord's will. Discussing in this manner, they arrived at the village of Ātisārā.

A very saintly personality named Ananta Paṇḍita was living in Ātisārā. The Lord decided to stay at his residence. This shows how fortunate Ananta Paṇḍita was. Ananta Paṇḍita was overwhelmed with divine bliss to have the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha personally come to his house as his guest. He joyfully busied himself to feed the Lord and all the devotees. The Lord sat down with the devotees and relished honoring *prasāda*. He was instructing everyone how to lead the ideal mendicant life of a *sannyāsī* by begging everything. That whole night He spent discussing topics of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

The next morning after blessing Ananta Paṇḍita with His merciful glance, the Lord proceeded in His journey with Kṛṣṇa's

name constantly vibrating on His lips. When the villagers saw the Lord's compassionate moonlike face, which was a soothing balm to all tribulations, they spontaneously began to repeat the Lord's holy name. Yogis steeped in meditation find it practically impossible to attain His lotus feet in their hearts, yet now even ordinary persons could see Him as He went on His journey.

The Lord traveled along the banks of the Ganges and arrived at a place known as Chatrabhoga. Here the Ganges was flowing in one hundred separate streams for the benediction and joy of the people. There is a *śiva-līṅga* in the form of water situated here at the place known as Ambulīṅga-ghāṭa.

I shall now relate the history behind this form of Lord Śiva. In the long past, Bhagīratha had worshiped Gaṅgādevī praying to her to descend to the earth. The waters of Ganges were the only means to bring his ancestors back to life. When Gaṅgādevī complied and started flowing on the earth, Lord Śiva was pining for her association. Finally Lord Śiva came to earth. Seeing her flow in Chatrabhoga, he became overwhelmed with emotion and entered her waters, himself taking the form of water. Gaṅgādevī on seeing Lord Śiva began to worship him with great devotion. Lord Śiva knows the depth of Gaṅgādevī's devotion and attachment for the Lord, and Gaṅgādevī is also aware of Lord Śiva's highly elevated position. By the touch of Ganges water Lord Śiva became water, and Gaṅgādevī offered him prayers with deep reverence.

From that time, the place became famous as Ambulīṅga-ghāṭa. Chatrabhoga also became an important place of pilgrimage with both Gaṅgādevī and Lord Śiva present there. And now the transcendental significance of this pilgrimage site was further enhanced by the foot marks of Lord Caitanya. The Lord approached the pilgrimage spot with increasing ecstasy. He roared loudly the holy names and fell swooning only to be caught timely into Nityānanda Prabhu's safe embrace. The devotees responded loudly taking the Lord's name. The Lord took everyone into the waters of the Ganges at Ambulīṅga-ghāṭa and bathed. The Lord and the devotees enjoyed an exhilarating bath. All these descriptions will be compiled later in detail by Vedavyāsa.

The Lord came out of the water feeling uncontrollable spiritual emotions storming in His heart. As He changed into fresh dry clothes, His clothes became soaked with tears of ecstasy. On the land Ganges was flowing in one hundred streams and the tears from the Lord's eyes also cascaded down in a hundred streams. The devotees were so amazed that they could only laugh at this extraordinary phenomenon.

The landlord of the village was Rāmacandra Khān. Although he was a materialist, he was also a pious man. Otherwise how could he meet Lord Caitanya. The Lord by some divine arrangement came to his house. As soon as he saw the powerful and effulgent appearance of the Lord, Rāmacandra Khān hurriedly got down from his swing in great awe. He prostrated himself before the Lord. The Lord was still absorbed in love of God, and oblivious to everything around Him. He was crying profusely and heaving deep sighs and falling to the ground. He kept chanting "O Jagannātha! O Jagannātha!"

Rāmacandra Khān was extremely moved to see such an intense devotional mood. He thought, "There is no way to stop this piteous crying," then he himself broke out in tears. Who in the three worlds could remain impassive to see these tearful entreaties? Even a stone-hearted person would melt. The Lord calmed Himself and inquired from Rāmacandra, "Who are you?" Offering prostrated obeisances at the Lord's feet, he spoke with folded hands, "O Lord, I am the servant of Your servant." Then the local people spoke up, informing the Lord, "He is the landlord of this entire southern part of the state." The Lord said, "It is nice that you are the chieftain here. Please tell Me how I can proceed to Nilācala tomorrow." As the Lord was speaking about Nilācala, He was once again overcome by divine ecstasy. Crying out Lord Jagannātha's name, He began to weep profusely and fell to the ground swooning. Rāmacandra spoke in a concerned voice, "O Lord, whatever You order I consider my prime duty to fulfill. The roads are very dangerous. Traveling between the two countries has become practically impossible. The inimical kings have placed camouflaged spears along the border. And if the soldiers find even an innocent traveler, they capture him and torture him thinking him an enemy spy. The only way I can arrange is to send you in secret. I place myself in great danger, but I do not care for this danger, I will certainly carry out your bidding. And my Lord if You kindly accept me as Your servitor then I pray that You and Your associates take food in my house. I will use everything I possess—money, influence, men—to bring You across the border tonight." The Lord was pleased with Rāmacandra and blessed him with His merciful glance.

By that one glance, Rāmacandra was purified of all material attachments. The Lord went to his residence. Rāmacandra's house became sanctified and everyone in the house exulted, practically experiencing the results of their previous piety. The *brāhmaṇa* Rāmacandra himself prepared the food with devotion and deference. The Lord nowadays ate very frugally. He had no spare moments away from His deep absorption within Himself. He sat down to eat only for the satisfaction of His devotees. His real food is always the spiritual mellows. His eating habits had changed ever since He embarked on this journey to Jagannātha Puri.

All the way here the Lord had exhibited the mood of separation, imploring Lord Jagannātha. Day or night, land or water were just fading images of no consequence to Him. He was steeped in meditation within Himself tasting the bliss of love of God. The devotees were always by His side keeping watch over Him, and protecting Him from any external harm. The different ecstatic moods exhibited by the Lord are impossible for an ordinary mortal to describe. This is possible by Vedavyāsa only. Who can understand the character of the Supreme Lord? Who can predict how Kṛṣṇa will act next? Lord

Nityānanda knows fully well the object of Lord Caitanya's love, for whom He pines so imploringly. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, is always engrossed in transcendental exchange of mellows where He Himself is the object of love. Yet He forgets Himself as the main actor of these pastimes. On one hand He thinks of Himself as Lord Jagannātha, and on the other He yearns for union with Lord Jagannātha, in this way bringing the devotees to His side with concern for Him. How can the living entities realize the Supreme if He Himself does not shower them with His causeless mercy?

The Lord sat with Nityānanda Prabhu and the other devotees who were so dear to Him. He barely took a morsel of food and got up with a thunderous roar. With the after-lunch ablutions done with, He kept on asking, "How far is Jagannātha Purī? How far is Jagannātha Swami?" Mukunda quickly started to sing. The Lord began to dance. The residents of Chatrabhoga being pious had a rare treat. They saw the Supreme Lord, the hero of Vaikuṇṭha, dance before their very eyes. As He danced, one after another of the ecstatic symptoms began manifesting on His person. Crying, shivering, roaring, horripilation, perspiring profusely, becoming statue-like and so on. Who knows the many subtle spiritual transformations that reflected on Him as He spun round and round. Tears gushed out of His eyes like the rushing currents of the Ganges in a monsoon state drenching everyone. The incarnation of love of Godhead in the form of Lord Caitanya had descended, for who else but Lord Caitanya has the potency to exhibit such pastimes?

Time passed; the night was almost ending. The Lord calmed Himself and sat down. Although it was late night, the long hours seemed to have swiftly gone by like a few moments only. Everyone was delivered by the Lord's causeless mercy. Rāmacandra Khān, waiting for this opportune moment, said, "My Lord, the boats are ready waiting for You." The Lord immediately got up and went to the riverbank. He alighted the boat and cast His benedicting glance on everyone. The boat headed toward Jagannātha Purī, His own abode.

The Lord asked Mukunda to sing. He began to sing while the boat moved silently in the still night. The boatman was a simple and illiterate person. He said, "This singing is very fearful. I will surely lose my life tonight. On land the tigers will maul us, and the water is infested with crocodiles. This part of the river is terrorized by bands of dacoits who if they catch us will forcibly take both our wealth and our lives. So please remain quiet until we reach Orissa."

The devotees were put into consternation, but the Lord's absorption in spiritual mellows continued uninterrupted. In a short while, the Lord sounded like thunder and said, "What do you fear? Who are you afraid of? The Supreme Lord's Sudarśana cakra, which always protects the Vaiṣṇavas from danger, is here. Just look around you. Assail your trepidations and continue the Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana*. The reassuring words from the Lord had a miraculous effect on the devotees and they began to sing with renewed gusto.

Utilizing this exigent situation the Lord gave instructions to the devotees, "The Sudarśana cakra is always present to protect the devotees of the Lord. Sudarśana destroys any inimical and atheistic forces who try to harass the devotees. Since the devotees have such an invincible protector as Lord Viṣṇu's own weapon, who can possibly harm the Vaiṣṇavas?"

Only those who have received the Lord's mercy can fathom the meaning of these confidential instructions. Soon the boat reached Orissa. The devotees had performed *kīrtana* the entire way. The boat stopped at the river port called Prayāga-ghāṭa and Lord Caitanya got off the boat. The hearing of this narration of the Lord entering Orissa accelerates the process of reaching spiritual perfection. The Lord was extremely joyful having set His lotus feet on the soil of Orissa. He offered obeisances, and the devotees did the same.

In that area is a well-known bathing place called Gaṅgā-ghāṭa. The Lord took His bath there. He then went to offer obeisances to a *śiva-līṅga* deity known as Maheśa. This deity was established right next to the bathing place by King Yudhiṣṭhira of the Pāṇḍavas. The Lord brought the devotees to a temple and requesting them to wait there, He went away to beg alms. The Lord went door-to-door with His cloth spread out to receive alms. As He stood before each house, the people were captivated by His magnanimous appearance and immediately offered Him something. Whatever was available in the household they gave with great pleasure. Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune and giver of all foodstuff and opulence, is always praying to receive shelter at the Lord's lotus feet. That same Supreme Personality is now knocking on every door in the guise of a *saṁnyāsī* begging alms only to benedict the conditioned souls.

The Lord returned to the devotees after collecting alms feeling content. The devotees began to laugh seeing what the Lord had begged and said, "The Lord can certainly maintain us." Jagadānanda Paṇḍita eagerly prepared the food. The Lord sat down with all the devotees and ate. They passed the night in that village performing Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana*. At dawn they were again on the road walking towards Purī.

After a few miles they were suddenly stopped by persons demanding tax, refusing the right of way to the devotees unless they paid. But when the tax collectors saw the grave and imposing figure of the Lord, they were impressed. They inquired, "How many men are with You?" The Lord replied, "I do not have anyone in this world, and I do not belong to anyone. I am all alone. The entire world is mine." Saying this, the Lord began shedding incessant tears flowing out in streams. The taxman said, "O master, You may kindly leave, but I will not release the others until I have received full payment." The Lord left the group of devotees remembering Lord Kṛṣṇa and chanting His names. The devotees were plunged into an

abyss of despondency, thinking the Lord had left them.

The devotees, after some consideration, began to laugh at how the Lord had displayed wonderful impartiality, but in the next moment they were again desperately worried that the Lord would leave them altogether. Nityānanda Prabhu pacified them saying, “Do not worry. The Lord will not leave us behind.” The taxman said, “you are not accompanying that *sannyāsī*, so you must pay the proper charges.” The Lord had gone just a short distance and sat down with His head hanging down, tears welling out of His eyes. Even a heart of stone would melt seeing the Lord weeping in such an entreating way. The taxman was filled with wonderment. He said, “He is certainly not an ordinary soul. It is impossible for a human being to shed such an excessive amount of tears.” Looking again carefully at everyone, he inquired from several devotees, “tell me clearly who you are. Whose associates are you?” They replied, “That’s *sannyāsī* is our master. You must have heard of Him. His name is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. We are His servitors.” Saying this, the devotees broke down in tears of divine love for their Lord. The taxman was now dumbfounded. Being infused by their mood and purified by their association, he also began to cry, tears coursing down his cheeks.

The taxman now hastened toward the sitting figure of the Lord and threw himself down on the ground like a rod before the Lord’s lotus feet. Very humbly he said, “The great fortune of seeing You has actually resulted from pious activities of many millions of lifetimes. Kindly forgive me for my offenses at Your feet, and I pray that You may arrive safely in Nilācala.” Lord Caitanya blessed the taxman and continued His journey. The Supreme Lord has advented as Lord Caitanya to deliver all living entities. Only the atheistic sinners who are inimical towards the Vaiṣṇavas and addicted to performing the most abominable activities will be deprived of the Lord’s mercy. Lord Caitanya’s name is so potent that even the demons have a change of heart by chanting His name and glories. Yet the devilish reprobates do not accept this mercy nor have faith in its powers.

The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha showered His merciful glance on everyone as He went on His way to Nilācala. He was always absorbed in drinking deep into the endless nectarean ocean of loving mellows of Lord Kṛṣṇa. One day He arrived on the banks of the River Suvarṇarekha. The Lord and the devotees found the water crystal clear and so took their baths in the river thus sanctifying it. Then they continued on towards their destination.

Somehow, Nityānanda Prabhu and Jagadānanda Paṇḍita had fallen back a distance from the rest of the group. Lord Caitanya decided to sit down and wait for the two to catch up with them. Nityānanda Prabhu was always engrossed in deep meditation on Lord Caitanya. This loving mellow made Him act intoxicated and mad. Sometimes He cried loudly almost wailing, then suddenly He began roaring loudly in an ear-splitting voice, then again He abruptly started to laugh. When He saw a river or stream He plunged into the water and swam for a long time. At times He covered His body with dust. He would sometimes fall swooning in ecstasy to the ground so hard that people were made to believe that all His bones were shattered. When He started dancing just on His own, it was difficult, or so it seemed, to keep the earth steady from tilting off balance. This sort of behavior and power are not unnatural for Lord Nityānanda. Lord Ananta Śeṣa is His partial expansion and Lord Caitanya resides eternally in His heart.

Jagadānanda Paṇḍita wanted to go and beg food from the village, so he wanted to leave the Lord’s *daṇḍa* behind. He was assigned by the Lord to carry His *sannyāsa-daṇḍa*, or staff, on the journey. He left Nityānanda saying, “Here, look after the Lord’s *daṇḍa* very carefully while I am gone.” and gave Him the *daṇḍa*. Nityānanda Prabhu, who was always meditating on Lord Caitanya, took the *daṇḍa* and sat down. He started laughing, holding the *daṇḍa* in one hand and began to speak to the *daṇḍa*. He said, “O *daṇḍa*, where is the logic that you should be carried by that personality who I bear in my heart.” Nityānanda Prabhu, who is Lord Balarāma, got up, and then smashed the *daṇḍa* to the ground with immense force breaking it in three places.

The Supreme Lord alone knows His own desires. How can I know why Nityānanda Balarāma broke the *daṇḍa*? Nityānanda Prabhu knows intimately Lord Caitanya’s mind. Lord Caitanya also fully understands Lord Nityānanda’s mind. They are brothers eternally, and They appear together in every millennium. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa knew each other’s hearts deeply. They are the one and same Supreme Lord. They have separated only to teach and enhance the loving mellows of devotional service. I am able to know Lord Caitanya and His pastimes only by the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu. Who other than Lord Balarāma Himself would have the power to smash the Lord’s *daṇḍa*? Actually it is Lord Caitanya, the supreme teacher, who teaches through many subtle ways. One who understands this essential truth enjoys blissful devotional life.

When Jagadānanda Paṇḍita returned, he found Nityānanda sitting with the three broken pieces of the *daṇḍa* lying next to Him. He was startled at first, but soon he began to worry. He inquired from Nityānanda, “Who broke the *daṇḍa*?” Nityānanda replied, “The one who took the *daṇḍa* in the first place. The Lord Himself has broken His own *daṇḍa*. Who else could do such a thing?” Jagadānanda picked up the broken pieces of the *daṇḍa* and without replying silently walked away.

Jagadānanda went directly to where Lord Caitanya was seated. He threw the broken pieces of the *daṇḍa* in front of the Lord. The Lord looked up and asked, “How was the *daṇḍa* smashed like this? Did you get in a fight? Tell Me what happened.” Jagadānanda narrated everything as he had seen it. He said, “Nityānanda, who is always rapt in meditation, has done this.” Lord Caitanya turned to Nityānanda and inquired, “What was Your reason for smashing My *daṇḍa*?”

Nityānanda Prabhu retorted, "They were just some bamboo sticks that I broke, and if You cannot forgive Me for this, then punish Me as You wish." The Lord replied, "A *daṇḍa* is the residence of all the demigods and You reduce its importance to some bamboo poles!"

Who can comprehend the esoteric pastimes of Lord Caitanya? What He considers in His mind He never speaks, but says something quite different. So if anyone falsely claims to know the Lord's mind, he is certainly ignorant and a cheat. If the Lord decides to destroy someone, on meeting him the Lord treats him affably. And to devotees who are as dear to Him as His very soul He shows Himself to be equally disposed. These are the various moods and pastimes the Lord reveals. They are inconceivable, hence only those who are graced by the Lord's mercy can perceive their true nature.

The *daṇḍa* was broken by the Lord's own desire, yet now He was showing His anger. The Lord said, "I had only My *daṇḍa* as a companion, but that also was broken by Kṛṣṇa's will. Now I am alone, so all of you go ahead and I will follow behind." No one dared to refute Lord Caitanya's decision. The devotees became concerned over this matter. Mukunda intervened and said, "You go ahead of us my Lord, for we must stay back for some work." With polite agreement the Lord left, walking away like a lithe, mad lion with a supple gait that is hard to describe.

The Lord soon arrived in Jaleśvara village. He went directly to the temple of Lord Śiva, the main deity in that village. The *śiva-līṅga* was well looked after by the local *brāhmaṇa* priest. The floral decorations in the temple and on the deity were attractive, and the smell of incense permeated the air giving the place an exhilarating devotional mood. Devotees in the temple were singing, playing musical instruments and dancing. The Lord's anger subsided in that joyful atmosphere. He let the loving devotional feelings in His heart gradually flow and merge in with the music. Enlivened by His dear devotee's (Lord Śiva's) opulence and influence in the temple, Lord Caitanya began to dance happily. Lord Caitanya knows Lord Śiva's glorious character, for he is favorite amongst His devotees. If anyone disrespects Lord Śiva, not following the example of Lord Caitanya, then he cannot be considered a Vaiṣṇava, and all his spiritual advancement is annulled.

As the Lord danced, He made joyful sounds so loud that the very mountains seemed to tremble. Lord Śiva's devotees were struck with amazement, and thought that Lord Śiva must have appeared in person. The musicians and singers again reached a crescendo, and the Lord became fully absorbed in dancing, losing all contact with the outside world. Meanwhile, His devotees arrived. Mukunda began to sing, joined by others. Seeing His beloved associates, the Lord experienced great joy, and danced more vigorously while the devotees danced circling Him. The whole scene was dynamically transformed. Tears flowed out effusively in a hundred streams from the Lord's eyes. Who can describe all the happenings properly? This temple of Lord Śiva was now sanctified by the Lord's presence and dancing. The real purpose for which the temple was built was now fulfilled.

After awhile the Lord became peaceful and embraced all His devotees with great love, giving them divine pleasure. Upon seeing Nityānanda Prabhu, the Lord rushed to embrace Him. Holding Him firmly He said, "Your real business is to calm Me down and restrain Me and help Me maintain My *sannyāsa* vows, but instead You are increasing My madness. If You continue in this way, soon You can have My head too. I am openly declaring that whatever You want of Me I will always do accordingly. This is the real truth." The Lord thus instructed everyone, "Always take great care about Nityānanda Prabhu. His position is much more elevated than Mine. This is not spoken in an exaggerated manner, it is the simple truth. If anyone commits an offense at His lotus feet, but has not offended Me directly, still he is refused entry into the more confidential devotional service of the Lord. An offender against Nityānanda may be situated in devotional service, hence is considered by some as a devotee, but I reject him." When Nityānanda Prabhu heard His own praise, He bashfully hung His head. All of the Lord's pastimes are so wonderful, and they bring much pleasure to the devotees.

Passing that night in Jaleśvara the Lord started on His journey again at early dawn accompanied by all the devotees. He went towards Bansdaha, and on the way was stopped by a *śakta sannyāsī* (one who worships the energy of the Lord in the position of the Lord Himself). The Lord knew that the stranger was a *śakta*, but spoke to him with sweet words. The Lord said, "Please tell me My friend where you have been for so long that I am meeting you only now. Where are your other friends?" The *śakta* became captivated by the Lord and slowly he began revealing all information about himself and all the other *śaktas*. Lord Caitanya smiled as He listened to him. The *śakta* invited the Lord to his so-called monastery, saying, "Please come now to my *maṭha* and we can all enjoy the bliss drink together," The *śakta* was referring to an alcoholic drink as "bliss" and this amused Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu. The Lord replied, "I will definitely come to enjoy your bliss drink. You should go ahead first to be sure everything is prepared for when we come." The *śakta* was very pleased to hear that his invitation was accepted and he left quickly, feeling elated. How fathomless is the Lord's character.

The *Vedas* declare that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the friend and deliverer of the poor and wretched. Hence the Lord spoke so amiably to the *śakta sannyāsī*. People began to say, "This *śakta* has now been delivered, and by his contact other *śaktas* will also become purified just like him." The Lord uses various means to liberate the conditioned souls.

The Lord arrived at Remuna village. In Remuna is the Deity of Lord Gopīnātha. Upon seeing Himself in the Deity form, the Lord began to dance ecstatically with all His devotees. Lost in love of Himself, He became oblivious to everything. He wept piteously in loving separation. Even the cruelest hearts melted hearing Him cry. After a few days, Lord Gaurasundara came to Yājapura village and stayed in a locality called Brāhmaṇa-nagara. There He visited the temple of

Lord Ādi Varāha. This Deity is unique and was self-manifested. By seeing this Deity, all material entanglements are severed. The temple was situated on the bank of the River Vaitaraṇī. Just by seeing this river one is cleansed of all sins. This entire area is a very holy pilgrimage site.

Even if an animal crosses the river at this spot, the demigods have the vision to see him take a four-handed Vaikuṇṭha form. Nīlācala Purī is exactly eighty miles away from this spot known as Nābhigayā or Virajākṣetra. This entire area is dotted with many temples. It is impossible to tabulate all of them with details.

At first the Lord went with the devotees to take bath in the river by the bathing place named Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa. Then they went to offer worship to Lord Varāha. The Lord danced ecstatically in front of Ādi Varāhadeva, and the devotees sang, creating a wonderful devotionally saturated atmosphere.

The Lord was very happy to be in Yājapura. His happiness increased with time, and He danced more vigorously. Suddenly, without warning, Lord Caitanya left the devotees and disappeared. It is difficult to know the Lord's desire and the reason for His actions. When the devotees found Lord Caitanya missing from their company, they began to look around in the temple in desperation. Their search proved futile. They became very worried. Nityānanda Prabhu, realizing the plight of the devotees, said, "Please calm yourselves. I am certain I know where the Lord has gone. He wants to visit all the temples and holy places in Yājapura alone. So we should also go out begging and return to this same spot. We will spend the night here, for the Lord is sure to return here tomorrow morning."

The devotees went out and collected food and returned. They cooked the food received as alms and ate together. Lord Caitanya in the meantime had visited the different temples and returned to the devotees. The devotees were jubilant, and greeted Him with loud chanting of "Hari! Hari!" In this way the Lord with His associates blessed Yājapura with His presence and then continued on the journey.

After a few days, the Lord arrived in Kataka city. From there He went to take a dip in the River Mahānadi. He then went to the temple of Sakṣi Gopāla to offer worship. The charming, unsurpassable beauty of the Deity of Sakṣi Gopāla greatly impressed Lord Caitanya, and feeling surging ecstasy, He began to roar with a thunderous voice. He offered many prayers, and exhibited wonderful devotional symptoms crying in ecstasy for the Lord. The authorized and recommended procedure to invoke life into the Deity is by chanting the *mahā-mantra*. This *mahā-mantra* was propagated by Lord Caitanya. And although He is the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, yet He is always exhibiting the mood of service to the Supreme Lord.

Lord Caitanya then came to Bhuvaneśvara. This city is actually the hidden Kāśī, the residence of Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva had collected waters from all the different holy places and brought them to Bhuvaneśvara and formed the lake known as Bindu-sarovara. Lord Caitanya knew the significance of the lake and that it was Lord Śiva's favorite. He took His bath in the lake and further increased its auspiciousness. The *liṅga* form of Lord Śiva that was being worshiped there was self-manifest. He went to see the *liṅga* and mingled with the crowd of Śiva devotees who were chanting loud praises of Lord Śiva. The *liṅga* was surrounded by small lit ghee lamps set in rows offered by the visiting devotees. Lord Caitanya was pleased to see the opulence of His beloved devotee Lord Śiva. The Lord's associates were also very happy in that devotional atmosphere. Lord Śiva is always immersed in the meditation of the Supreme Lord, which makes him relish the nectar of devotion and cannot keep from dancing. That same Supreme Lord Gauracandra, his master, was dancing ecstatically in front of him. The Lord and His devotees spent the night there.

I will now describe from the *Skanda Purāṇa* how Lord Śiva found this place. Lord Śiva and his consort, Pārvatidevī, were living contentedly in Kāśī for a very long time. Then they went to Kailāsa and left Kāśī to be ruled by kings. Soon a king named Kāśīrāja ascended the throne. He was an ardent worshiper of Lord Śiva. Suddenly by the will of destiny he lost everything in a war. He was determined to destroy his victor in battle, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. With vengeance in his heart he sat down to perform the most terrible of austerities, meditating on Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva, attracted to appear before him by the potency of his austerity, offered him to choose any boon. Kāśīrāja eagerly asked, "I pray only for this boon from you, my lord, that I may avenge my defeat and destroy Kṛṣṇa in battle." Lord Śiva is a magnanimous personality. No one can say how he will grace someone with his favor. He said to Kāśīrāja, "O King prepare for battle. My army of followers will be right behind you in the field. Let me see who is strong enough to defeat you as long as I am behind you with my weapon Pasupati."

Reassured by Śiva's words, the foolish King Kāśīrāja went to battle against Kṛṣṇa, smiling confidently. Lord Śiva, accompanied by his associates and followers, followed the army of Kāśīrāja. His intention was to fight for the king. Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul situated within everyone's heart, could know immediately what was happening. He swiftly sent His disc weapon, Sudarśana, to destroy the enemy. The Lord's Sudarśana cakṛa is invincible, so unchallenged it went straight to Kāśīrāja and severed his head from his body. Then Sudarśana started destroying the city of Vārāṇasī, the capitol of Kāśīrāja. This enraged Lord Śiva. Seeing that his abode was being plundered, he released his terrible Pasupati weapon. What can any other weapon, however powerful, do against Sudarśana? The Pasupati weapon quickly retreated in fear. Sudarśana then went after Lord Śiva himself. Lord Śiva fled from the awesome weapon. The power and heat from the Sudarśana covered the whole world, and Śiva had no place to hide. Lord Śiva found himself in the same predicament as the sage Durvāsā when he was being chased by the fearsome weapon.

Lord Śiva finally understood that he was being preyed upon by the Sudarśana cakra, and that only Lord Kṛṣṇa could help him out of his dilemma. Then, making his decision, he remembered Lord Kṛṣṇa, taking shelter at His lotus feet. He began to offer prayers to the Lord, “All glories to the Supreme Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the son of mother Devaki! You are omnipresent and the shelter of all living entities. You give men both good intelligence and ill motivations. You are the creator, maintainer and protector. You never see the faults of others and You are an ocean of compassion. You are the only well-wishing friend of all those who are suffering. You are the forgiver of all offenses, so kindly forgive my offenses since I have taken shelter of You.”

Lord Kṛṣṇa, being appeased by Lord Śiva's prayers, recalled His Sudarśana and appeared before him. Lord Śiva saw Him faintly smiling, although His eyes were still stern. He was surrounded by His cowherd boyfriends and Vṛndāvana damsels. Kṛṣṇa said, “O Śiva, you are well-aware of My position and power, so what suddenly prompted you to act in this fashion? That degraded king, Kāśīrāja, is no better than a little insect, and siding with him you are fighting with Me. Now you have seen the fearsome might of My Sudarśana cakra which not even you could counter. All the most powerful weapons like Brahmāstra and Pāśupata-astra put together are no match for Sudarśana. The unique feature of the Sudarśana cakra is to prey after the one who sends counter weapons. Now I am feeling that there is no one in the entire creation who dislikes Me more than you.” Hearing these somewhat angry words of chastisement, Lord Śiva felt trepidation within.

Lord Śiva threw himself down to the ground and caught hold of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Surrendering himself to the Lord, Śiva said, “O Lord, the entire creation is subservient to Your will. Who can claim to act independently? Just as dry straws are strewn by the wind, so does the entire material nature bend to Your commands. Everyone executes Your wishes. There is no one who can disobey Your biddings. Somehow You have given this feeling of false pride, and blinded by this I was unable to see anything else but myself as big and powerful. I am helpless, my Lord, since it is You only who made me think in this manner. Your lotus feet were always my life and soul, and I stayed in the forest and meditated solely on Your lotus feet. Yet You churned this mood of arrogance within me. What can I do? I acted as You desired. In spite of everything, I have committed serious offenses at Your feet, so now kindly forgive me and bless me with Your mercy. And I pray for this boon that I may never again develop such evil intelligence. I have been rightly punished for my arrogance. Now kindly tell me where I can stay, for who else but You can I turn to with such problems.”

Lord Kṛṣṇa smiled slightly and spoke kindly, “Listen, My dear Śiva, I am giving you a very beautiful place. Live here with all your associates and followers. This place is known as Ekāmṛka-vana. In this idyllic surrounding you will appear and be worshiped as Koṭi-lingeśvara. This place is in every way as captivating as Vārāṇasī. Besides, this place is also spiritually extremely elevated, but is not known to all. Today I will reveal to you the esoteric significance of this place which is so dear to Me.

On the shores of the ocean, covering a very large area is the place known as Nilācala. This is also known as Puruṣottama-kṣetra or the abode of the Supreme Person. It has a most pleasing and peaceful atmosphere. Even at the time of the cosmic annihilation, this place remains intact, unscathed. I reside eternally here, and daily receive opulent offerings of foodstuffs. Its area is spread over eighty square miles. All living entities living within this area are, by the influence of this place, possessing four-handed forms, though visible only to the demigods and their equals. The demigods glorify this place as the most auspicious of all places of pilgrimage. The act of sleeping here is equivalent to deep meditation, *orsamādhi*. Similarly, lying postures accrue the pious result of offering obeisances to the Deity. Simply walking around here is the same as circumambulation, *pradakṣiṇa*, and all speeches are glorification. These are all enumerated in the *Vedas*. Such is the potency of this *kṣetra* that even if one eats fish here it is the same as eating sacred vegetarian food or *havisya*. This place is very dear to Me, hence it is known by My name. All the residents here are My equals. It is outside the jurisdiction of Yamarāja, the guardian of death. I am the judge here who decides on the evil and pious deeds and their results.

The place I have designated as your residence lies north of My abode, Purī. Your place is, as I have described before, very beautiful and charming. Here one can very easily attain liberation and bliss. This place will be famous as Bhuvaneśvara.

The glories of Jagannātha Purī greatly impressed Lord Śiva. He again embraced the Lord's lotus feet and began to speak, “O Lord of my life, I have one prayer. I am always so falsely proud, therefore if I remain far away from Your association, it is most detrimental for me. I am yearning in my heart to stay close to You, because I can never benefit from bad association. If You consider me Your servant, then kindly allow me a place in Your own abode. After hearing the wonderful glories of Your dhāma from Your lotus lips, I am feeling an uncontrollable urge to simply live there. Living very humbly, I want to render menial service to You. All I pray for is just a little space in Your dhāma. His voice choked with emotion, and tears coursed down his cheeks.

The Lord was very pleased with Śiva's words and He embraced him firmly saying, “Hear Me, O Śiva. You are as precious to Me as My own body. One who is dear to you is even more dear to Me. I reside always within you, there is no doubt about this. I allow you to stay in all My abodes. In fact, you are the protector and maintainer of all the *dhāmas*. And this place known as Ekāmṛka-vana I am giving to you. Stay here and make it your home. This place is also My favorite. I will be pleased if you stay here always. One who claims to be My devotee but disregards you is only trying to pretend devotion to Me.” This is how Lord Śiva came to reside in this famous place, Bhuvaneśvara. It is still existing.

In order to teach everyone that Lord Śiva is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya danced in front of Lord Śiva. He was now practically demonstrating all the instructions of Lord Kṛṣṇa as they are found in the *Purāṇas* and other Vedic scriptures. Clapping His hands, Lord Caitanya danced and sang "Śiva Rāma Govinda." The Lord then offered worship to Lord Śiva with all His devotees. The Supreme Lord is the supreme instructing spiritual master. One who does not follow His instructions suffers due to this grievous mistake.

The Lord took His disciples and went around Bhuvaneśvara visiting different temples of Lord Śiva. The Lord was particularly happy to see one *śiva-līṅga* that was off the beaten track. When He left Bhuvaneśvara, He was feeling very elated all the way to Kamalapura village. From Kamalapura the Lord looked in the direction of Pūrī and saw the fluttering flags in the distance atop the Jagannātha temple. His heart flooded with spiritual emotions, drowning Him in an ocean of ecstatic bliss. The Lord began to cry out rumbling like thunder. The transformation in mood was amazing. He began to shiver and went sluggish, unable to move. His eyes were fixed on the temple spires, and He stumbled on, reciting Sanskrit verses. Take careful note of the verse - "Just see, the cowherd boy, Kṛṣṇa, is shyly smiling from the top of the temple seeing Me, thus increasing the extraordinary beauty of His face." Such is the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord's pastime that He kept repeating this verse, and at the same time stumbled and fell swooning with each step. And such was the force of His fall simultaneously exhibiting intense separation that even the expressive inner voice felt inadequate to describe everything.

The Lord moved forward offering full obeisances on the ground. Thus instead of walking He fell like a stick to the ground, and stood up each time at distances measuring the length of His body. He stood up, looked up at the temple spires, chanted the verse, and fell crashing to the ground. People all around stared agape in complete awe and amazement. No one else could have done this. It was possible for the Lord because He was the divine incarnation of supreme spiritual love. The whole way, He exhibited the apex of divine love for the Supreme Godhead. How fortunate were the souls that lined up the roads to see the Supreme Lord lost in ecstasy. They said about the Lord, "He certainly is the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa, Himself."

The devotees moved along with their Lord surrounding Him on all sides, their freely flowing tears of ecstasy soaking the earth. The distance from Kamalapura to Āṭhāra-nālā is a good hour and a half's walk. The Lord required six times more that time. When He came to Āṭhāra-nālā He withdrew within Himself all the ecstatic moods and feelings. He equiposed Himself and sat down with all the devotees. He spoke entreatingly to the devotees saying, "You have been real well-wishing friends to Me, having brought Me to Lord Jagannātha. Now kindly tell Me whether I go after you, or I am allowed to go ahead of you alone." Mukunda replied, "You go ahead of us."

The Lord left their company and walked towards the temple of Lord Jagannātha. His gate was regal like the maddened king of the forest. With quickening steps He entered Jagannātha Pūrī temple. Whoever hears this narration of the Lord entering Nilācala Pūrī will be carried on waves of ecstatic bliss. By the will of the Supreme Lord, Sārvabhauma Bhāṭṭācārya also came at the same time to see and worship Lord Jagannātha in the temple.

As Lord Caitanya stood in front of the Deities of Lord Jagannātha, Subhadrā, and Saṅkarsaṇa, Balarāma, He began to roar loudly like the booming of the ocean waves. He was yearning to hold Lord Jagannātha in His embrace. He jumped and pranced as His spiritual emotions became ebullient His spouting tears being sprinkled all around. Suddenly He fell crashing to the ground swooning with uncontrollable bliss. How can one fathom such moods of the Supreme Lord. The ignorant and foolish interior guards of the temple thinking the Lord was misbehaving immediately prepared to punish Him and beat Him. Just then, Sārvabhauma Bhāṭṭācārya rushed to the supine form of the Lord and stopped the guards from striking Him. He saw the unconscious body and thought to himself, "Studying all the symptoms, I think this person is not a human being. It is impossible for anyone to call out so loud, shedding such incessant tears. This is all very extraordinary. Maybe He is Kṛṣṇa Caitanya." Such were the thoughts which flitted through the mind of the blessed Sārvabhauma.

The temple guards were warded off by Sārvabhauma, and they stood now at a distance watching on with fear and reverence. Lord Caitanya still lay almost unconscious being moved to such a state of ecstasy upon seeing His very own self on the altar. The *Vedas* are inadequate to describe such esoteric transformations of the Supreme Lord. Lord Gaurasundara, the Supreme Lord, is sitting on the altar in His *caturvyūha* expansions feeling content. The selfsame Lord has now become the devotee rendering service to Himself. The Lord knows these transcendental mysteries about Himself. This is delineated in the *Vedas* and *Bhāgavata*. The *Vedas* always describe the Lord's pastimes only with the good intentions of delivering the conditioned souls.

Sārvabhauma remained patiently waiting, protecting the Lord from any harm. The Lord still remained deeply immersed in love of Godhead in the mood of a devotee, oblivious of the external world. Finally Sārvabhauma decided to take the Lord to his own house. He spoke to the sentries, "Please carry this jewel amongst saints and follow me." The sentries lifted the still unconscious form of the Lord on their shoulders and carried Him out. Sārvabhauma's arrival in the temple at the same time as the Lord's transcendental ecstasy was not a mere coincidence. The Lord's character is incomprehensible to humans. They don't know how events take place.

Once outside the temple, they carried the Lord amidst thunderous chanting. The large crowd which had gathered was

very jubilant. Just then, the rest of the devotees from the Lord's party arrived..., and met their Lord being carried out in front of the *Siṃha-dvāra*. They became very joyful seeing their beloved Lord. Everyone in the crowd wanted a chance to carry the Lord, so the Lord was passed down from hand to hand like being transported by a swarm of ants, as the ants pass foodstuff down a long line. The devotees paid their obeisances to the Lord, and joined the flowing mass of jubilant people. So many people had come carrying the Lord that when they arrived at Sārvabhauma's house the doors had to be closed keeping the huge crowd outside.

Sārvabhauma was extremely pleased to see the associates of the Lord. He received them with proper respect and etiquette, seating them comfortably. By now his doubts about the Lord's identity were calmed. Sārvabhauma was feeling elated beyond words. How very fortunate he was. That Personality whom the Vedic literature so eloquently and repeatedly glorifies, in fact there are entire volumes fully devoted to glorifying Him, was now here in his house in person. When he saw Nityānanda, a radiant Personality, he fell to the ground, smearing his head with the dust from His lotus feet. Then he gathered some of his men and asked them to accompany the Lord's associates to the temple of Lord Jagannātha.

Their guides were at first hesitant, then thinking frankness a better proposition, began to earnestly request the devotees in the following manner. With folded hands they said, "Please be calm and composed when in front of the Deities of Lord Jagannātha. Do not act like your guru did some time ago. We do not know who you are, but only if you give your word to remain equipoised in the temple are we willing to accompany you. The way your guru acted, we are sure that it was only by God's will that Lord Jagannātha remained on His altar. I think there is no need to elaborate further on the subject, because all of you saw how your guru crashed to the ground. If it were anyone else, he would have died on the spot. This is all very inconceivable to us. Therefore we request you to please remain composed. The devotees began to laugh, but they assured their guides that they had nothing to worry about due to them, that they would behave normally.

The devotees went inside the temple and beheld Lord Jagannātha, who is the source of the quadruple expansions of *caturvyūha*. He was the Lord of the universe, and He manifested Himself as the source of all bliss and is always with His devotees. The devotees exulted in His presence, shed tears of ecstasy, and circumambulated the Lord, all the time glorifying Him with Vedic prayers. The priests brought them the Lord's flower garlands and placed them around their necks. The devotees were very happy, and begging permission from the priests to leave, they returned to Sārvabhauma's house.

Lord Caitanya was still in the same condition, deeply absorbed within Himself in the ecstasy of love of Godhead. Sārvabhauma sat at His feet, and the rest of the people were loudly chanting "Rāma, Kṛṣṇa." The Lord's activities are all inconceivable. He was in a state of unconsciousness for more than nine hours continuously. Then gradually the Lord began to stir. He was awake again, and the devotees greeted Him jubilantly chanting the Lord's name. Collecting Himself, the Lord inquired, "Please describe to Me exactly what transpired." The devotees were quiet. Lord Nityānanda at last spoke, "You had gone to see Lord Jagannātha in the temple, and as soon as You saw the Deity, You fell swooning in ecstasy. By the will of Providence, Sārvabhauma was there at that moment and he took care of You and brought You to his house. You have been totally absorbed in ecstasy for the past nine hours. Here is Sārvabhauma offering obeisances to You." Lord Caitanya quickly got up and embraced Sārvabhauma.

The Lord spoke to Sārvabhauma, "Lord Jagannātha is very merciful; He has brought Me to Sārvabhauma's house. I was wondering how to contact you and have your association. Lord Kṛṣṇa has easily fulfilled My desire." The Lord looked benignly at Sārvabhauma and smiled. The Lord continued to speak, "Kindly hear Me. I came to the temple and saw Lord Jagannātha. Upon seeing Him I felt the immense urge in My heart to go and embrace Him and hold Him to My chest. Luckily, Sārvabhauma was about, and I was saved from a serious danger. Therefore, I firmly declare that from today I will see Lord Jagannātha from a distance, not entering into the inner sanctum. I will stand next to the pillar of Garuḍa and see the Lord. I am fortunate today that I did not embrace the Lord, thus avoiding a dangerous situation."

Nityānanda Prabhu said, "You certainly averted a possible mishap. It is late. You should quickly bathe." Lord Caitanya replied, "Nityānanda, You should always correct Me and steady Me. I have given this body of Mine in Your total care." After completing His bath and other rituals, and feeling refreshed, the Lord came and sat with the devotees, a sweet smile faintly playing on His lips. Sārvabhauma had arranged for a lot of *mahā-prasāda*, so he had it brought in and placed it before the Lord. The Lord offered His prayer of thanks to the Lord for the opulent *mahā-prasāda*, and sat down to partake of it with all the devotees.

The Lord said, "Give Me as much as you can of the *latra* preparation, and you can take all the *pitha*, cheese dumplings and other sweets. The Lord was very much relishing the transcendental taste of *mahā-prasāda*. He ate His *latra* with the greatest relish, and the devotees this simple, spiritually saturated pastime. They laughed with boyish joy. Sārvabhauma, who had arranged this feast, was certainly an eternal associate of the Lord, otherwise, no person could have this sort of rare gift and fortune. He brought rice for the Lord on a golden plate and gave it to him. The Lord immediately began eating it. The scene was so transcendently exhilarating that the details fail me and are therefore reserved to be later delineated by Vedavyāsa.

After the meal, the devotees sat around their Lord. The meal was a treat for all in every respect. Anyone who hears these transcendental pastimes with devotion will indeed be blessed with Lord Caitanya's direct association. And anyone who

hears the narration in *Antya-khaṇḍa* of how Lord Caitanya came to Nilācala will swim in an ocean of devotional love.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 3

All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the repository of all transcendental qualities! He is the life and soul of Nityānanda Prabhu and Svarūpa Dāmodara Prabhu. He is the supreme actor of Vaiṣṇava and an ocean of compassion. He is the crest jewel of all the *sannyāsīs* and the true friend of the destitutes.

Please hear attentively these narrations of Lord Caitanya's pastimes as recorded in the *Antya-khaṇḍa*, or final part. His pastimes are concentrated nectar derived from nectar, and Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā are always hankering to relish them. Therefore these pastimes when heard with proper faith become the source of great spiritual pleasure for everyone except the sinful miscreants. Hearing these esoteric subjects will certainly bestow on one the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In this chapter, we find the Lord wishing to remain incognito, not revealing His real identity. And once the Supreme Lord decides not to assert Himself or to be recognized, then who can know Him?

One day the Lord sat with Sārvabhauma in a secluded place. The Lord said, "O respected sir, I want to open My heart to you. Although I have come to Purī to see Lord Jagannātha, My main concern was to meet you. Lord Jagannātha is not going to speak with Me, but you can sever the bonds of My material attachments. Lord Kṛṣṇa has fully empowered you to distribute love of Godhead. If you want, you can give it to Me also. Therefore, I am taking shelter of you, and you kindly do what is most beneficial for Me. What must I perform and how must I act in order to keep from falling into the deep dark well of material existence? Please advise and guide Me in every way, because I have surrendered Myself unto you." In this way the Lord spoke to Sārvabhauma, deluding him fully.

Sārvabhauma could not fathom the Lord's words and intentions. He began to explain to the Lord the religious duties of man. He said, "I appreciated everything You spoke. The lofty heights of devotional realizations You have revealed are to say the least wonderful. You have indeed been blessed by Kṛṣṇa's grace. Being such an intelligent person, what prompted You to take to the renounced order of life? Please try to analyze and understand what is to be gained by taking *sannyāsa*."

The first thing that happens on taking *sannyāsa* is that the person is immediately attacked by pride. By holding the *sannyāsa daṇḍa*, he thinks that he is empowered with special knowledge, and never folds his hands or bows his head to anyone. And when he meets a very saintly soul, who is according to the *Vedas* to be worshiped by smearing the dust from his lotus feet on one's head, the *sannyāsī* simply offers respect to him, not feeling any reason to be cautious. This sort of arrogance is not at all healthy.

"Try to understand this point from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.29.16), 'The Supreme Lord has entered every living entity as the soul, His part and parcel. Therefore, knowing this, one should offer his *daṇḍavat* obeisances even to a dog-eater, dog, cow, ass and all other beings.' This is the proper standard for a Vaiṣṇava. Only a charlatan devotee will act otherwise."

"The only thing he gains by taking *sannyāsa* is that he shaves off his *śikhā* and receives respect and honor from many persons. This certainly is one big waste, and thus the next disaster is that he loses all good sense. The living entity is meant to worship and serve the Supreme Lord, but instead of that, the *sannyāsī* calls himself Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the human soul in the form of a fetus is cramped up in the mother's womb, the Supreme Lord comes to his rescue, and by His grace the living entity gains the proper knowledge and intelligence. Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, Ananta Śeṣa, and Lakṣmīdevī are all trying to serve that same Supreme Personality. In fact, even after being engaged in His service, they hanker for more. The whole cosmic process of creation, maintenance, and annihilation is undertaken by that same Supreme Person's servants, yet the *sannyāsī* has no shame to call himself *prabhu*, or lord. When lost in deep sleep, he does not even know who he is, still he shamelessly thinks he is Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Godhead."

"The Vedic literature declares that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme father of the entire creation. One who serves and obeys the father is a good son. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.17) it states. "I am the father of this universe, the mother, the support, and the grandsire." Now listen to what the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa, Himself tells Arjuna about *sannyāsa* in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.1) "One who is unattached to the fruits of his work and acts strictly according to scriptural injunctions is called a *yogi* or *sannyāsī*, not he who lights no sanctified fire and performs no work." Further in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.29.49-50) it says "One should act only for the purpose of pleasing Lord Hari. One's education should be meant only to elevate him to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Because the Supreme Lord, Hari, is the Supersoul and guide of all living entities who have accepted material bodies, He is the supreme controller and cause of this material world."

"After hearing these scriptural evidences if you still insist on saying that Śaṅkarācārya is not of the same opinion, then I will quote something that he himself has said which indicates his desire to serve the Lord. He said, "O Lord, although *jīva* and Brahman are nondifferent qualitatively, I, a *jīva* soul, am always under Your control, and my existence depends entirely upon You and not vice-verse. There is no qualitative difference between the ocean and its waves, but still the

waves exist because of the ocean and not the other way around.”

“Therefore, the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, is the father, and this cosmic manifestation belongs to Him. He is the maintainer of both the material and spiritual realms. One who does not worship and serve the father is to be ostracized. This is the essence of Śaṅkarācārya's words. Without a sincere probe into the actual meaning of his words, what is the use of shaving one's head, because this will result in further distress. A *sannyāsī* should utter the name of Nārāyaṇa incessantly with loving devotion, but without this devotional attitude, there is no use becoming a renunciate.

“Hence I ask you why you embarked on this idea of becoming a *sannyāsī*. If you wanted to deliver the world by distributing the science of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, then what compunction drove You to shave off Your *śikhā* and discard Your *brāhmaṇa* thread? And if You argue that great spiritual stalwarts like Mādhavendra Purī also became mendicants, shaving their hair and so on, then I will reply that You are not yet of age to accept the renounced order. These stalwarts took *sannyāsa* only after three quarters of their lives had passed and after they had relished enough of their social life. Whereas You have just entered the youth of life. how can You justify takings *sannyāsa*? How can the renounced order help You advance in spiritual realization, considering the devotion You already possess, as I saw manifest in Your person? All these ecstatic symptoms of love of Godhead are rarely achieved even by the great yogis, then why did You opt to be misled by illusion?”

Lord Caitanya was very pleased to hear the science of devotional service as explained by Sārvabhauma. The Lord said, “O respected Sārvabhauma, please do not consider Me to be a *sannyāsī*. I have shaved My head and given up My *brāhmaṇa*'s thread leaving home and family only because the pangs of separation from My beloved Kṛṣṇa were becoming unbearable for Me. Therefore do not look upon Me as a *sannyāsī*, rather, I pray to you to be merciful so that I can develop attachment for Kṛṣṇa.”

The Supreme Lord had desired to put His own devotee into such illusion; how can this poor servitor know the truth? If the Lord Himself does not reveal Himself, then who is able to know Him as He is? Yet when His devotee speaks without proper knowledge, still this greatly pleases the Lord. The Lord is always engaged in performing many pastimes with His devotee servitors. In fact, He advents only for the pleasure of His devotees. The Lord is always reciprocating the devotional mellows with His devotees. As the devotee surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa, the Lord is willing to give that much of Himself. He is always favoring His devotees; He is *bhakta-vatsala*. Who can influence the Lord to act otherwise?

Lord Caitanya looked at Sārvabhauma and smiled, but Sārvabhauma was still very much under the spell of the Lord's illusory energy, and so he failed to fully comprehend His words. Sārvabhauma said, “Your status as a *sannyāsī* is certainly more elevated than mine. According to scriptural injunctions, You are worshipable and I am the worshiper. It is not logical that You should praise me. This might make me an offender.” The Lord replied, “Please do not deceive Me further in this manner. I have fully surrendered to you.” In this way the Supreme Lord, Gaurasundara, played with His servitors. Who can fathom the transcendental pastimes of the Lord?

The Lord again spoke to Sārvabhauma, “I have a great yearning to hear explanations of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* from you. All the doubts that assail Me can be allayed only by you.” Sārvabhauma replied, “I am well aware that You have deep and mature understanding of all the scriptures. What purport from the *Bhāgavatam* is unknown to You? Yet I realize that it is the nature of noble and cultured devotees to discuss amongst themselves about the science of devotional service. Now tell me please which portion of the *Bhāgavatam* seems to create confusion in You. I will try my best to explain it.” The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, smiled quietly and recited a verse from the *Bhāgavatam*, (1.7.10). “Those who are self-satisfied and unattracted by external material desires are on the other hand attracted to the loving service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose qualities are transcendental and whose activities are wonderful. Hari, the Personality of Godhead, is called Kṛṣṇa because He has such transcendently attractive features.”

By the Lord's grace, Sārvabhauma began his dissertation in the presence of Lord Gaurasundara who is the Lord of the goddess of learning and speech, mother Sarasvatī. He explained, “The real meaning of this verse is as follows, The essential truth is loving devotional service at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Those persons who are fully realized souls and are free from all hankerings and bindings surrender to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Such is the extraordinary potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities. Such liberated souls are constantly glorifying Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and qualities. And those who disregard the Lord's transcendental nature are doomed to annihilation.” Sārvabhauma was totally absorbed in the discourse he was giving. He offered thirteen different expositions on the same verse, and finally fell silent saying, “I am unable to go on further on this subject.”

The Lord smiled again and said, “Each one of your delineations is correct. Now I will also give My explanations. Please judge if they are accurate or not.” Struck with wonder, Sārvabhauma stared at the Lord. “Any further elucidation on this subject is beyond human power.” Yet the Lord's annotations were His original, and never before were they explained. Sārvabhauma, still in a state of shock, thought, “These words must have emanated from the mouth of the Supreme Lord Himself.”

After His explanations the Lord roared like thunder, and becoming absorbed in Himself He manifested His wonderful six-armed form. The Lord spoke, “Sārvabhauma, now what do you say. Do you think I am not qualified to be a *sannyāsī*? Do

you not consider Me a *sannyāsī* in your heart? I have come here only to see you. Many lifetimes you have spent in My service with great devotion, so I have come personally to present Myself before you. I have incarnated specifically to initiate the *sāṅkīrtana* movement. Know for certain that I am that Supreme Lord who is the cause of the entire cosmic manifestation. And you have always been My unalloyed devotee, so I have specially come to see you. I have come to protect My devotees, the saintly souls, and to destroy the demoniac forces. Allay your fears now and glorify Me.”

Sārvabhauma saw this most wonderful six-armed form more dazzling than a million suns and he fell swooning in uncontained ecstasy. The Supreme Lord, Gauracandra continued to roar loudly still exhibiting His six-armed form. The Lord was very pleased within with Sārvabhauma, and placing His hand on his head the Lord said, “Arise.” The divine touch on his head awakened Sārvabhauma yet the feeling of extreme bliss had mummified him, he could not speak. The Lord, an ocean of munificence, placed His lotus feet on Sārvabhauma's heart. Sārvabhauma, finding the most precious treasure within easy reach, wrapped his arms around the Lord's lotus feet in a tight clasp. With pure joy gushing in his heart, Sārvabhauma said, “Today I have captured the thief that steals my heart.” He broke down in tears crying like a child. He had found a treasure sought after even by the goddess of fortune, Rāmadēvi.

Words now poured out of Sārvabhauma's mouth, “O Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, You are the Lord of my life. Please look upon this worthless wretch with compassion. I am so sinful that I dared to try to teach You religious principles, not knowing that You are the transcendental cause of all causes. O Lord, who is there, even the most powerful mystic, who is not mesmerized by Your illusory potency? So what effort is required to put me into illusion? But now, my Lord, please grant me undeviating devotion at Your lotus feet.

All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the Lord of my heart! He has appeared from the womb of the divine mother, Śacī. He is the life and soul of everyone; and the protector of the *Vedas*, the *brāhmaṇas*, the pious and religious principles. He is the supreme autocratic Lord of all the planetary systems including the spiritual planets of *Vaikuṇṭha*. You possess an eternal form full of knowledge and bliss, and You are the invaluable crown which decorates the *sannyāsa* order.” The saintly Sārvabhauma, endowed with transcendental intelligence, glorified the Lord with choicest verses.

He continued eulogizing, “May my heart, like the bumble bee, be deeply attracted to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, who has manifested Himself in this present incarnation as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya only to rejuvenate the path of devotional service unto Himself, which due to the passage of time had become almost lost and neglected.”

Again he sang, “I take complete shelter of the Supreme Absolute Lord who is unrivaled, is the cause of all causes, and is the most munificent personality. He has advented as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya to teach humanity the science of renunciation, knowledge, and devotion to Himself.” A hundred verses, like sublime incantations, cascaded out of Sārvabhauma's lips as he held onto the Lord's lotus feet.

He continued, “My Lord, You have appeared simply to liberate the fallen souls, so kindly deliver this fallen wretch. I have been bound up by Your *māyā* potency by the chains of material education, wealth and high birth. How then can I know You as You really are? Thus I beg You for one favor, O Lord of the universe, that my mind and heart become totally engrossed in You, without deviating even for a minute. All Your activities are inconceivable and transcendental, hence they are incomprehensible to all unless you personally reveal them to us. You have accepted the transcendental wooden form of Lord Jagannātha and You are sitting in *Nilācala* mercifully enjoying the foodstuffs offered by Your devotees. Now You personally offer and also eat it Yourself, then distribute it to everyone as Your mercy. Then You cry in separation upon seeing Your own self, and become maddened with love attracted by Your own form. How can anyone then understand You at all. You alone know Your real self, and the others who are able to know You are those fortunate souls who have been graced by Your causeless mercy. Then who am I, an insignificant entity, to know You? Even Lord Śiva, Lord *Brahmā* and other demigods fall victim to Your powerful deluding potency, *māyā*.” In this way, Sārvabhauma offered many entreaties and praises, becoming suddenly eloquent by the Lord's blessing.

The Supreme Lord Gauracandra, still manifesting His six-armed form, smiled benignly upon Sārvabhauma and said, “Dear Sārvabhauma, you are My eternal associate, therefore you were able to see My mystic opulences. I have come to this place only to meet you, because you have worshiped Me for a long time. All your explanations on devotional service have greatly pleased Me. You have enunciated the absolute knowledge, and naturally so, for why should anything inferior come from your lips? The one hundred verses which you just composed in My glorification when heard or read by anyone will certainly help develop undeviating devotion unto Me. These verses will be famous as the Sārvabhauma-śataka, or Sārvabhauma's one hundred verses.

Whatever you have seen of Me now should remain a secret, not to be discussed amongst others. At least as long as I am present on this earth, I forbid you to reveal it to anyone. Nityānanda is very close to Me, in fact He is My second body. Serve His lotus feet with deep devotion. His character and identity are also extremely esoteric subjects, only when I disclose the truth can anyone know about them.” After confiding in Sārvabhauma, the Lord withdrew within Himself His mystic manifestation. Sārvabhauma became submerged in ecstasy with the truth about his Lord dawning upon him.

Anyone who hears these supramundane pastimes of the Lord and His qualities is immediately liberated from the entanglement of the material mesh, and finally attains Lord Caitanya's personal abode. These are very confidential

pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa's, hence one is assured the shelter of the Lord if one sincerely hears them. In this way Lord Caitanya liberated Sārvabhauma and continued His *saṅkīrtana* in Nīlācala. He performed nonstop *kīrtana* and dancing. Days and nights became submerged in a deluge of devotional nectar. The residents of Nīlācala were offered a rare transcendental treat of this *saṅkīrtana* mood, and they responded jubilantly singing, "Hari! Hari!"

The people saw Lord Gauracandra and said, "Here is our moving Lord Jagannātha." The Lord's looks mesmerized the people; they forgot whatever they were doing. Wherever He went, He was always greeted with resounding chanting of "Hari! Hari!" People threw themselves to the ground to bathe in the dust that bore the impression of His lotus feet. And only the most pious and fortunate could avail themselves of this transcendental opportunity. Their bliss is impossible to describe.

Who could resist such perfect beauty? The Lord's exquisite form stole everyone's heart. His eyes were always decorated with cascades of tears of loving separation and bliss, His lips forever vibrating the Hare Kṛṣṇa name. His golden body embellished with sandalwood paste and flower garlands moved with a agile gait that makes the movements of a mad elephant look awkward. Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Lord, although He walked about in the streets was always deeply saturated in the sublime nectar of love of Godhead and was oblivious to this world.

One day Śrī Paramānanda Purī returned after a long tour of all the holy places of pilgrimage. Lord Caitanya saw him approaching from a distance and got up hastily with great deference. The Supreme Lord Gauracandra was extremely happy to see His devotee, and lifting His hands in the air, He began to dance. Relishing this delectable moment of meeting His devotee after a long period of separation, He exclaimed, "Hari! Hari! My eyes have seen Śrī Paramānanda Purī! How fortunate is My birth; how blessed is My vision! In all respects My religious practices have now become fruitful. Today My acceptance of the *sannyāsa* order has become a success; Śrīpāda Mādhavendra Purī has appeared before Me " He rushed to embrace His beloved devotee, and holding Paramānanda Purī to His bosom, the Lord bathed him with tears of divine ecstasy.

Paramānanda Purī, looking at his dear Lord's beautiful moonlike face, came into a state of indescribable bliss, benumbing him, making him forget himself. After awhile they offered obeisances to each other. Indeed, Paramānanda Purī is the object of Lord Caitanya's love. The Lord was pleased to find back His eternal servitor, and kept him beside Him as His associate. Paramānanda Purī, having again found his dear Lord, served His lotus feet with increasing ecstasy. Śrī Paramānanda Purī is a very close and dear disciple of Śrīpāda Mādhavendra Purī, and a devotee who relishes the different loving devotional mellows.

A few days later, Svarūpa Dāmodara came and joined them. Svarūpa Dāmodara was so intimate with Lord Gaurasundara that they would spend many days and nights always in close spiritual intimacy. Dāmodara is also a very versatile musician. His singing invariably inspired Lord Caitanya to dance. In fact, this final portion of this book will deal a lot with the activities of Paramānanda Purī and Svarūpa Dāmodara.

Gradually all the associates and servitors of the Lord began to come to Nīlācala. Those associates who were born in Utkala or modern Orissa also came one by one to join the Lord. Elevated souls like Pradyumna Miśra, who was always absorbed in love of God, and Paramānanda and Rāmānanda came and joined the others. Dāmodara Paṇḍita and Śrī Śankara Paṇḍita came shortly after. Pradyumna Brahmācārī also came. He was a pure servant of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva. It is described that Lord Nṛsiṃha manifested Himself in his body and that while he performed *kīrtana* he looked like Lord Nṛsiṃha as a *sannyāsi*. Bhagavān Ācārya, who, like a lotus, could remain unpolluted even in the midst of mundane discussions and association, also came to meet the Lord.

Once they saw their beloved Lord, the devotees became immediately free from all distress and joined their Lord in singing and dancing. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, now a *sannyāsi*, danced with His associates in divine ecstasy. Lord Nityānanda was always submerged in the loving mellows of Lord Caitanya, and this made Him restless and caused Him to act according to His own sweet will. Once He rushed toward the Deity of Lord Jagannātha wanting to embrace Him. Even the temple sentries could not keep Him in check. Then one day He jumped up on the golden altar and entwined His arms around the Deity of Lord Balarāma. The sentry on duty, seeing this, came rushing at Him to bring Him down from the altar. But as soon as his hand tried to arrest Nityānanda, he went flying at least seven paces. Unperturbed, Nityānanda Prabhu lifted the flower garland from around Lord Balarāma's neck and slipped it on His own neck. He got down and walked away majestically like the king of the elephants.

The sentry, still bewildered, quickly got up. He thought, "This *sannyāsi* is certainly endowed with superhuman powers, because no one can get away unpunished after touching Lord Balarāma. I have the strength to keep a mad elephant in check, and a human being cannot escape my grip. I definitely had Him in a strong grip, and yet the very next moment I found myself as if blown away like dry grass." The next time he saw Lord Nityānanda, he approached Him with utmost humility. Lord Nityānanda's character is like that of an innocent child. He immediately forgave him and embraced him.

A few days later, Lord Gauracandra, the husband of Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune, went to live near the ocean. The beach and surrounding area were pleasant and idyllic. This was pleasing to the Lord. The moon had set the night aglow with her soft aura, the southern breeze caressed the Lord as He sat on the seashore. His body and beatific face were

exquisitely decorated with sandalwood paste. He was continuously chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇamahā-mantra. The flower garland hanging loosely around His neck covered a large portion of His chest. He was a picture of perfect beauty. The devotees sitting around Him relished His every movement. The waves were like swiftly approaching white lines foaming as they crested one after another. The Lord smiled, looking at the endless swells of churning water. The benedictions Gaṅgādevī and Yamunādevī had already received from the Supreme Lord were now being showered upon the ocean.

The Lord spent the whole night performing *kīrtana* in divine bliss, He was immersed in the nectarean ocean of His own loving mellows, and danced vigorously, drowning His devotees in the flood of ecstasy. The different ecstatic symptoms like horripilation, crying, shivering, roaring and perspiring sometimes came in waves one after the other, and at other times all at once. All the different devotional ecstasies bloomed like the various seasonal flowers on the Lord's body. This was only possible because of the Lord's inconceivable potency. The devotees gathered around the Lord as He danced, saturated in the mood of a Vaiṣṇava. The Lord felt happy in the company of His devotees, and forgot the pangs of loving separation.

The Supreme Lord utilizes but a small fraction from His resources of unlimited potency to carry out His pastimes, and even that is impossible for any other person to imitate. The Vedic scriptures in describing the Lord unequivocally state that no task is too difficult for the Lord to do. The ecstatic devotional symptoms of love of Godhead exhibited by Lord Caitanya cannot be repeated by anyone. There is no end in describing Lord Caitanya's glories. Only those who are graced with Lord Caitanya's grace are able to comprehend Him with all His potencies. Therefore all the knots of material entanglement can be easily severed by taking full shelter of the Supreme Lord. That Supreme Personality who is constantly meditated on by the most perfected beings like Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā and so on is now dancing freely with His devotees lost in the currents of His own devotional ecstasy. I fall at the feet of those devotees who performed *saṅkīrtana* with the Lord.

All night *kīrtanas* on the seashore became more frequent, and the Lord participated with ecstatic dancing. It was around this time that Gadādhara Paṇḍita began to spend practically all his time with the Lord. They ate together, slept together, went on walks together. Gadādhara Paṇḍita served Lord Caitanya continuously. When he read aloud to the Lord from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, the Lord entered a state of blissful trance. Gadādhara Paṇḍita's voice always made Him happy, and he would accompany the Lord to visit different Vaiṣṇavas.

One day the Lord went to Śrī Paramānanda Purī's *maṭha* and sat close to him. Śrī Paramānanda Purī is very dear to the Lord, just as Arjuna was very dear to Kṛṣṇa. They became totally absorbed in discussing Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes very confidentially. They spent a long time together. There was a well in that *maṭha*, and the water was not clean and drinkable. Lord Caitanya, as the Supersoul knew all the details regarding this well. So He inquired from Purī Gosvāmī, "Please tell Me how you find the well water." Purī Gosvāmī replied, "This is a very unfortunate well; its water is very muddy." The Lord showed immediate concern, lamenting over this inconvenience to Purī Gosvāmī. He said, "It seems that Lord Jagannātha is being very miserly. Actually, whoever touches the water of this well will be cleansed of all sins. Therefore, by Lord Jagannātha's mystic potency, the waters turned muddy so no one can drink or touch it."

The Lord stood up, and lifting His hands in the air He began to speak, "O Lord Jagannātha, I beg this benediction from You that mother Ganges may enter this well. Please instruct Gaṅgādevī, now flowing in the nether regions, to appear in this well." The devotees became extremely jubilant chanting "Hari! Hari!" The Lord returned home that night with all His devotees. While the devotees slept, Gaṅgādevī, feeling honored to carry out the Lord's order, appeared in that well. In the morning everyone saw the miracle. The well water had turned crystal clear. The devotees marveled and chanted the Lord's holy name, and Śrī Purī Gosvāmī became almost unconscious with joy.

The devotees understood that the Ganges had entered the well. When Mahāprabhu heard the news, He came and upon seeing the fresh clean water became very content. He spoke to the devotees saying, "Listen all devotees, whoever drinks this water or bathes in it I say truly that he will experience unalloyed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa." The devotees responded jubilantly to the Lord's words. The Lord then bathed in and drank the water from the well with great exhilaration. He said, "I remain in this world only because I am bound by Śrī Purī Gosvāmī's love. I am his property. If he wants to sell Me, then he can do so. Anyone who simply sees Purī Gosvāmī becomes the receptacle of Lord Kṛṣṇa's love." Describing the extraordinary qualities of Śrī Purī Gosvāmī, and blessing the well, the Lord left for His residence.

The Supreme Lord takes pleasure in lauding the transcendental qualities of His devotees. Who is so mean and despicable that he will not worship such a Supreme Lord? The Lord always advents to protect His devotees and to perform wonderful pastimes in their association. He even does things for His devotees which in general opinion are considered wrong, as He did when Lord Rāma killed Vālī in support of Sugrīva, His devotee. The Lord gladly serves His servitors, thus Lord Caitanya won the hearts of His devotees.

The Lord liked to perform *saṅkīrtana* on the ocean shores. He built His residence near the beach, and stayed swimming in the ocean of devotional bliss. The ocean experienced indescribable ecstasy having the Lord's close association, hence Rāma, Lakṣmīdevī, was born out of the ocean. Whatever sins the residents of Nīlācala may commit become completely cleansed simply by bathing in the ocean. Gaṅgādevī, calculating the value of this golden opportunity, swiftly flowed to merge into the ocean. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya's presence blessed the ocean and purified its waters.

When Lord Caitanya had come to Nilācala, King Pratapārudra was away waging war against the southern kingdom of Vijayanagara. Meanwhile, Lord Caitanya, after a long sojourn in Nilācala went back to Bengal. The Lord felt especially merciful towards Gaṅgādevī, so He came to Bengal.

Śrī Vidyā-vācaspati was Sārvabhauma's brother. He was gentle, charitable, and very saintly. One day Lord Caitanya arrived at his residence with all His servitors without prior notification. Śrī Vidyā-vācaspati, seeing that his guest was none other than the Lord of Vaiṣṇava, Lord Gaurasundara, fell like a rod at His lotus feet. The *brāhmaṇa* host was so confused with extreme joy that he did not know what was the proper thing to do next. The Lord, also happy to see the saintly *brāhmaṇa*, embraced him and said, "I have a request. My heart is bent on going to Mathurā, Vṛndāvana. I want to spend a few days here to bathe in the Ganges. But please find Me a quiet bathing spot where I will not be disturbed by crowds. Thereafter, I want you to help Me start My journey to Vraja. If you want Me to remain here, then you must make these arrangements."

Śrī Vidyā-vācaspati attentively heard everything the Lord said. He replied with great humility, "O how fortunate now is my entire family and race simply by receiving the dust from Your lotus feet by Your coming to my house. My house and everything belong to You my Lord. Kindly remain here comfortably. I will see that no one knows You are here." The Lord was content to hear his humble and sincere words, so He stayed there for a few days. But how can one hide the sun? So also the Lord's arrival was immediately known. Word spread like wildfire everywhere that Lord Caitanya, the shining jewel of the *sannyāsa* order was residing in Śrī Vidyā-vācaspati's house. The people experienced great exhilaration; they felt that they were in Vaiṣṇava even though they were in their earthly bodies. They became jubilant and chanted "Hari! Hari!" forgetting their sons, wives, wealth, home and everything else.

People became very excited and began to talk animatedly amongst themselves saying, "Let us go and be blessed by the sight of His lotus feet." They made preparations to go to see the Lord and so almost forgot all etiquette in their enthusiasm. A milling crowd moved toward Vidyā-vācaspati's house, all loudly chanting "Hari! Hari!" All the regular paths and roads were full. People went off in all directions, stamping on plants and bushes. I shall continue to describe this wonderful phenomenon of Lord Caitanya's extraordinary influence by which He will liberate all living entities. Please listen attentively.

People came unchecked, undeterred by thorny bushes they happily went to see the Lord. Areas which were woody and wild were cleared up by the moving mass of people and made into makeshift pathways. All of them had one word on their tongues—the holy names of God. People were expectant, and some talked amongst themselves. One said, "I will fall at His feet begging Him to give me just this benediction that all my material entanglements be severed." Another said, "If I could just see Him once with these eyes, then I consider I have received everything obtainable, then why should I ask anything more from Him?" Yet another said, "I was hopelessly ignorant about His real position and potencies, therefore for so long I have only criticized Him in a very offensive manner. Now I will clasp His lotus feet to my heart and beg Him to tell me how I can get rid of all my offenses." A fatherly man said, "My son is a compulsive gambler, and so I will beg the Lord to make him stop." Someone else said, "The only boon I want is that I may always remain fixed at His lotus feet with my body, mind and words and never leave that shelter." Someone else said, "What a wonderful opportunity, I only pray that I may never forget my dear Lord Gaurasundara." Talking in this manner, they kept moving in a massive column, all of them feeling indescribable bliss.

The milling masses converged on the ferry port, all wanting to be the first to cross the river. The boatmen were put into extreme anxiety as they saw the uncontrollable crowd piling into the larger boats. Hundreds tried to pack into one boat. Finally the boats began to cave in under the enormous weight. The people then handed over their clothes to the boatmen as some compensation for their loss, and with unconstrained joy continued their endeavors to cross over. They became innovative in the absence of boats, and used any available means. Some tied upturned earthen water pots around their chests to float across. Others made rafts out of banana tree trunks and drifted across. The swimmers had great fun swimming in the currents. The whole atmosphere reverberated with such tumultuous sounds of chanting "Hari! Hari!" that it replicated and pierced the outer covering of the material cosmos.

Vidyā-vācaspati came running in search of large boats and collected many. But the impatient crowd had not the time to wait; they just crossed over anyhow. Only the Supreme Personality can attract the minds of people in the way Lord Caitanya was now doing. The people, having passed over the Ganges, came directly to Vidyā-vācaspati and fell at his feet. They said, "You are very saintly and fortunate because the Supreme Lord Caitanya is a guest in your house. Your good luck cannot be described, so now you kindly save us. We are the most sinful persons, fallen into the dark well of material existence. Kindly lead us and show us His lotus feet so that our wretched and bad lives may become successful."

Śrī Vidyā-vācaspati was extremely moved to see the sincerity of the people, and he began to weep with joy. Thousands of people were gathered there and Śrī Vācaspati led them all to his residence. The only words vibrated in the atmosphere were the chanting of the Lord's name. Lord Gaurasundara is an ocean of compassion, and He had incarnated specifically to liberate all living entities. When He heard the tumultuous chanting of the holy names of God, He came out of the house to bless the huge mass of fortunate souls and increase their pleasure.

An enchanting figure appeared before them whose beauty was unparalleled. His effulgent face was always decorated with a gentle smile, and His eyes were effusive with transcendental joy. His golden form was ornamented with sandalwood paste tilaka markings, and a flower garland hung loosely on His chest. With a gait as graceful as an elephant He walked and raised His long exquisite knee-length arms and chanted "Hari! Hari!" with a sound which resembled a thunderbolt.

When the people saw Lord Gaurasundara they jumped and danced in great exultation chanting loudly and then fell to the ground like sticks offering obeisances. Getting up like the ocean waves, they raised their arms to the sky and prayed, "O Lord, please save us sinners." The Lord smiled benevolently and blessed them saying, "May you develop love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Chant Kṛṣṇa's name, worship Him and hear about His pastimes. Make Lord Kṛṣṇa the greatest treasure of your lives."

The people were happy beyond words to receive such benedictions. They repeatedly praised the Lord and pleaded, "Your advent in this world is a secret. You appeared in the womb of mother Śacī in Navadvīpa only to liberate the whole universe. But we are so sinful that we could not recognize You and remained in the deep dark well of ignorance spoiling our human lives. You are an ocean of mercy. O Lord, the benefactor of all living entities, benedict us that we may never forget You." All this was happening by the potency of Lord Gauracandra, that these ordinary people were speaking eloquently.

The whole village began to become excessively crowded. There was no empty space. People climbed to treetops and roofs. Their eagerness to see Him increased with every passing moment. The extraordinary phenomenon was that although the trees and roofs were overcrowded, no houses collapsed or trees fell crashing down. This all happened by the transcendental potency of the Lord. Endlessly their eyes remained fixed on His perfect and beautiful face. Once having seen Him, they had not the desire to return home. They chanted jubilantly and drank in the captivating beauty of the Lord with their immovable glances.

The Supreme Lord Gaurasundara is the master of all mystic potencies, hence He could leave Śrī Vidyā-vācaspati's residence without his knowledge and went to Kuliā village. The people also did not see Him leave. Only Nityānanda and a few other associates accompanied Him. Meanwhile, Śrī Vācaspati began to frantically look everywhere for the Lord. Not finding Him anywhere, he came to the conclusion that the Lord must have left. He was grief-stricken. Lifting his face to the heavens, he began to weep bitterly. The people outside, noticing the Lord's absence, were convinced, "The Lord must have gone inside to avoid this commotion." Thus the entire mass of thousands began to chant loudly echoing in the vaults of all the three worlds.

Śrī Vidyā-vācaspati's mind was still paralysed with grief. He came out amongst the thronging mass and broke the sad news of the Lord's departure to them. He said, "I could not even know at what time in the night He left and where He went. The crest jewel of the *sannyāsa* order, our beloved Lord, has deluded us, a most sinful lot, and gone. My dear brothers, I say truthfully I do not know His destination." Śrī Vācaspati tried with many words to convince them of the truth, but he could not invoke their trust in him. They continued to think that the Lord was hiding in seclusion to avoid the maddening crowd, and so they waited in expectation.

People came up to Śrī Vācaspati and requested him, "Please take me inside to see the Lord. I promise you I am alone." They started catching his feet and entreating him, "We want to see Him just once with these eyes, then we can return home happily. Please place this prayer before the Lord. So that sinners like us may also see Him, He will not refuse you." Vācaspati patiently tried to tell them the truth, but failed to convince them of his sincerity. As time went by, people realized that the Lord was not coming, and they became impatient and frustrated. They spoke cutting words to Vācaspati.

Someone said, "Vācaspati has hidden that rarest gem amongst *sannyāsīs*, our Lord Caitanya, and then he is coming and telling us lies. Why should he feel sorry if we are liberated? What joy is there in saving oneself alone?" Another person complained, "A good person's nature is that he is satisfied when others are liberated. An ordinary soul simply thinks selfishly of his own betterment, but a saintly soul sees first to the salvation of others even before he considers himself." Yet another person said, "Even in ordinary social dealings, if one buys sweets and instead of sharing them with others just eats them himself, it is considered an offense." Again someone said, "This *brāhmaṇa* is somewhat crooked in his behavior, he is not inclined to help others." On one hand Vācaspati was greatly afflicted by the Lord's departure, and now such blame being hurled at him at random caused him extreme distress. He had no means of relief from this dilemma.

At this very moment, a *brāhmaṇa* came and spoke softly into Vācaspati's ear, "Lord Caitanya has gone to Kuliā village. Now do what you want to immediately with this information." The clouds of gloom cleared away, and Vācaspati was happy again. He embraced the *brāhmaṇa* warmly. Vācaspati rushed out to the crowd and told them the news. He said, "All of you have been falsely blaming me not knowing the actual facts, thinking I have hidden the Lord in my house. I just received the information from a *brāhmaṇa* that the Lord is in Kuliā village. Let us go and find out if this information is correct. If it is true then you must agree that I am an honest upright *brāhmaṇa*."

The people responded with appreciation chanting "Hari! Hari!" and left together right then for Kuliā with bubbling joy in their hearts. The word spread speedily that the most exalted of *sannyāsīs*, Lord Caitanya, was in Kuliā. Meanwhile, the crowd had multiplied itself several times over. It seemed that Kuliā had much more magnetism than Vācaspati's village.

The crowd had swelled to millions. Only Ananta Śeṣa could describe this extraordinary phenomenon. No one could say from where this endless stream of people had magically appeared. It was difficult to tabulate the number of boats that capsized yet there was no loss of life and everyone could cross the Ganges. The miraculous happening was that each time a boat was on the verge of drowning, land appeared below and prevented the calamity. All this was happening only by Lord Caitanya's desire. Whoever sings the glories of such a Supreme Personality can easily cross over this material ocean as if it were as small as the hoofprint of a calf. And it is not surprising that those who were eager to see the Lord could cross Gaṅgādevī without untoward incidents.

Countless thousands crossed the river on their own, drowning in an ocean of joy. Once on the other side, they embraced each other chanting loudly the Lord's holy name. It was a big day for making money; no one could calculate how much the boatmen earned. Makeshift markets selling a variety of wares suddenly appeared everywhere and did bustling business. Gradually every space was being filled up, and the whole town became an ocean of fluid mass of people. Far above the humdrum of activities was the loud and clear sound of chanting God's name—it was the all-pervasive word that was comprehensible. Yet in spite of this tumult, the Lord remained in seclusion.

When Śrī Vidyā-vācaspati arrived in Kuliā, he began searching for the Lord. But the Lord had refused to show himself in public, hence it became difficult to locate His whereabouts. After a frantic search, Śrī Vācaspati discovered the Lord. As soon as he saw the Lord, he fell to the ground like a stick and offered Him obeisances. Vācaspati began reciting verses repeatedly describing the Lord's present incarnation and pastimes. He prayed, "O Lord, You have appeared as Caitanya Mahāprabhu just to liberate the whole universe. You have already liberated those who have fallen into this deep dark well of material existence. Your mercy is as vast as the unlimited ocean, so kindly let this mercy touch my heart eternally. Seeing the entire creation steeped in mundane activities, You have showered Your causeless mercy on them, giving them love of Godhead. May You, the most magnanimous Supreme Personality, always reside in the core of my heart."

Glorifying Lord Gaurasundara in this manner, he fell again at His feet. I offer my humble respects at the feet of Viśārada, the father of the illustrious Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and Vidyā-vācaspati. Vācaspati looked up at his dear Lord, and exhilarated by the shower of His merciful glances, he began to speak again. He stood up and with folded hands he prayed, "O merciful Lord, I have one prayer. You are the supreme autocrat, acting according to Your own sweet will, fully independent of anything. Others can know Your mind only as much as You reveal it to them. You are not bound by rules and regulations imposed by anyone. All the people outside do not understand this simple truth about You, and so in their minds they are angry and blame me saying I have hidden You inside my house. They are not aware of the actual facts and so they are angry at me. Therefore, my Lord, kindly step outside for a moment and show Yourself, then they will once again accept me a truthful person, a *brāhmaṇa* that I am."

The Lord smiled hearing his words, and was immediately ready to comply with the *brāhmaṇa*'s request. As soon as the Lord stepped outside, the people became drowned in an ocean of bliss. People everywhere threw themselves to the ground offering their obeisances. Each according to his knowledge and capacity began reciting verses eulogizing the Lord. Their joy gradually increased, and hundreds of *kīrtana* groups sprouted up from everywhere and began to sing sweetly. The holy name of Kṛṣṇa resounded with melodious clarity and filled and vibrated in the concave vaults of the earth. This could happen only by the extraordinary potency of Lord Caitanya.

The Supreme Lord, now dressed as a *sannyāsī*, initiated the congregational chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. That name is so sublime that it gives one the taste of divine nectar. The higher planets like Brahmaloka and Śivaloka are free from all distress simply by experiencing a mere fraction of that nectar. The great mystic yogis and sages are mad after a drop of that nectar. Anyone who out of gross illusion refutes the existence of such a Supreme Personality, who is endowed with all potencies and opulences, loses all good qualities and status in society and is shunned by everyone. Therefore simply worship the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya. Ignorance is destroyed by hearing His pastimes. By remembering Him and His transcendental activities all sins are extirpated.

The Lord became ecstatic seeing *kīrtana* being held everywhere. Tears cascaded down His cheeks as if Gaṅgādevī had manifested in His eyes and began to flow freely everywhere. The Lord became immediately absorbed in the congregational chanting; everything else fading out into insignificance. Whichever *kīrtana* group appeared in front, the Lord joined with them in dancing with sublime joy. This multiplied the enthusiasm and bliss of that group, and they considered themselves most fortunate to be graced by the Lord in this way. Lord Nityānanda, who is the foremost amongst the devotees who are mad with love for God, sometimes caught Lord Caitanya and made Him dance. Sometimes He danced along with the Lord, lost in the ecstasy of spiritual love.

Lord Caitanya now danced with full abandon, roaring loudly with ecstasy. Such is the potency of this sound that all despondency is dissipated on hearing it. Lord Śiva becomes so intoxicated when he dances meditating on Lord Gaurāṅga that he is not even aware of his nakedness. Now this same Supreme Lord, Gaurāṅga, is dancing in the view of mortals. The whole cosmic manifestation is created by His potency, and all the demigods are always eager to have the direct sight of the Lord. His advent has liberated the entire universe, and has now sent the whole mass of people into waves of divine bliss. Yet the Lord was unaware of the crowd that swelled and poured in from all directions to see Him. He was totally absorbed in love of Godhead and danced ecstatically.

Everyone in the town of Kuliā was liberated by the Lord's presence. From the most elevated soul to the most fallen soul, all received the Lord's mercy. And whosoever hears this narration will also become free from the shackles of karmic reactions. The compassionate Lord stayed outside long enough for everyone to see Him and bring up their consciousness to a state of intense joy. He then went inside accompanied by His associates and sat down feeling very much their presence. Just then a *brāhmaṇa* came and clasped the Lord's feet tightly. He said, "O Lord, I have one prayer. If You can spare a little time, I may tell You. Without understanding the essence of the devotional path, I have committed a grievous offense by criticizing a Vaiṣṇava. I would repeatedly shout and taunt, 'Who is a Vaiṣṇava in Kali-yuga, and what is *kīrtana*?' In this way I have condemned myself. Now when I remember these incidents, my mind begins to burn up. O Lord, You have the potency to liberate anyone, so kindly tell me how I can mitigate my sins."

Lord Caitanya smiled benignly on hearing the *brāhmaṇa*'s straightforward and honest confession. He said, "Please listen, O *brāhmaṇa*, if one who has taken poison is administered nectar or the drink of immortality, then gradually the effects of poison weaken and the body becomes immortal. So now I will reply to your question and tell you how this nectar works. All the criticisms you made although unwittingly are equivalent to having drunk poison. So now you must drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's name and pastimes with that same mouth. Use the tongue that offended Vaiṣṇavas from now on to glorify them. Above all other activities, constantly glorify the Vaiṣṇavas through songs, poems or any other way. The ambrosia of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is transcendently blissful, and can factually dissolve all poisonous effects of Vaiṣṇava criticism. I am telling you truly that this is the method of purification for one who criticizes a Vaiṣṇava unknowingly. If one give up such malpractices and offensive behavior and constantly glorifies the Supreme Lord and His unalloyed devotees, then one can totally destroy all sins. Otherwise, millions of pious activities and penances cannot counteract the offenses committed against a Vaiṣṇava. So go now and practice glorifying the devotees of the Lord, and you will become free from all sins."

The devotees became very happy when they heard these wonderful instructions and they responded by chanting, "Hari! Hari!" The Lord nicely explained the method of exoneration from the offense of Vaiṣṇava criticism. One who disregards these instructions of Lord Caitanya and criticizes a saintly person must drown in the ocean of grief. And those who accept the instructions of Lord Caitanya as the Vedic truth can smilingly cross the ocean of nescience.

The next visitor was Devānanda Paṇḍita. When Lord Caitanya was still in family life in Navadvīpa, where He performed many transcendental pastimes, Devānanda Paṇḍita had not the desire then to come and meet the Lord. He did not possess sufficient faith in the Lord so he avoided coming in contact with Him. Yet although having the required piety to see Him again, why did he not come across the Lord earlier? All such arrangements are actually in Kṛṣṇa's hands. So when Lord Caitanya had accepted the *sannyāsa* order and left home, Devānanda Paṇḍita had the good fortune to closely associate with Vakreśvara Paṇḍita.

Vakreśvara Paṇḍita was very dear to Lord Caitanya. He was such an elevated soul that he could purify the entire universe. He was always totally absorbed in relishing devotional mellows with Lord Kṛṣṇa. When he danced, both the demigods and the demons were captivated. In fact, as soon as he would begin to dance, by Lord Caitanya's mercy all the ecstatic symptoms like crying, shivering, perspiring, laughing, horripilation, roaring, and swooning in divine bliss would all appear on his person. It is impossible to describe all the devotional symptoms in Vakreśvara Paṇḍita. By some providential arrangement Vakreśvara Paṇḍita came to stay in Devānanda Paṇḍita's house, attracted by his devotional qualities.

Devānanda Paṇḍita was very pleased and impressed with Vakreśvara Paṇḍita's radiant appearance and his unalloyed devotion to the Supreme Lord. He began to serve Vakreśvara Paṇḍita with sincere devotion. When Vakreśvara Paṇḍita would dance, he would walk around him with a cane keeping the crowd away from disturbing him. And when on occasion Vakreśvara would fall swooning in ecstasy Devānanda Paṇḍita rushed to catch him in his arms. He would take the dust from Vakreśvara's body and feet and smear it all over his own body with much humility and devotion. In this way, serving him and seeing his elevated devotional characteristics, there developed a strong faith in Devānanda Paṇḍita for Lord Caitanya.

From this incident one can understand the words from the *Purāṇas* where it states that devotion to the Supreme Lord is developed only through serving the pure devotees of the Lord. Devānanda Paṇḍita was a very pious and noble person. From his childhood he was studying the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. He was calm and peaceful, in control of his senses, unattached to material things, and had so many other good qualities. In spite of these qualities he could not develop attraction to Lord Caitanya's lotus feet. But by Vakreśvara's grace, his perverted intelligence became rectified. Therefore we find in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* that service to a pure devotee is even higher than service to the Supreme Lord Himself.

In the *Varāha Purāṇa* it is stated,
siddhir bhavati vā neti / samsāyo 'cyuta sevinām
nihsamsāyas tu tad bhakta / paricaryaratātmanām

"There may exist some doubt about the success in attaining perfection by serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but there is absolutely no doubt whatever in achieving perfection by serving the Supreme Lord's pure devotee."

Therefore it is clear that to gain the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa one must serve His unalloyed and surrendered devotee. Devānanda Paṇḍita developed the right devotional attachment for Lord Gaurāṅga due to his intimate association with

Vakreśvara Paṇḍita. Now he lay supine, hugging the Lord's lotus feet in great awe and humility. The Lord was very pleased to see Devānanda Paṇḍita's mood of devotion and humility. He reached out to him and made him sit. In this way He forgave all his previous offenses and blessed him.

The Lord said, "Because you have served Vakreśvara Paṇḍita so well, I am able to see you here today. Vakreśvara is a manifestation and embodiment of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental potency, hence whosoever serves him well immediately attains the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa's favorite residence is the heart of Vakreśvara Paṇḍita. When Vakreśvara dances, Kṛṣṇa Himself is induced to dance. Vakreśvara Paṇḍita's presence converts any place into a place of holy pilgrimage—into the spiritual abode of Kṛṣṇa, Vaikuṇṭha."

The *brāhmaṇa*, Devānanda Paṇḍita, folded his hands and began to pray to the Lord, "O Lord, out of Your infinite compassion You have appeared in Navadvīpa solely for the purpose of delivering the entire humanity. I am so sinful that at that time due to my bad karma I could not even see You, nor could I experience the divine bliss of Your association. Your nature is to shower benedictions on every living soul, hence I pray that I may develop attachment to Your lotus feet. I have one special favor to ask of You; I need Your divine guidance. I am completely without knowledge, yet I am trying to teach from a book full of knowledge. The *Bhāgavatam* is meant to be taught only by realized souls. O Lord, please instruct me what to teach and how to explain the *Bhāgavatam*."

The Lord began to explain the essence of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, "Listen, O learned *brāhmaṇa*, Interpret the *Bhāgavatam* only in the light of bhakti or devotion. Do not enter any other process. The beginning, middle and end—throughout the *Bhāgavatam* establishes that devotional service to the Supreme Lord is eternal, absolute and infallible. Devotional service is the only reality, the absolute truth. Even at the time of total dissolution of this cosmic creation when everything else is annihilated, only this reality remains unaffected, perfect. The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa does not give devotional service to everyone. He easily offers liberation to an aspirant while hiding the science of unalloyed devotion. Only through His grace does He elevate someone to the path of bhakti.

The philosophical conclusions on the path of bhakti available in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* have no parallel in any other scripture. Just as all the incarnations of the Lord, like Matsya, Kūrma and so on are self-manifest and appear and disappear at will similarly, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is not a text composed by ordinary mortals. It is transcendental, hence it also appears and disappears by God's will. The *Bhāgavatam* having disappeared has once again appeared on the tongue of Śrīla Vedavyāsa by the causeless mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The esoteric truth about the Supreme Lord is inconceivable as is the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. This is the verdict of all the scriptures.

If one claims to know and understand the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, then he is certainly ignorant about its real conclusions. On the other hand, if one is submissive and admits his lack of understanding, then the essence of the *Bhāgavatam* will indeed be revealed to him. The *Bhāgavatam* is saturated with divine love of Godhead. It is in fact the body of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It contains the confidential pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Vedavyāsa, after having compiled the many different *Purāṇas* and *Vedas* was still feeling a vacuum in himself, but when he finally spoke the *Bhāgavatam*, he became completely satisfied in his heart. But sometimes someone might even find himself in a dilemma by reading this great scripture, so be very careful.

The only way you must explain the entire *Bhāgavatam* is through bhakti. In this way you can clear away your offenses and you will experience sublime bliss in your heart. All scriptures conclude that devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate destination. Especially the *Bhāgavatam* is imbued with the supramundane exchanges of mellows with Kṛṣṇa. Now return and study the *Bhāgavatam* well and explain to everyone that devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is the highest ambrosia."

Devānanda Paṇḍita fell flat on the ground at the Lord's lotus feet thinking himself the most fortunate soul. Surrendering his body, mind and words to the Lord, and offering repeated obeisances, he returned to his home. Lord Gaurasundara instructed everyone about the actual position of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. The *Bhāgavatam* teaches nothing but bhakti, so if one does not explain the path of devotional service while teaching the *Bhāgavatam*, then he uselessly wastes energy and words and he also earns the fruits of offenses.

One who understands that the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is a treatise dedicated fully to the science of devotional service becomes a recipient of Lord Kṛṣṇa's special grace. The presence of the *Bhāgavatam* in any house makes the house sanctified and free from all inauspiciousness. Worshiping the *Bhāgavatam* is equivalent to worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa. Hearing and reading the *Bhāgavatam* is unalloyed devotional service. There are two meanings of the word *Bhāgavata*—one is the book *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and the other is the person *Bhāgavata* who is the personification of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. By daily worshiping, studying and hearing the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, one is actually elevated to become a person *Bhāgavata*.

On the other hand, if *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is read by a sinful person without the proper attitude, then due to lack of proper understanding he will criticize Lord Nityānanda. Lord Nityānanda is the embodiment of the essence and divine mellows of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. One who understands this is truly an intelligent and fortunate soul. Lord Nityānanda is continuously explaining the purports of the *Bhāgavatam* with His thousand mouths even now. Although Lord Nityānanda is unlimited, He is not able to fully complete His dissertation on the *Bhāgavatam*. Such an unlimited

scripture is *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. It is transcendental and it contains the conclusion of the path of bhakti.

The Lord taught everyone the real essence of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* using His discussion with Devānanda Paṇḍita as a means. And those who came with spiritual questions, the Lord answered them all to their full satisfaction. By coming to Kuliā, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya blessed everyone. Everyone there was full satiated by looking at the Lord. Their vision remained glued on the Lord. This way the Lord fulfilled everyone's desire and dissolved all their distress and despondency. One who hears these pastimes with pleasure will certainly associate with the Lord directly. A person may be born in family or caste—all is good if he hears about the transcendental pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 4

All glories to Lord Gauracandra, who is an ocean of mercy and whose lotus feet are all auspicious! I offer my obeisances to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the pride of the *sannyāsa* order, and His devotees.

After delivering everyone in Kuliā, the Lord proceeded towards Mathurā accompanied by His associates. He traveled along the banks of Gaṅgādevī, often drinking her waters or bathing in them, thus fulfilling her long-standing wishes. On the banks of the Ganges and near to Gauḍa lay Rāmakeli, a township with a large community of *brāhmaṇas*. Here the Lord remained incognito for a few days. But soon everyone came to know that Lord Caitanya had arrived, just as it is an exercise in futility to try to hide the sun. So men and women of all kinds and ages poured in from every direction, feeling excited and flushed with pleasure.

As usual the Lord was totally absorbed in divine ecstasy, nothing interfered with it. One after another the different ecstatic symptoms manifested on His person, and He fell swooning again and again. The devotees were also wrapped in the Lord's blissful mood, and they performed continuous *kīrtana*, leaving aside all other business. When sometimes the Lord cried out in a spiritual mood, this sound would be carried far and heard by travelers a couple of miles away. Although most of the people were simple rustic folk, ignorant about the intricacies of devotional service and mellows, yet by seeing the Lord in all His variegated splendor they became very happy. The people remained watching the Lord from a distance, and offered their prostrated obeisances, resounding the holy name of "Hari! Hari!" When the Lord's name entered Lord Caitanya's ears, His bliss increased several fold. He lifted His arms and encouraged them saying, "Go on—chant, chant, chant!" The Lord blessed these people with such a feeling of overwhelming joy that even the Muslims joined in chanting "Hari! Hari!"—what to speak of others. The Lord was emanating so much compassion that even the Muslims offered prostrated obeisances from a distance to the Lord. And the Lord had no other thought in His mind than *kīrtana* and dancing.

The crowd began to swell and grow. They watched entranced. No one had any desire to leave. The people were jubilant, and their chanting made a tumultuous sound that rose upwards and rent the atmosphere for miles around. The only sound was "Hari! Hari!" Close by, within earshot, was the ruling Muslim king's assembly house, yet this did not cower their spirits. They fearlessly chanted loudly, forgetting all attachments to home and family. But in the meantime, the police inspector had gone to the king's palace and reported the arrival of a *sannyāsī* in Rāmakeli. He also reported that this *sannyāsī*'s continuous chanting of some ghostly mantra of the faithless had attracted a huge gathering. To this news the king replied, "Tell me, how is this *sannyāsī*? What does He eat? What is His name? Describe His appearance."

The inspector said, "Listen, your majesty, I have never seen anyone so marvelous. His beauty far excels the beauty of Cupid. His complexion overshadows the brilliance of gold. His tall, majestic appearance, long arms extending to His knees, and slender concave abdomen are most charming. His lion's neck, elephant's shoulders, lotus eyes, and exquisite face more effulgent than a million moons are incomparable. With red coral lips, a perfect set of pearly teeth, and arched brows like Cupid's bow, a full broad chest decorated with sandalwood pulp, generous hips covered by cloth with the color of the rising sun, completely capture the mind. His feet are like two blooming pink lotuses, His ten toenails are like ten shining mirrors. I think He must be a prince out traveling in a *sannyāsī*'s dress.

The most remarkable thing about Him is that His body, which is as soft as fresh-churned butter, keeps falling to the ground with great force. He crashes down at least a hundred times in an hour, yet His body remains unhurt, unscathed. The hairs of His body are always standing on end like a jackfruit. At times He shivers so violently that hundreds of people cannot keep Him calm. His eyes emit tears like two effusive rivers flowing endlessly, and sometimes He laughs out so long and loud that for a couple of hours He does not stop. Then suddenly He falls swooning to the ground, overcome by the *kīrtana* and remains lying unconscious, to the petrification of the onlookers. When He danced, it was a treat for he eyes how He raised His hands and incessantly chanted, "Hari! Hari!" He seemed to forget every other activity.

People who converged on that spot from all directions had no desire to leave. I myself have come across many *sannyāsīs*, mystics, and wise men in my lifetime, but this *sannyāsī* is certainly extraordinary. I repeat, your majesty, this *sannyāsī*'s arrival in your land is indeed a great blessing. He does not eat or sleep; He is all the time enrapt in dancing and *kīrtana*."

The king, although grossly materialistic, heard everything, and he marveled at the descriptions of the *sannyāsī*.

The king called for Keśava Khān and inquired from him in disbelief, “Keśava Khān, I want your opinion on this matter. Tell me what you think about this person everyone calls Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Let me know in detail about the character of this powerful guru and *sannyāsī*. People are running from everywhere to see Him. What brings Him here?”

Keśava Khān, a noble upright gentleman became wary. He answered, “Who says He is a *gosvāmī*, or famous guru? He is a mendicant *sannyāsī*, a poor foreigner. He just travels and lives under trees.”

The king replied, “Do not refer to Him as poor. It is offensive even to hear such things. This *sannyāsī* is not an ordinary mortal. He is that Person whom the Hindus call Kṛṣṇa and the Muslims call Khuda. This kingdom of mine runs under my direction, but His orders control the entire universe. And even in my own kingdom there are so many who are inimical to me, whereas, if He were not the Supreme Godhead, why everywhere one and all worship Him with full surrender? If I stop my staff's salary for six months, they will have so many complaints against me, but in His case, I see that people are maintaining themselves at their own expense and then going eagerly to serve Him. Therefore, please understand that this *sannyāsī* is God. Do not say that He is some poverty-stricken mendicant.”

After a thoughtful pause, the king continued to speak, “Now hear my orders concerning this *sannyāsī*. I do not want anyone to disturb Him. He is free to go anywhere and preach anything He wants from His scriptures. Let Him perform *kīrtana* with the people and be satisfied and stay wherever He desires. If anyone tries to stop Him for anything, be he the Kazi, police inspector, or anyone, I will punish him with death.” With these words, the king went inside his private quarters. Such are the wonderful ways of Lord Caitanya. This was the same King Hussain Shah who was responsible for desecrating and destroying hundreds of temples in Orissa.

Although Hussain Shah was such a fanatic and despotic Muslim ruler, even he accepted Lord Gauracandra as the Supreme Lord. But the spiritually blind cannot see Him as the Supreme Personality. They shave their heads and become *sannyāsīs*, but when they hear the Lord's eulogies, they burn within with envy. The whole universe resounds with the Lord's panegyrics and ignorance is dissipated by hearing His glories. Ananta Śeṣa, Lakṣmīdevī, Lord Brahmā, and Lord Śiva are all intoxicated and mad after relishing the superexcellent pastimes of the Lord. The *Vedas* sing laudatory hymns in His praise, describing His supreme lordship over everything. So if anyone feels irked hearing the transcendental qualities of Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, then even if he is endowed with all good characteristics, they become malefic and cause him distress. On the other hand, if a person bereft of all good qualities remembers the Lord's lotus feet, he is immediately elevated to the spiritual abode of Vaikuṇṭha. This concluding portion, or *Antya-khaṇḍa*, of this book reveals the transcendental activities of the Lord performing *sankīrtana*.

The King's wise words created new confidence in him amongst the pious circles. They secretly assembled in a house and began discussing this news. They said, “Our king's character is terribly tyrannical. He is always influenced by the mode of ignorance. He has caused widespread devastation, demolishing thousands of temples in Orissa. Suddenly by some divine arrangement he is now being prompted by the mode of goodness. His words strongly indicate this change. But now again if someone influential comes along and sways the King with ill advice against Lord Caitanya, then the King might have Him brought in his presence and then anything could happen. So we must immediately send a message to the Lord suggesting that this place, being always under the surveillance of the Muslim king, is unsafe, and so He must proceed to the next village. A secret message was dispatched to Lord Caitanya through a reliable and honest *brāhmaṇa*.

The Lord was then totally submerged in divine ecstasy relishing the bliss within Himself, and was continuously roaring like the rumbling of thunder. Millions of people chanted “Hari! Hari!” and Lord Caitanya danced in ecstasy. No unnecessary words or other activities distracted Him from dancing, singing and encouraging the others to sing. The messenger *brāhmaṇa* stood there amazed at the sight, failing to find the right opportunity to speak to Him. What to speak about others trying to talk to Him, the Lord even refused to converse with His own associates. The Lord was swimming in the tides of ecstatic bliss. He was tasting the nectar of His sweet devotion unto Himself forgetting every other activity.

The messenger did not find the occasion to speak to the Lord, so he approached His devotees. The *brāhmaṇa* said, “You are all followers of the Lord, so please approach Him timely and give Him a message from the pious section of our village. It says, ‘What is the necessity of staying so close to the King's palace?’”

The *brāhmaṇa* offered his repeated *daṇḍavats* to the Lord from a distance and left. The Lord's associates were worried by the implications of the message. Yet they could not deliver the message to Him because the Lord was oblivious to everything else and simply engrossed in dancing. Raising both His arms He sang, “Sing, sing the name of Hari!” And the millions who now swayed to the music joined in with clapping hands and singing “Hari! Hari!”

Simply by remembering the Lord's devotees, all obstacles are removed, and the noose of material entanglement falls away. The living entities are able to perform their slightest activity only by the help of His energy. He is glorified in the *Vedas* as the Supreme Brahman, Absolute Truth, eternal and pure. His illusory potency, *māyā*, puts the living entity into illusion whereby he forgets his constitutional position and becomes shackled by the chains of material life. This very same Supreme Lord has appeared only to liberate the conditioned soul by bringing down with Him and distributing the nectar

of love of Godhead amongst all.

Which king can cause fear in the Lord? The *Vedas* declare that Yamarāja, the lord of death, and death personified are the Lord's menial servants. Lord Gauracandra, the son of mother Śacī, is the Lord of both the material and spiritual planets. Now He continued *kīrtana* with unbounded joy, unconcerned about anything else. The Lord had ignited the hearts of the teeming millions who came to see Him with such transcendental happiness that even they were unafraid of the King's close proximity, what to speak of the Lord Himself becoming intimidated by the King. Although the spectators were mostly very ignorant, when they saw Lord Caitanya they became fearless of even death, then why should the thought of a mere king invoke trepidation in them? The atmosphere resounded with jubilant chanting of "Hari! Hari!" as the crowd appreciated the presence of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha mingling with them singing and dancing freely.

Suddenly the devotees began to worry, and this was immediately felt by the Lord, who is the Supreme Soul within everyone's heart. The Lord smiled and returned to His normal behavior. He then spoke, cutting asunder the anxiety of His devotees. He said, "I know you are very concerned and afraid, but why should the King call for Me? It is natural for Me to meet someone who wants to see Me, but it is not possible that everyone would like to meet Me. So why be worried? If the King wants to see Me, then I will see him. And how can the King order Me to come to him? What power does he have to do so? Only on My prompting can the King say these words. What is his ability to see Me when others more powerful search the *Vedas* to seek My grace and sight? Kings, sages, demigods and perfected yogis fail to see Me even after a long arduous search.

I have advented to propagate the congregational chanting of the holy names of God, and with this I will deliver this sinful material world. Those demons and evil forces who never accepted My authority and lordship will weep in joy in this age by chanting My names. I will vigorously distribute in this age such extraordinary devotional service, which is sought after even by demigods, sages and perfected beings, that even the most abominable sinners, dog eaters, untouchables and women will receive it. But those who, becoming intoxicated with education, wealth, family background and knowledge, criticize and offend My devotees I deprive of everything, and they can never know My true identity.

I declare truly that My name will be preached in every town and village of this earth. I have appeared in this universe, so I want that people seek after Me, yet nobody is doing so. Therefore it is highly improbable that the King would want to see Me." The Lord finished His talk giving the devotees hope and joy. The Lord stayed in that village for another few days performing *kīrtana* and dancing, without the shadow of fear hanging over the people. Who can understand the Lord's mind? The Lord went back to Bengal instead of proceeding to Mathurā.

Lord Caitanya told the devotees, "I am going to see the Lord of Nīlācala." The supremely independent Lord, the source of the highest spiritual bliss, traveled southward, singing and dancing on the way. He stayed close to the Ganges all the way, and in a few days He arrived at Advaita Ācārya's house. Advaita Ācārya's days were fully taken up blissfully absorbed in watching the wondrous activities of His son, neglecting all other work. Now I will describe these wondrous activities of the son that had so captivated the whole attention of the father, Advaita Ācārya.

Advaita Ācārya's son's name was Acyutānanda. He was certainly the fit son of an able father. One day an elevated *sannyāsī* visited their house and met with Advaita Ācārya. The *sannyāsī* was at first hesitant, then Advaita Ācārya offered His respects and seated him. Advaita inquired, "How can I serve you, master?" The *sannyāsī* replied, "There is one thing I want to beg from You. I have a few questions I want You to answer." Advaita Ācārya replied, "Kindly eat first and we can talk later." But the *sannyāsī* insisted, "I want to first know the answers to my queries." Advaita Ācārya relented and said, "All right, please ask your questions."

The *sannyāsī* said, "Please tell what is Keśava Bhāratī's relationship with Lord Caitanya?" Advaita Ācārya considered the question in His mind and thought, "There are two concepts, social norms and spirituality. Although the Supreme Lord does not have parents, still we say Kṛṣṇa, the son of mother Devakī. In a spiritual sense the Supreme Lord does not need a guru, yet we find that the Lord is having a guru and we glorify these activities of His. Therefore, why should I talk about the spiritual aspect first? Better I speak about the social norms first."

After thinking in this manner, Advaita Ācārya said to the *sannyāsī*, "Śrī Keśava Bhāratī is Lord Caitanya's guru. You already know that, yet why do you ask?" As Advaita Ācārya was speaking these words, Acyutānanda came running into the room. Acyutānanda was five, without any clothes, his chubby and charming form was covered with dust. He was as beautiful and attractive as Kṛtīkeya. At this age he was already very knowledgeable, devoted, and an extremely potent personality. When he heard his father's words saying that Lord Caitanya has a guru, he became very upset and angry. But when he spoke he smiled and said, "Father, what did You say? Can You please repeat it. You really think that Lord Caitanya has a guru? I cannot understand how You can dare to say such a thing. If such words have emanated from Your mouth, then surely we find ourselves in Kali-yuga now. Or maybe it is because the illusory potency of Lord Caitanya is insurmountable. Even Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva are deluded by it. I can understand that You have been affected by Lord Caitanya's deluding potency. It must be under the influence of the Lord's illusory potency that You have uttered such a statement as, "Lord Caitanya has a guru."

"By Lord Caitanya's desire the entire cosmic manifestation enters into the pores of His transcendental body as He lies in

the waters of the causal ocean. Many wise and powerful sages, proud of their status, find themselves confused and lost. Just as when Lord Brahmā came out of the lotus that grew out of Lord Caitanya's navel by Lord Caitanya's desire to participate in this pastime. Lord Brahmā was lost and could not see or understand anything. Finally Lord Brahmā began meditating on the lotus feet of the Lord. The Lord being satisfied then gave him transcendental knowledge. With this knowledge, Lord Brahmā began to create this material universe. This knowledge was then passed down to the great sage, Sanaka, and others. Very mercifully they propagated this knowledge to others. Gradually, by disciplic succession the knowledge has come down. Then how can You say that the very same Supreme Personality, Lord Caitanya, has a guru? You are my father and my instructing spiritual master, so I am to learn from You. Why then are You giving wrong instructions?"

Acyutānanda became silent. Advaita Ācārya felt rising pride mixed with unbounded joy within Himself. He cried out, "Dear son, dear son!" and picked Acyutānanda up in His arms, drenching him with tears of ecstasy. He said to His son, "as a matter of fact, you are My father and I am your son. You have come to Me as My son to give Me spiritual instructions. I have certainly offended you, so please forgive Me. I promise never to say such things any more." Acyutānanda became immediately shy hearing his own praises, and he kept his head down. The visiting *sannyāsī* was overwhelmed hearing Acyutānanda's words, and he fell down to the ground like a stick offering his obeisances. He said, "He is truly a worthy son of Advaita Ācārya. Like father, like son. All this is very wonderful to me. Right here is proof of the Lord's inconceivable potency. Otherwise how could such words emanate from a mere child's mouth? I have chosen an auspicious moment to come and see Advaita Ācārya and I saw the most amazing miracle." He offered repeated obeisances to Advaita Ācārya and his son, and feeling content and blissful, the *sannyāsī* left, chanting Lord Hari's holy name.

Acyutānanda was indeed a worthy son of Advaita Ācārya because he had taken complete shelter of Lord Caitanya's lotus feet. If someone worships Advaita Ācārya but disregards Lord Caitanya, even if he is Advaita Ācārya's son, he will be doomed. Advaita Ācārya was so impressed with His son that He forgot all other duties. He took him in His arms and wept in great satisfaction. He smeared the dust from His son's body all over His own body. He began to dance happily saying, "Lord Caitanya's associate has appeared in My home." Who can know the extent of Advaita Ācārya's devotion as He danced with His son in His arms.

Lord Caitanya found Advaita Ācārya engrossed in dancing when He arrived at His house with all His associates. When Advaita Ācārya saw that the dear Lord of His heart had arrived, He fell to the ground and offered His obeisances chanting "Hari! Hari!" He immediately went into a state of intense ecstasy oblivious to His body and home. The ladies of the house chanted loudly, praising the Lord. Advaita Ācārya's house echoed with jubilant sounds. Lord Caitanya firmly took Advaita Ācārya in His embrace and showered Him with tears of immense joy. Advaita Ācārya fell to the ground and placed the Lord's lotus feet on His chest weeping profusely. The devotees were amazed to see such wonderful loving exchanges between the Lord and His dear associate, so they also were unable to contain their tears of happiness.

Advaita Ācārya Prabhu composed Himself, and with utmost humility He offered Lord Caitanya a seat. The Lord sat down on the elevated seat, and His associates sat surrounding Him. Meanwhile, Advaita Prabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu grasped each other in a warm embrace reading each other's hearts effervescent with joy. All the devotees offered obeisances to Advaita Ācārya, who in turn clasped everyone in a loving embrace. Only Vedavyāsa is able to fully describe the transcendental joy that descended in Advaita Ācārya's house that day.

Suddenly, Advaita Ācārya's son Acyutānanda, appeared in that assembly and fell at Lord Caitanya's lotus feet. The Lord quickly picked him up in His lap and bathed him in tears of love. The Lord kept him lovingly, not letting him go, and Acyutānanda clung to the Lord not wanting to get down. The devotees were moved to tears of joy seeing the Lord's extraordinary mercy upon this small boy. Acyutānanda was dearly loved by everyone, and all the Lord's associates were very much loved and respected by Acyutānanda. Lord Nityānanda and Svarūpa Dāmodara loved him dearly. He was amongst the foremost of Gadādhara Paṇḍita's disciples. For these reasons, Acyutānanda was considered by everyone to be the worthy son of an equally worthy father. Thus the Lord was experiencing divine bliss to be amongst His old and dear associates once again. He remained for a few days in Advaita Prabhu's house immersed in the ecstasy of *kīrtana*. Advaita Ācārya's joy at having His dear Lord in His house was ever-increasing.

After the initial excitement, Advaita Ācārya gave more thought to other matters. He sent a messenger to Navadvīpa to inform mother Śacī of the Lord's arrival in Śāntipura. The messenger was transported in a palanquin for speed. He requested mother Śacī to immediately accompany him back to Advaita Ācārya's house. Since Lord Caitanya had left home, mother Śacī had gradually become more and more immersed in an ocean of spiritual bliss of love of Godhead. She was unaware of external situations. She spoke things that had no immediate relevance, or seemed to be listening to someone unseen.

When mother Śacī met anyone, she would ask, "Please tell me the news from Mathurā, Vṛndāvana. How are Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma faring in Mathurā? And how well is that sinful demon, Kaṁsa, continuing his tyrannical activities? What about that thief, Akṛūra, who stole my Rāma and Kṛṣṇa? In fact, I heard that the demon, Kaṁsa, died and Ugrasena was crowned the new king." Sometimes mother Śacī cried out loud, "Rāma! Kṛṣṇa! Quickly go and milk the cows. I will go and sell the milk in the market." Sometimes she was seen running absorbed in deep thought with her hands stretched out in front saying, "Hold Him! Hold Him! There runs the butter thief. Let me see how You escape today. I will catch You

and bind You.” At other times she would say, “Come, let us go to the Yamunā for a bath.” Many times she waited piteously, her eyes releasing endless gushing streams of tears in such a manner that even stone hearts melted.

Lord Kṛṣṇa would sometimes appear in her meditation then she laughed out in loud peals in the same manner for hours, exuding inexplicable joy. Then suddenly she would fall into an ecstatic swoon lasting several hours, where the external world stopped existing for her. Another amazing symptom was when she began to tremble it was as if someone were repeatedly lifting her up in the air and hurling her down to the ground. No one other than mother Śacī could exhibit such ecstatic feelings of love of Godhead.

Lord Caitanya is certainly the unlimited reservoir of love of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. He has also infused into mother Śacī that same spiritual loving potency. Therefore who can fully describe the various ecstatic transformations of mother Śacī? Day and night she is immersed in an ocean of devotional bliss. And from time to time, when her consciousness focuses on the immediate present, then also it is only to perform worship to the Deities of the Supreme Lord. All her activities are devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. The messenger from Śāntipura arrived at a time when mother Śacī was engaged in remembering Kṛṣṇa.

The messenger said, “Lord Gaurasundara has come to Śāntipura. Come, mother Śacī, let us go right away to see Him.” This news deeply moved mother Śacī into a state of overwhelming placid bliss. She was indescribably content. The other devotees of the Lord were jubilant. Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Murāri Gupta and other beloved devotees of the Lord immediately accompanied mother Śacī to Śāntipura. When mother Śacī and the devotees arrived in Śāntipura, the news was quickly brought to Lord Caitanya.

The Lord rushed to meet His mother. When He but saw her from a distance, He fell to the ground like a rod and offered obeisances. He circumambulated her on and on chanting many verses and offering repeated *daṇḍavats*. He prayed, “You are the universal mother, the embodiment of pure devotion, transcendental to all material inebrieties. By your gentle glance upon the living entities alone, the *jīvas* can develop love and attachment for the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. You are personified devotional service to the Supreme Lord. You have the potency to fulfill everyone's desire. You are in fact Gaṅgādevī, mother Devakī, Yaśodā, Devahūti, Prṣṇī, Anasūyā, Kauśalyā and Aditi. They have all emanated from you and will finally merge in you. Who can describe your transcendental glories? You dwell in everyone's heart.” The Lord chanted eulogies in this manner, and He fell to the ground in joy, offering obeisances.

Who other than Kṛṣṇa Himself can exhibit such extraordinary heights of devotion to father, mother, guru, or to any superiors. As He offered obeisances and chanted prayers, His whole body was bathed in ecstatic tears. And when mother Śacī saw her son for the first time after such a long interval, she became inert with ecstatic bliss. All the while the Lord sang verses of praise, she remained stiff in spiritual shock like a wooden doll. The Lord continued exuberantly, “Whatever devotion I have for Kṛṣṇa is only due to your grace. And all the millions of servitors of the Lord who have the slightest relationship with you are extremely near to My heart. Anyone who simply remembers you will become free from all material bondage. Gaṅgādevī and Tulasīdevī are famous for purifying everything by their mere touch, but even they are highly privileged to have your association.

You have put so much time, energy, and love to raise Me from birth. I have been always cushioned by your affection at every step of My life. I will never be able to repay this incalculable debt of love to you. Here again, only your wonderful qualities can counteract this burden of debt.” It gave the Lord a special satisfaction to glorify His mother. The devotees also experienced transcendental joy hearing the Lord. Mother Śacī, or Ai as she is more popularly known, knew that her son was Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Lord, incarnated on Earth, and so could say anything at any time.

Mother Śacī then spoke up saying, “Who can understand Your words? Logs in an ocean are tossed about and drawn away by waves not having any control of direction. Similarly, the living entities are in this material ocean being swept away without volition by the waves of Your illusory potency. This is all I am able to say. The rest is You know what is best to be done. I see You are praising me and offering obeisances to me, but my understanding of all this is that You are independent, hence You can act as You wish.” The devotees greeted Mother Śacī's words with spontaneous appreciation. Who can really glorify the extent of mother Ai's devotion to the Supreme Lord? It was in her glorious womb that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Gaurasundara appeared. Even if someone speaks the name Ai without understanding its spiritual significance, still by the transcendental potency of the word he is alleviated from all suffering.

Mother Śacī's heart was filled with immense satisfaction seeing her son. The devotees were swept away by tides of trembling ecstasy. It is impossible for a puny mortal to fully describe the joy that permeated there. Even Lord Nityānanda was overwhelmed with happiness seeing mother Śacī's satisfaction. Advaita Ācārya was reciting prayers to Devakīdevī and offered repeated obeisances to mother Śacī. All the devotees like Haridāsa, Murāri, Śrīgarbha, Nārāyaṇa, Jagadīśa, Gopinātha and others were very blissfully affected by her joys. Whosoever reads and hears these ecstatic narrations is enriched with the jewel of love of Kṛṣṇa.

Advaita Ācārya came to the Lord and gained permission for the fortunate mother Śacī to cook for Him. Mother Ai went to the kitchen with bubbling joy thinking, “I am cooking for my Gauracandra, who is the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa.” Innumerable items of food appeared as if by magic. Many of the preparations she cooked were unknown to me and so I

have no name to describe them. Mother Śacī knows that the Lord loves to eat sak, or spinach, so she prepared twenty varieties of sak. In fact, each vegetable was prepared in ten to twenty different ways. After cooking, she brought all the dishes and placed them neatly in the dining hall and put some *tulasī* buds on each item. In the middle of the room she spread a very nice sitting mat for the Lord.

The Lord came with all His associates to eat. When He saw the elaborate arrangements with the countless dishes He fell down and offered *danḍavats*. The Lord exclaimed, “Leave aside partaking of these foodstuffs. Just by seeing this transcendental food one becomes free from all material entanglement. And how can I sufficiently glorify the quality of cooking? In fact, simply by smelling the food one develops pure devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Now I can understand that Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself along with His associates must have already tasted this delectable food.”

The Lord then circumambulated the bhoga and sat down to eat. Taking permission from the Lord, the devotees also sat down to see Him eat. As the Lord of the Vaikuṇṭha planets ate, the fortunate mother Ai feasted her eyes on Him. He tasted every single item that was there with childish relish. But amongst all the dishes, the Lord preferred the different types of sak spinach. He ate that again and again. Thus sak gained the special favor of the Lord. The devotees were thoroughly enjoying this scene as the Lord always went back to eat the sak. The Lord then began to explain the esoteric efficacy of eating sak.

The Lord smiled and said, “This sak here is known as acyuta. By relishing this sak one quickly develops a special attachment for Kṛṣṇa. And the result of eating patal, bastuka, and kal saks is that one attains the association of pure Vaiṣṇavas birth after birth. By eating salinca and helanca sak, one is not only free from diseases, but achieves the platform of pure devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

The Lord ate, and in between spoke out the transcendental qualities of eating different kinds of sak. Everyone experienced such spiritual ecstasy that day while the Lord took *prasāda* that only Lord Ananta Śeṣa knows these facts in detail and is constantly describing them with His thousand tongues.

In Kali-yuga that same Lord Ananta Śeṣa has appeared as Lord Nityānanda, the Avadhūta. Everything that I write are simply pointers and are only by His grace. They are all explained by Śrīla Vyāsadeva in detail. Anyone who reads and hears these descriptions becomes free from the darkness of ignorance.

After this pleasurable experience of eating, the Lord got up and washed Himself. As soon as He left the seat to wash and again sat down to relax, the devotees pounced on the Lord's remnants and began to eat. Someone said, “Why should a *brāhmaṇa* take these remnants? I am a *śūdra*; only I have the right to eat this.” The other replied, “I am not a *brāhmaṇa*.” Many just slipped in through the crowd and taking a handful of *prasāda* ran away. Someone said, “The *śūdras* are not eligible to eat remnants. Try to understand this by analysis. It is already stated in the scriptures.” Another said, “I do not want any remnant food. I just want the food vessels.” Yet another devotee said, “It has always been my duty to throw away the Lord's leaf plate, but now you are forcibly taking the remnants, simply showing your bossy nature.” In this way the devotee used all cunning to steal some of the nectarean remnants touched by the lotus mouth of the Lord. And considering that the food was cooked by mother Ai and then taken by the Supreme Lord, it was natural that everyone became so greedy for it. Happily licking their fingers after eating, they washed and came and sat in front of the Lord.

The Lord looked at the devotees sitting around Him and spotted Murāri Gupta. The Lord smiled and said to him, “Murāri, I heard that you have composed something about Lord Rāghava in eight verses. Please read it.” Murāri began to read the verses in Sanskrit as if in a trance of ecstasy. The meanings of which are, “I constantly serve the lotus feet of Lord Rāmacandra, the spiritual master of the three worlds, whose brother, Lakṣmaṇa, is Lord Ananta. Lakṣmaṇa is dressed in opulent kingly attire, with a bright golden complexion, always meditating on serving His older brother, Lord Rāma, and who is a most expert archer and is always walking in front of the Lord.

“I constantly serve the lotus feet of Lord Rāmacandra, the spiritual master of the three worlds, who with His family slew Khara, Trisira and Kabandha, thus clearing the idyllic forest of Daṇḍaka of mischievous demons, who killed King Vāli and made friends with Sugrīva.” Like this, Murāri Gupta recited all the eight verses. Then on the Lord's instructions he began to explain the meanings of those verses.

Murāri explained, “With a complexion like that of fresh *durvā* grass, He is seated on a gem-studded majestic throne smiling benignly. Śrī Janakidevī, Sītā, is on His left. He is the supreme archer, teaching everyone the art of archery. He is the desire tree who more than fulfills all the yearning of His devotees. His younger brother, Lakṣmaṇa is Lord Ananta Śeṣa. He is constantly absorbed in serving His elder brother. Walking everywhere ahead of His elder brother, Lakṣmaṇa is an extraordinary archer. Lustrous with a golden complexion, He dons a stately golden robe. Lord Rāmacandra, the pride of the Raghu dynasty, is the supreme teacher of everyone. I worship His lotus feet birth after birth. Bhārata and Satrugṇa fan Him with whisks, and Hanumān and his army of monkeys kneel with folded hands singing of their Lord's glorious activities.

I pray that birth after birth I may sing of His transcendental activities, for it is He who befriended and graced Guha, who belonged to the lower caste of dog-eaters. The Lord willingly renounced the kingdom and crown on the instructions of

His guru to live in the forest and perform divine deeds. He killed King Vāli, and mercifully offering His friendship to Sugrīva, He made him king. Everyone should take shelter of His lotus feet for He is the Lord of all the three worlds and He kindly liberated Ahaya. Worship the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord who built a bridge across the ocean with the help of the monkey army and Lakṣmaṇa and later killed the demon, King Rāvaṇa, who was powerful enough to defeat even Indra, the king of the heavens.

Worship the lotus feet of the best of the Raghu kings. By His mercy, the devout Vibhīṣana became the king of Lanka although he was not in the least interested in the position. Such are the Lord's wondrous activities that even the Yavanas or Muslims are eager to hear His pastimes. He is always carrying His bow only to suppress the miscreants. He cares for His subjects in the kingdom just like His own children. By His mercy alone all the residents of Ayodhya were transported to the spiritual sky in their selfsame form and became permanent residents of Vaikuṇṭha. Just worship the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord Raghavendra, who is eulogized in the *Vedas* as the Supreme Brahman, the Lord of the universe. Mahēśvara, Lord Śiva, looses his clothes intoxicated by the nectar of chanting His holy name, and Lakṣmīdevī is eternally engaged in massaging His lotus feet.”

Thus Murāri Gupta recited and explained all the eight nectarean verses in praise of Lord Rāmacandra composed by himself. Lord Caitanya was very satisfied with Murāri Gupta, and He placed His lotus feet on Murāri's head in blessing. The Lord said, “listen, dear Gupta, I am blessing you that you can eternally serve the lotus feet of Lord Rāmacandra. Whoever takes your shelter and association for a single moment will easily attain Lord Rāma's lotus feet.” The devotees resounded their loud approval hearing Lord shower His blessings upon Murāri Gupta. In this way the magnanimous Lord dispensed boons to the devotees, always surrounded by the bee-like associates who are eternally attracted to the lotus feet of the Lord.

Suddenly a leper appeared in that assembly and came before the Lord. He threw himself down on the ground like a stick groaning in pain. Then, getting up, he lifted his arms high and began to wail loudly. He said, “O merciful Lord, You have risen like the sun on this earth only to dissipate the sufferings of this material life. Your compassionate nature is always moved by the distress of others, and so I have come to You. I am burning in the pain of leprosy. Kindly tell me how I can be relieved of this.”

When the leper had finished speaking, the Lord addressed him angrily with a thundering voice. He said, “Go! Go away from here! Just seeing you incurs sin. Even if a very pious man sees your face, the day will bring him only woes. You are a wretched sinner and a Vaiṣṇava offender. Much more suffering is in store for you. You cannot even tolerate this pain, you contemptuous reprobate! How are you going to live through the sufferings in Kumbhipaka hell?

“A Vaiṣṇava is so pure that just uttering his name can cleanse the entire universe. Lord Brahmā takes pleasure singing the Vaiṣṇavas' glories. One easily attains the inconceivable association of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa simply by serving a Vaiṣṇava. In fact nothing is superior to the worship of a Vaiṣṇava. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* clearly says that a Vaiṣṇava is more dear to Kṛṣṇa than even Lord Ananta Śeṣa, Lakṣmīdevī, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, or even His own self.

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.14.15) it says,
na tathā me priyatama / ātmayonir na śaṅkaraḥ
na ca śaṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr / naivātmā ca yathā bhavān
“O Uddhava, you are more dear to Me than Brahmā, My son; Śiva, My partial expansion; Śaṅkarṣaṇa, My brother; Lakṣmīdevī, My wife; and even I Myself.

“Anyone who offends a Vaiṣṇava has to suffer terrible consequences life after life. A person's education, good birth, and austerity are rendered useless by criticizing a Vaiṣṇava. Lord Kṛṣṇa refuses to accept worship from the sinful offender of a Vaiṣṇava. When the Vaiṣṇava dances mother earth feels blessed, and wherever they glance sins are eradicated. When Vaiṣṇavas lift their arms to the sky while dancing, all ill fortune in the heavenly abodes are diminished. Such an elevated devotee is Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, and you are so demoniac that you have offended him. Your leprosy is just a reminder of your offense, the actual punishment will come later from Yamarāja, the god of death. Therefore you are not fit to be seen by Me, and I am unable to deliver you.”

The leper quietly heard the Lord's chastisement, then with utmost humility, holding straw in his teeth, he began to speak. He prayed, “I did not know any of this, that You have spoken now. Being mad I have grievously offended a Vaiṣṇava. For this heinous act I deserve this punishment. But now my Lord, pray think of my deliverance. It is the nature of saintly personalities to relieve the suffering of the wretched and even forgive the blasphemers. Therefore I have taken shelter of You. But if You neglect me, then who will save me? You are the omniscient father of all, so please tell me what atonement will relieve me of my offenses. Since I have committed *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, I have received a proper punishment.”

The Lord replied, “Leprosy for an offender is just his first punishment. It is only the beginning—the worst is yet to come. Yamarāja has eight lakhs forty thousand types of excruciating punishments waiting for the offenders. You should go right away to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and throw yourself at his feet. It was Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita you offended, and so you can be excused by his mercy alone. When a thorn goes in the body, it has to come out the same place. If a thorn gets stuck in

the foot, does it come out of the shoulder? So I tell you, your only means for reprieve is to beg forgiveness from Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. He is very elevated and intelligent. If you beg him then he will surely forgive you.”

The devotees expressed their loud approval of the Lord's perfect and honest instructions. The leper paid his obeisances to the Lord and the devotees and hurried off to see Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, out of his causeless mercy exonerated the leper from all offenses and saved him from the worst fate. The Lord had clearly described the horrific results of offending a Vaiṣṇava. In spite of hearing this, if a person is still so foolish to indulge in criticism and blasphemy of Vaiṣṇavas, then Lord Caitanya will personally mete out the due punishment.

If one sees two Vaiṣṇavas quarrelling, then one should never think that something is amiss, or that there is enmity and malice between them. Such quarrelling is in fact transcendental and pleasing to the Lord. The arguments and abuses exchanged between Rukmiṇīdevī and Satyabhāmadevī, although sounding like serious fights, are factually not so, because they are forever united in their service to their common Lord and master. There is no enmity between Vaiṣṇavas. The Supreme Lord Himself induces these fights due to His frolicsome nature. But if anyone foolishly sides with one Vaiṣṇava against another, then he is doomed due to offending a Vaiṣṇava. The Vaiṣṇavas are the extensions of the Lord's limbs, so how can one benefit by serving Him with one hand and inflicting pain on Him with the other? One who has developed such vision becomes steady in devotional service. One who worships Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, knowing them to be nondifferent, actually serves the Lord and can easily cross the ocean of nescience. One who glorifies, hears and understands these transcendental subject matters can always avoid *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*.

The Lord remained a few days more in Śāntipura enjoying His stay in Advaita Ācārya's house. Soon it was time to celebrate the auspicious occasion of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī's appearance day. Although there is no difference between Mādhavendra Purī and Advaita Ācārya, yet Advaita Ācārya considered Himself to be Mādhavendra Purī's disciple. It is certain that Lord Gaurasundara is eternally present in Mādhavendra Purī's body. His devotion to the Supreme Lord is unparalleled. By Lord Kṛṣṇa's grace, the Lord's transcendental potencies were fully manifest in Mādhavendra Purī. Kindly hear attentively how Advaita Ācārya became a disciple of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī.

Before the advent of Lord Śrī Caitanya in this world, the entire planet was bereft of any devotional feelings towards the Supreme Lord. Even then, Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, by the special mercy of Lord Caitanya was constantly experiencing devotional ecstasy. All the ecstatic symptoms would manifest on his person. He was so totally saturated in meditating on the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa that he was not aware of what he was doing. While walking on the streets suddenly he would start to dance very gracefully and chant the holy name. Sometimes due to intense devotional feelings, he would go into a spiritual coma lasting several hours. Again at times experiencing acute love in separation, he would cry shedding torrential tears gushing out like the River Ganges in spate. Then there were instances where he would break out in loud peals of laughter and intoxicated by the nectar of love of Godhead, he became unaware that he had lost the clothes he had on.

Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī spent his days happily relishing his sublime relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa. Only the absence of devotion amongst the general populace disturbed him and made him morose. He gave much thought to how to alleviate this suffering of the people. He arrived at the conclusion that the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa must appear. The society then had no interest in nor understood the purpose of celebrating festivals of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes or holding night-long *kīrtanas* glorifying Kṛṣṇa. People's understanding of a perfect religious activity was to stay up nights listening to songs about the demigoddess Mangal Candi. The only gods they knew were demigods like Sasti and Visahari, and they worshiped these demigods with much fanfare and ostentation.

Many persons simply desired to increase their wealth and dynasty. To reach this end, they worshiped demons and ghosts with offerings of animal flesh and wine. Their fondest enjoyment was to listen to banal songs of equally mundane songsters. It was truly a sign of great piety if someone uttered the names of God, “Govinda or Puṇḍarikākṣa” once, at the time of the morning bath. People were so steeped in the mode of ignorance and deluded by Lord Kṛṣṇa's *māyā* that they had no concept of who a Vaiṣṇava is, what is *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, why do devotees dance and even weep in ecstasy during *kīrtana*.

Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī was deeply pained by the godlessness of the people, yet he found no one to speak to. Thinking that *sannyāsīs* would be sympathetic to his concern because of their renounced order, he approached them, but to his dismay he found that they were polluted by the desire to become one with God. So he gave up further attempts to talk to them. He felt forlorn, he had no place to turn to where he could discuss topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Learned scholars, yogis, hermits and even *sannāyīs* were never heard speaking any instructions guiding the people to serve the Supreme Lord. All of them were only interested in exhibiting their learning by presenting logic and argument. In fact they had become agnostics refusing to accept and revere the Deity forms of the Supreme Lord. Seeing these negative conditions and himself all alone, Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī decided to live away from society in a forest.

Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī observed, “Why am I roaming amongst people searching for a Vaiṣṇava? How can I meet one amongst them if they themselves have no appreciation for a Vaiṣṇava? Therefore let me just go to the forest and live there. There at least I will not have to associate with a nondevotee.” About the time he made up his mind to withdraw from society, by divine arrangement he met Advaita Ācārya. Śrī Advaita was also greatly afflicted for the same reason. He felt despondent seeing the lives of people were empty and meaningless without devotion to the Supreme Lord.

Śrī Advaita Ācārya in the meanwhile in spite of such reverse conditions had continued to preach about devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa by the Lord's mercy alone. His discourses on the *Gītā* and *Bhāgavatam* always stressed devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, which is in fact the essential truth in these books. So when Śrī Mādhavendra Purī came to Śrī Advaita's house it was a wonderful meeting of two highly elevated Vaiṣṇavas. When Śrī Advaita saw Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, recognizing all the signs of saintliness in him, he immediately fell to the ground offering his obeisances. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī picked up Śrī Advaita and embraced him warmly, drenching him with tears of spiritual ecstasy.

They sat down and entered the unlimited ocean of nectar of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. They forgot about themselves and everything else talking to each other about Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī was such an elevated devotee and lover of Lord Kṛṣṇa that just by seeing a blackish cloud he would become unconscious due to uncontrollable spiritual agitation. Hearing Lord Kṛṣṇa's name brings him immediate ecstasy, and roaring loudly he would manifest various symptoms of divine love. Śrī Advaita could see all these Vaiṣṇava qualities in Śrī Mādhavendra Purī. He was extremely pleased to meet him and so he wanted to hear spiritual instructions from him. This was how the two spiritual stalwarts met.

Śrī Advaita Ācārya since their meeting always celebrated Śrī Mādhavendra Purī's appearance day with great festivity leaving all other work. So now he applied himself fully to commemorate this special occasion. Lord Caitanya and His associates were also very happy to join in the festivity, especially seeing how vigorously Śrī Advaita went about decorating and making endless preparations for the celebration. Necessary requirements began pouring in from different people, just a clear indication to show how so many persons were attracted to the saintly qualities of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī. The devotees distributed different duties amongst themselves according to their capabilities to help in the preparations.

Mother Śacī accepted the responsibility for all the cooking. The housewives gathered around her and began to get things ready. Lord Nityānanda, who was always self-satisfied, wanted to serve and worship the Vaiṣṇava. One devotee expressed his desire, "I want to make all the sandalwood paste." Another said, "I will make the flower garlands." "And I will fetch water." said another. "Then give me the duty to wash and clean the floors." said yet another. Another devotee said, "All right then let me wash the feet of all the Vaiṣṇavas." Everywhere devotees were very busy. Some were spreading the multicolored cloth awning overhead and tying the corners to the nails. Others hurried to bring vegetables, oils and so on to the kitchen. Many devotees began *kīrtana* and dancing, and some joined in playing the gong and blowing conch shells. Devotees were jubilant, loudly chanting "Hari! Hari!" while they enthusiastically performed their various services. The festive mood had everyone in a grip. Happy tumult echoed everywhere. The loud chanting of the holy name, the blowing of conches, and the sounds of cymbal, gong and drums transformed Śrī Advaita's house into *Vaikuṇṭha*.

The Lord was very satisfied with all the elaborate arrangements. He went around the house looking at everything. A couple of rooms were packed with bags of rice. The firewood was stacked like high mountains. Several rooms were being used for cooking with innumerable pots strewn everywhere. A few rooms were filled with lentil dahl; about seven rooms were packed with clothes. Room after room had just flat rice, puffed rice and leaf plated. It was impossible to count the number of bananas, coconuts, and big lumps of gur, molasses lying around. Then came the many, many rooms filled with an array of all sorts of vegetables like patal, aubergine, banana tree stem, potatoes, spinaches and so on. Another spectacle that met His eyes was the rows and rows of large containers filled with milk, yogurt and cream. Piled high were the sugar canes, and next to them were large vessels of oil, ghee and salt. This miraculous display which appeared as if from nowhere is indescribable in its variety and volume.

The Lord was filled with wonder for He knew that all this was not humanly possible to accomplish at such short notice for one person. The Lord said, "Such manifestation of opulence cannot be the work of an ordinary mortal. Śrī Advaita must be Maheśa, Śiva, this is what I strongly feel. This miracle is possible only for Mahādeva, Lord Śiva. Advaita Ācārya must be the incarnation of Lord Śiva." The Lord smiled and kept repeating these words. And in this manner, through insinuations the Lord revealed the actual spiritual identity of Advaita Ācārya. One who is pious will accept these statements of Lord Caitanya with great spiritual joy. For those who disrespect and have no faith in the Lord's words, Advaita Ācārya will incarnate as all-consuming fire. Although Śrī Advaita is as cooling as the rays of millions of moons, He is like the all-devouring fire of time for those who have no faith in Lord Caitanya. that if anyone utters Lord Śiva's name even without the proper understanding of the esoteric truth about him, still

How will one who chants Lord Śiva's name without offense not understand the truth about him? At that moment he is purified and freed of all sins. This is clearly described in Vedic literatures such as *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. On the other hand, if someone feels depressed upon hearing Lord Śiva's name, he is certainly thrown into an ocean of inauspiciousness.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.4.14) says,
yad dvy-akṣaram nāma gireritam nṛṇāṁ
sakṛt prasāṅgād agham āśu hanti tat
pavitra-kīrtiṁ tam alaṅghya-śāsanam
bhavān aho dveṣṭi śivam śivetaṛaḥ

"Sati continued: 'My dear father, you are committing the greatest offense by envying Lord Śiva, whose very name, consisting of two syllables, si and va, purifies one of all sinful activities. His order is never neglected. Lord Śiva is always pure, and no one but you envies him.'"

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself asks, “How can a person who doesn't worship Śiva worship Me? If someone disregards Lord Śiva, who is so dear to Me, how can one develop love for Me?”

In the *Padma Purāṇa*, *Nirvāṇa-khaṇḍa*, it says,
katham vā mayi bhaktim sa / labhatām pāpa-puruṣaḥ
yo madyam param bhaktam / śivam sampūjayen na hi
“How can anyone render devotional service to Me (Lord Kṛṣṇa) without worshiping My dear devotee Śiva in the proper devotional mood. A person who does not respect Śiva is envious of the Vaiṣṇavas and is a sinful reprobate.”

Therefore in the beginning one should first worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, then after worshiping Lord Śiva with love, he should worship all the demigods.

Again, in the *Skanda Purāṇa* it says,
prathamam keśavam pūjām / kṛtvā deva maheśvaram
pūjaniyā mahābhaktiā / ye cānye santi devatāḥ
“First one should worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, the cause of all causes, and then worship the best of the demigods, Lord Śiva. Then all the other demigods should be worshiped with great faith and devotion.”

Śrī Advaita Ācārya is accepted by saintly personalities as Śiva Himself. This is so because Lord Caitanya gave sufficient indications to establish this truth. Less intelligent persons who raise objections against such truths cannot understand Śrī Advaita Ācārya's transcendental potencies and are therefore vanquished.

The profuse arrangements and new cloth which the Lord saw there was all unlimited and thus beyond description. The Lord was very pleased and He began to glorify Śrī Advaita to everyone. The Lord again came back to the place of *kīrtana*. His presence immediately accelerated the enthusiasm of the *kīrtana* and drowned the devotees in a deluge of divine nectar. Devotees danced in every direction, singing and clapping, their uncontained joy increasing with every passing moment. Far above all sound was the clearly discernable singing of the holy names of God. The devotees were now shining with greater effulgence, their bodies decorated with sandalwood paste and flower garlands. The Lord's associates were all dear to Him, and their joyous singing of the holy name spread everywhere purifying the entire universe.

Lord Nityānanda, with His tall impressive stature like that of a wrestler, danced and pranced about like a little boy chuckling with pure innocent glee. Śrī Advaita Ācārya was totally absorbed in dancing unaware of the passage of time. Haridāsa Ṭhākura and all the other devotees danced and sang jubilantly. And at last Lord Caitanya joined the dancing after inspiring everyone else to dance first. He danced together with all the devotees. The devotees circled Him and danced, keeping Him in the center. The whole day passed in the ecstasy of dancing and *kīrtana*, and finally the Lord sat down with all the devotees. Śrī Advaita begged permission from the Lord to prepare for eating, and busied Himself making the necessary arrangements for all the Vaiṣṇavas' *prasāda*.

The Lord sat down to eat with His entire group of devotees. As usual the devotees sat around Him everyone wanting Him to be in the center. Like the many shining luminaries in the dark purple sky were the devotees, and the Lord arose on the horizon looking more iridescent than a million moons. Mother Śacī had prepared a delicious feast in honor of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī with an incredible variety of rice preparations, vegetables, and sweets. The Lord relished the transcendental delicacies and spoke about the glories of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī between mouthfuls. It was difficult to say which mouthful He relished more. The Lord said, “If one is fortunate enough to taste this wonderful *prasāda* in honor of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī's appearance day, then one is immediately showered with loving devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

The Lord then got up from *prasāda* and after washing Himself He sat down. Śrī Advaita brought many flower garlands and sandalwood paste and placed them before the Lord. First the Lord garlanded and smeared sandalwood paste on Lord Nityānanda and Svarūpa Dāmodara Prabhu with great affection. Then one by one the Lord garlanded and smeared sandalwood paste on all the Vaiṣṇavas with His own hands. The devotees were extremely happy to have received these directly from the Lord. They all loudly cried out the Lord's holy name making a joyous clamor that is impossible to describe. There was no way to gauge the pinnacles of ecstasy Śrī Advaita climbed, because above everything He had the Lord of Vaikunṭha Himself as His guest.

How is it humanly possible to fully describe all these transcendental pastimes of the Lord? The different activities the Lord performs within the span of a day cannot be recorded by anyone even if allowed a period of a million years to complete it in. Like a bird flying in the vast vault of the sky is unable to find its limits, similarly the pastimes of the Lord are unlimited, and one is able to know as much as He empowers one to see and understand. The wooden doll is completely controlled by the puppeteer, so also I can say as much as the Lord prompts me to say. I do not know the chronological order of these pastimes. Somehow I am writing the glories of the Lord. I beg humbly at the feet of all the Vaiṣṇavas to forgive me for my offenses in this effort of writing. One who listens to these transcendental topics will certainly attain loving devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, humbly offer this song at

Their lotus feet.

Chapter 5

All glories to Lord Gaurasundara, the spiritual preceptor of the entire universe! You are the desire tree of all the surrendered devotees. All glories to You, who are the most brilliant gem of the *sannyāsa* order, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha! Please bless the living entities with Your merciful glance. All glories to the Supreme Lord Gaurāṅga along with all His devotees and associates! He is the most munificent Lord, an ocean of divine compassion.

Please hear attentively the topics narrated about the Lord in this concluding portion of this book. The Lord stayed another few days in Śrī Advaita's house, and then went to Kumārahaṭṭa to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita at this time was immersed in meditation on Lord Kṛṣṇa, so when Lord Gaurasundara, the Lord of his life, appeared in person before him, it was like the object of his meditation was suddenly there in his presence, and as if the result of deep and sincere meditation was answered. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita threw himself to the ground like a stick and paid his respects to the Lord. He clasped the Lord's lotus feet to his chest, and heaving long sighs of love he wept profusely. The Lord picked up Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and embraced him, drenching him with tears of divine love.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's entire family was truly blessed by the Lord's causeless mercy. They all crowded to see the Lord, and raising their arms in a gesture of overwhelming joy, they began to weep. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita was beside himself with happiness. He could not fathom the exhilaration he experienced in the presence of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha in person as his guest in his house. He picked up the best seat on his head and brought it to the Lord. The lotus-eyed Gaurāṅga sat down. The devotees sat surrounding Him and began *kīrtana*. The ladies of the house all made auspicious sounds of welcome to the Lord. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house resounded with joy.

The news spread quickly of the Lord's arrival in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house. Ācārya Purandara came immediately to meet the Lord. The Lord embraced him with warm affection and reverence, considering him to be His father. Ācārya Purandara was overwhelmed with spiritual emotion and could not hold back his tears of extreme joy as he embraced the Lord. Śrī Vāsudeva Datta was very dear to the Lord. He knew all the esoteric conclusions by the Lord's grace. Śrī Vāsudeva was always meditating on how to properly benefit the living entities. Compassionate to everyone, he was perpetually absorbed in thoughts of Lord Caitanya. He never looked for faults in others, but always praised their good qualities. He had great attraction and love for the Supreme Lord and His service, and he was always respectful to the Vaiṣṇavas and rendered humble service to them. When the Lord saw Śrī Vāsudeva Datta He was very pleased and He embraced him and wept profusely in ecstasy. Śrī Vāsudeva fell down to the ground and clasped the Lord's lotus feet and began to cry out loudly. He cried so piteously that what to speak of men, even the stones could be moved to tears. Śrī Vāsudeva was endowed with such wonderful qualities that he alone could exemplify himself.

The Lord loved Śrī Vāsudeva so dearly that He said, "It is indeed true that I belong to Vāsudeva." Repeatedly the Lord said, "My body is Vāsudeva's property; he can sell Me anywhere he wants. This is true and not meaning anything else. A moment's association with Śrī Vāsudeva can bless anyone with Lord Kṛṣṇa's protection from all dangers. O Vaiṣṇavas, please hear Me. I say truly that Śrī Vāsudeva owns me completely." The devotees became jubilant hearing the Lord shower such causeless mercy on Śrī Vāsudeva, and loudly chanted the holy name. Lord Gaurasundara is expert in praising His devotees and increasing their glories. Just as the devotees are always eulogizing the Lord's transcendental qualities, the Lord also does so in the same manner.

The Lord stayed for some time in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house performing exhilarating pastimes. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and his brother Rāmāi Paṇḍita were always engaged in singing the glories of the Lord, and the Lord feeling spiritually animated by their singing danced in ecstasy. Both the brothers, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and Rāmāi Paṇḍita are very beloved of the Lord. They are like the two bodies of the Lord. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita pleased the Lord in many ways by performing *kīrtana*, discussing from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and maintaining proper standards of Vaiṣṇava etiquette. It was in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's house that the Lord performed some of His most wonderful pastimes.

One day the Lord called Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita aside and asked him confidentially about some family matters. The Lord said, "I see you never go anywhere. How will you manage to make ends meet in the family and how are you doing it presently?" Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita replied, "My Lord, I have not the heart to go anywhere." The Lord gently prodded the subject further, "You have a large family to maintain, how then will you look after them?" Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said, "Whatever comes because of my fate will certainly come as a provision." The Lord then said, "Then Śrīvāsa, take *sannyāsa*!" Śrīvāsa replied, "That is not possible for me."

The Lord said, "On one hand you refuse to accept *sannyāsa*, and on the other hand you do not go to beg alms. How do you plan to maintain your family? I am unable to understand you. Nowadays if one does not make the effort of going hither and thither then nothing comes of its own. Under the circumstances please tell Me what do you propose to do?" Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said clapping his hands thrice, "Here is my explanation—one, two, three." The Lord insisted, "Please explain properly why you clapped thrice and what does 'One, two, three' imply?" Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita replied calmly, "I have taken a solemn vow that if after fasting for three meals I do not get any food then I will surely tie a stone around my neck

and drown myself in the Ganges.”

As soon as the Lord heard these words He roared like thunder and said, “What did you say, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita? You will be fasting because of lack of food? Even if Lakṣmīdevī by some rare chance has to go begging, your family will never experience poverty. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, you have already forgotten what I have said in the Bhagavad-gītā (9.22) ‘Those who worship Me with devotion meditating on My transcendental form, to them I carry what they lack and preserve what they have.’ One who is fixed in undeviating meditation on Me has never to beg at anyone’s steps. All the mystic potencies automatically manifest in him. My devotees are fully protected by My Sudarśana cakra at all times, and even at the time of total annihilation of this material universe, they remain transcendental and unaffected.”

The Lord continued, “One who simply remembers My devotee, I take responsibility of maintaining him. The servitor of My servitor is dear to Me, and he certainly attains My shelter. My servitors need not have any concern about their maintenance since I am taking their responsibility on My shoulders. So Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita you just remain happily in your house and every requirement will automatically come to you. I am blessing you and Śrī Advaita with the boon that none of you will ever be affected by old age, debility, or senility.”

The Lord then called for Rāmāi Paṇḍita and told him, “Listen, Rāmāi Paṇḍita, I instruct you to always serve your elder brother, as if he were the Supreme Lord. Know also that you are as dear to Me as My very life, so I want that you never deviate from this service to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita.” Both Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and Rāmāi Paṇḍita were overwhelmed with divine bliss. The blessed Lord had filled their hearts with indescribable joy. By Lord Caitanya’s causeless mercy, even now, in some pastime, all requirements are coming on their own to Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita’s doorsteps.

The Lord remained a few days more in Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita’s house enjoying His stay in the company of His associates and the affectionate family members of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. From there He went to Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita’s house in Pāṇihāṭī. Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita was always busy in serving Lord Kṛṣṇa. So when the Lord arrived, Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita was overwhelmed to see his beloved Lord face to face. He fell to the ground offering obeisances, and clasped His lotus feet, the very same lotus feet that are the source of Lakṣmīdevī’s constant joy. He began to weep in jubilation. The Lord was also extremely happy to see His dear devotee, and He picked him up and embraced him, while unrestrained tears of joy bathed Rāghava Paṇḍita. Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita did not know what to do or how to receive the Lord such was his effusive bliss. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Śrī Caitanya, was very pleased with Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita’s devotion, and He showered His mercy upon him.

The Lord said, by coming to Rāghava Paṇḍita’s house and seeing him, all My gloom has been dispelled. Coming to his house has resulted in the same purification, and hence satisfaction, as bathing in the holy Ganges.” Then smiling benignly at Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita, the Lord said to him, “Dear Rāghava Paṇḍita, please go immediately and prepare food for Lord Kṛṣṇa’s satisfaction.” Rāghava Paṇḍita immediately went off swimming in ecstasy to execute the Lord’s order. His heart inundated with divine love, he cooked as his heart dictated, a plentiful variety.

The Lord came to eat accompanied by Nityānanda Prabhu and all the associates. The Lord relished Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita’s cooking and praised each and every preparation. The Lord said to Rāghava Paṇḍita, “Rāghava Paṇḍita has cooked everything so excellently well. Especially I have never tasted such a delectable preparation of spinach, sak, ever before. Rāghava Paṇḍita already knew that the Lord was very fond of sak, so He made it a point to prepare it in many delicious ways. The Lord, finishing His food, washed and came and sat down.

Meanwhile, word had spread that the Lord was staying in Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita’s house. Śrī Gadādhara dāsa heard the news and came hastily to meet the Lord. Śrī Gadādhara dāsa was very near and dear to the Lord. He epitomized pure devotion to the Lord. The Lord was extremely pleased to see Gadādhara dāsa and out of great love for him He placed His lotus feet on his head. Śrī Purandara Paṇḍita and Śrī Parameśvari dāsa also came rushing to see the Lord. Parameśvari dāsa was so surrendered to the Lord that the Lord reciprocated and manifest Himself in person in his Deity. Both these saintly devotees were in great ecstasy to see the Lord, and they cried tears of divine love. Śrī Raghunātha Vaidya, that very exalted Vaiṣṇava, also came to meet the Lord. In this way, an endless stream of devotees came to see the Lord. Pāṇihāṭī village experienced an extraordinary spiritual event by the Lord’s advent and stay there. The Lord inundated the whole village with divine ecstasy by His personal presence.

Once, the Lord called Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita aside and spoke to him alone. He said, “Rāghava, I want to reveal to you confidentially that Nityānanda Prabhu is nondifferent from myself. You must understand that whatever Nityānanda wants of Me I do it. Without sophistry I say that everything I do is through Nityānanda. We are one and the same. That which is rarely attained by great mystics steeped in meditation is easily obtained from Lord Nityānanda. Therefore, engage yourself with sincerity and deference in Nityānanda’s service, knowing Him to be the Supreme Lord.” Before leaving the fortunate village of Pāṇihāṭī, the Lord instructed Makaradhvaja, “Serve Rāghava Paṇḍita nicely. Know that the loving attachment you have developed for him is highly appreciated by Me.”

The Lord then came to a place called Varāha-nagara. He visited the residence of an exalted and saintly *brāhmaṇa*. The *brāhmaṇa* was well-versed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and upon having the Lord’s audience, he began to recite the verses. As the Lord heard the verses from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* read by him with sublime devotion, He went into an ecstatic trance. With a voice resembling the roll of thunder, He cried out “Read on! Read on!” The pious *brāhmaṇa* was blissfully

submerged in the text reading aloud and the Lord began to dance in divine exultation, oblivious to everything around Him. Verse after verse described the transcendental glories of loving devotional surrender, and the Lord swooned again and again falling like a rod on the ground with tremendous force. Such was the Lord's spiritual ecstasy that the people were amazed and afraid to see Him fall with such intensity. This pastime lasted late into the night. The *brāhmaṇa* read and the Lord danced.

Gradually the Lord came out of His ecstatic trance and He calmly sat down. He was extremely happy with the *brāhmaṇa*, and so He embraced him. The Lord said to him, "I have never heard anyone reciting the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* so sweetly, therefore I name you Bhāgavatācārya or the spiritual preceptor of the *Bhāgavatam*. You need not engage in any other activity; just go on reciting the *Bhāgavatam*." Everyone was jubilant with the *brāhmaṇa*'s new and deserving title. They appreciated it with loud chanting of the Lord's name. Blessing the residents of that place, the Lord traveled along the banks of the Ganges visiting many houses of devotees. He satisfied all the devotees, fulfilling their hearts' yearning to see Him. Finally He returned to Nīlācala, Purī. One who hears these descriptions of the Lord's return to Bengal becomes immediately free from all distresses.

Great crowds of people greeted the Lord as He entered Jagannātha Purī with jubilant sounds saying, "The moving Lord Jagannātha has come back to Nīlācala." The news flashed with the speed of lightening everywhere. Śrī Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and the other Oriyan associates of the Lord came running to see Him. The devotees were morose because of feelings of separation since the Lord was away, and now on His return they were exulting and welcomed Him with loud *kīrtana*. The Lord, the reservoir of divine love, embraced them, reciprocating their spiritual affections, and bathed everyone with His effusive tears. Once in Nīlācala, He began to reside in Kāśī Mīśra's house.

Here in Purī, the Lord spent all His time dancing in ecstasy and performing sweet, sublime *kīrtanas* everywhere. Often He danced before Lord Jagannātha losing Himself in the ecstatic graceful movements, sometimes within the closed precincts of Kāśī Mīśra's residence, and at other times He simply ran out to the ocean shores and danced to the rhythmic crashing of the waves on the sand. Blissfully oblivious of every other activity, the Lord now engaged in this wonderful pastime. He was up early with the first blowing of the conch shell from the temple, and as the doors to Lord Jagannātha opened He was there bowing before the Lord. So wonderful was His love for Lord Jagannātha that tears cascaded from His eyes and flowed like the River Ganges. All the people stared, transfixed in amazement, their worries and sorrows long forgotten. Crowds followed Him wherever He went. They were moved and inspired. Loudly they chanted "Hari! Hari!" as they went behind the Lord's dancing form.

The King of Orissa, Mahārāja Pratapārudra, also heard the news of the Lord's return to Nīlācala. He immediately left the capitol, Kutaka, and hurried to Nīlācala, Purī. The King was very keen to see the Lord and meet Him, and had been trying since long without success. He had requested many of the Lord's associates, including Śrī Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, to approach the Lord on his behalf, but all of them were afraid to approach Him on this matter. So thinking, he said exasperated to Śrī Sārvabhauma, "If you are so afraid to speak to Him about me, then at least point Him out to me without Him seeing me." Appreciating the King's intense desire to see the Lord, the devotees decided to help him. They conferred and said, "The Lord becomes totally absorbed while dancing, and the external world fades into oblivion from His consciousness. At that time the King, who is so deeply religious, can see the Lord from his place of hiding."

The devotees explained their plan to the King, and the King eagerly responded saying, "I just want to see Him once by any means." So one day the King was informed that the Lord was dancing, and he hurried to the spot. He quickly found a vantage point that was well hidden. From there he saw the most wonderful sight of his life. The Lord's eyes were like two river sources spouting unlimited tears like waterfalls, and all the ecstatic symptoms manifested on His person at different times. He sometimes fell to the ground with such terrible force that people gasped in horrified alarm. When the Lord began His roaring like thunderclaps, the King had to hold his hands over his ears. Then suddenly the Lord would be overcome with the mood of intense separation from Kṛṣṇa and break down in heartbreaking tears. So many subtle spiritual moods played on the Lord's person that it is impossible for anyone to describe.

Dancing constantly with His long arms up in the air, and chanting "Hari! Hari!", the Lord was fully saturated in ecstasy. Finally, when He became aware of His immediate surroundings, He came and sat down amongst the devotees. The King after seeing the Lord's dancing till the end, stealthily slipped away, his heart full with effervescent joy, his inner eye still viewing the graceful movements of the Lord. Though the King was fully satisfied, his mind was stuck with a gnawing doubt, which later turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

When the Lord was submerged in dancing, tears cascaded down from His eyes, and saliva drooled out of His mouth and nose in the acme of divine ecstasy. His body was smeared all over with drool and dust, and the King could not comprehend that these were symptoms of spiritual love for the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. Doubt crept into his mind, but without revealing this to anyone he went away feeling happy and content. On returning home, he went to rest for the night. The King had failed to understand even after the days experience that his worshipable Lord Jagannātha had appeared dancing before him incarnated as Lord Caitanya, the topmost *sannyāsī*, so the Lord Himself set about to communicate this truth to the King.

That night, the pious King Pratapārudra saw Lord Jagannātha appear in his dreams. He saw that Lord Jagannātha's body

was covered with dust. His eyes like torrential springs gushed out incessant tears. Drool was dropping out of His mouth and nose wetting His body and making it gleam. In the dream, the King thought to himself, “What kind of pastime is this? all these activities of Lord Jagannātha are incomprehensible to me.” The King approached his beloved Lord to touch His lotus feet, and Lord Jagannātha said, “No, no, this is not proper. When I am smeared with camphor, musk, sandalwood paste, vermilion and other perfumed oils, then I am the most desirable and clean, but see now My body is covered with dust and drool and I am not fit to be touched by you. Today you came to see Me dancing and when I was covered in dust and drool you found Me repulsive. Now that I am in that same dirty condition, how can you think that now I am clean enough to be touched by one who is a great monarch with an illustrious ancestry?” Speaking in this manner, Lord Jagannātha, the most merciful Lord, smiled at His servitor.

The next moment, the King saw, still in the dream, that Lord Jagannātha was no longer seated on the throne. The new occupant of the throne was Lord Caitanya. His body was covered with dust, and smilingly He spoke to the King, “How can this be possible. Today you went away having found Me repugnant, then why do you want to touch Me now?” After the Lord finished speaking, He continued to smile benignly upon the King, thus showering unlimited mercy on him. On awakening after awhile, the King began to weep bitterly and condemned himself for his act.

He repented, “I am the most sinful wretch alive. I could not recognize that Lord Caitanya was the Supreme Lord. Of course, how much intelligence does a human possess to understand the infinite truth on his own. Even Lord Brahmā is deluded by His illusory, *māyā*. Therefore my Lord, be gracious on me, forgive me for my offensive behavior. Accept me, a lowly person, as Your servant and bless me. Then the King realized that his worshipable Deity, Lord Jagannātha, was in fact Lord Caitanya. With this realization his yearning to meet the Lord increased manifold. Yet none of the Lord's associates could arrange a rendezvous with the Lord.

Soon after this incident one day the Lord was sitting in a garden surrounded by all His devotees. Mustering up courage, alone he approached the group and fell flat at the Lord's lotus feet. Immediately the King was heaved high on waves of ecstasy. Shivering, weeping, and horripilation all manifested on his person. The Lord, seeing that the King was indeed imbued with the spiritual sentiments of a Vaiṣṇava placed His hands on him and said, “Rise, O King.” The touch of the supreme master's hand on him brought him out of his ecstatic trance and he clasped his hands around the Lord's feet and began to cry.

The King began to pray to the Lord, “Save me, O Lord! Save me!: You are an ocean of mercy and the Lord of all living entities. Please look upon me favorably and forgive a fallen sinner like me. You are the fully independent Supreme Lord, most munificent. O Lord Caitanya, You are the friend of the poor and meek. Please protect me, for You are eulogized with chosen verses by all the most powerful demigods. You are the husband of the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmidevī. You are the only shelter and Lord of all the surrendered souls. Your form is absolutely transcendental to all material inebriety. You are the initiator of congregational chanting, fearlessly propagating it, for You are the conqueror of the terrible demon, Mura. Your transcendental qualities and names are all unfathomable, and You are the repository of all supramundane excellences. Your lotus feet are constantly worshiped and glorified by Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śeṣa, Śrīdevī and others. You are also the priceless gem amongst all the *sannyāsīs*. O Lord Gaurasundara, I bow humbly before You with this prayer that You may never reject me and deprive me of Your sublime shelter.”

Lord Caitanya was very satisfied with King Pratapārudra's prayers. He blessed him saying, “May you develop an unalloyed taste for serving Lord Kṛṣṇa. Do not engage in any other activity except to render devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Go and perform continuous chanting of the holy name, and you will always be protected by the Lord's Sudarśana cakra. My reason for coming to Nilācala was to meet the three of you, you, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and Rāmānanda Rāya. There is just one request of Mine I want you to keep, that is not to broadcast about Me. If you do so then I will leave right away.” Saying this, He lifted the flower garland adorning His neck and placed it around the King. The Lord bade him farewell, feeling very satisfied with him.

Offering repeated *danḍavats* to the Lord, the King left, taking seriously to heart the Lord's instructions to him. The King's mission was complete; he had seen and met the Lord. From then on he was always engrossed in meditation on the Lord's lotus feet. One who hears this narration of how King Pratapārudra met Lord Gaurasundara is guaranteed to receive divine love of Godhead. The Lord's pastimes in Nilācala are numerous, and He enjoyed His own activities.

The Lord's eternal associates who appeared in Nilācala all spontaneously recognized Lord Caitanya as the Lord of their heart. Śrī Pradyumna Miśra is an ocean of love for Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya personally gave him shelter at His lotus feet. Then there is Śrī Paramānanda Mahāpatra, who is an embodiment of nectarean love for Lord Caitanya. Śrī Kāśī Miśra was always in a state of divine ecstasy relishing the sublime nectar of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. The Lord stayed in his house. The Lord spent most of His time in congregational chanting in the company of these servitors.

Most of the Lord's followers who had developed disinterest to continue in family life, all came to stay in Nilācala. Lord Nityānanda spent a long time in Nilācala. He was always enthusiastic, jubilant, and roamed everywhere in Nilācala like the noon sun. He was perennially saturated and intoxicated with divine love. I am incapable of writing fully about His unlimited ecstatic love. He is always chanting just one name, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya; no other name escaped His lips even in a dream. Just like Śrī Lakṣmaṇa was completely devoted to Lord Rāmacandra, so is Nityānanda fully surrendered to His love for

Lord Caitanya. The reason for the whole world glorifying Lord Caitanya even today is solely due to Lord Nityānanda's mercy. In this way, the two brothers, Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda Prabhu passed Their days in Nilācala.

One day Lord Gaurasundara, the Supreme Personality of Godhead now appeared in human form, was sitting in a secluded place conversing with Lord Nityānanda. The Lord said to Nityānanda Prabhu, "O exalted one, ear Nityānanda, please listen. You must return to Navadvīpa immediately. In My own words I have promised, "I will drown every ignorant, wretched and fallen soul in the deluge of Kṛṣṇa prema. But now if You also take to the life of a hermit discarding Your indomitable enthusiasm, then who will deliver these fallen souls? You are the storehouse of devotional mellows, distributing divine love to everyone. Now if You withdraw within Yourself from these activities, then what was the necessity of Your appearance on this planet? If You want My opinion, then I think You should go immediately to Bengal and relieve the sufferings of the conditioned souls by showering them with a mood of devotional service."

On receiving these instructions from the Lord, Nityānanda Prabhu started for Bengal with all His devote associates. These elevated souls were, Rāmadāsa, Gadādhara dāsa, Raghunātha Vaidya, Kṛṣṇadāsa Paṇḍita, Parameśvara dāsa, and Purandara Paṇḍita. On the way, Lord Nityānanda was the first to be overcome with spiritual ecstasy. This spiritual mood infected all the other associates. They were filled with wonderment seeing Lord Nityānanda. Soon they were also experiencing unlimited divine bliss. Rāmadāsa, a stalwart amongst the Vaiṣṇavas, was imbued with the spiritual mood of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Right in the middle of the road he stood like Gopāla, bent in three places for almost an hour, oblivious of his surroundings.

Gadādhara dāsa was overcome with the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Laughing in sweet peals he said, "Who wants to buy yogurt?" Raghunātha Vaidya was draped in the sublime personality of mother Revatī. Parameśvara dāsa and Kṛṣṇadāsa were both experiencing the mood of Gopāla and the cowherd boys. They began to make sounds with their mouths when herding the cows. Purandara Paṇḍita had climbed up a tree. Shouting he said, "I am Angada," and jumped down in a leap from the branch. Lord Nityānanda had infused in everyone's heart the ecstatic experiences of exhilarating spiritual moods. They traveled like this for a few miles sometimes going to the left and sometimes to the right without any direction.

After awhile they asked the local people, "Please tell us how we can reach the Ganges." They replied, "O goodness, you have already come too far. You must go back a distance of two hours." They changed direction according to the direction of the locals, and traveled for awhile in the right direction, but again after some distance they got aimlessly lost in their mood of ecstasy. They had to stop someone and ask again for proper direction. Again one of them pointed out, "You have to travel another twenty miles to the left." Realizing their confusion, they laughed looking at each other and embarked once more on their journey. They had forgotten the existence of their own bodies, what to speak about remembering the right direction. Unconcerned about the needs of the body like thirst, hunger, fear and suffering, they were always experiencing great joy. Who can describe the transcendental activities of Lord Nityānanda as He traveled, because they are inexhaustible.

Finally they arrived at Pāṇihāṭī village on the banks of the River Ganges. Lord Nityānanda went first to Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita's house, and put up there with all His devotees. Both Rāghava Paṇḍita and Śrī Makaradhvaja Kara and their families were very happy to receive their most exalted guests. The guests remained there for a few days. In that wonderful atmosphere Lord Nityānanda and His devotees felt always spiritually exhilarated. Every once in awhile Lord Nityānanda would roar out His appreciation. Once He felt strongly within Himself the spiritual urge to dance. Suddenly all the singers began appearing there. Śrī Mādhava Ghosh, the famous *kīrtana* singer came. His *kīrtana* singing was the best in the whole world. He was known as the singer from Vṛndāvana because he was especially expert in singing about the Lord's pastimes in Vṛndāvana, which were Lord Nityānanda's favorite *kīrtanas*.

Lord Nityānanda danced with such ecstatic abandon that the earth reeled under His weight. Roaring sounds like thunder incessantly issued from His mouth, and when He fell crashing to the ground people stood back in amazement. When His merciful glance fell on any person, he was instantaneously infused with divine love of Godhead, and by the power of that love the recipient also fell to the ground swooning. Lord Nityānanda is the embodiment of the highest spiritual love, and He has advented simply to alleviate the suffering due to ignorance in this world. While dancing, He manifested all the different ecstatic symptoms of divine love. Finally He sat down on Lord Viṣṇu's throne and acquiesced to a request to be bathed by the devotees.

Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita and His other eternal associates immediately made preparations for the *abhiṣeka* or bathing ceremony. They carried in hundreds of pots filled with Ganges water and perfumed it with delicate aromas. The devotees one by one poured water over His head with a gladdened heart, and all the while chanted the Lord's holy name. The devotees chanted appropriate mantras for the *abhiṣeka* and felt divine exhilaration surge through their person. After the *abhiṣeka* they clothed Him in fresh new clothes, decorated Him with sandalwood paste, and covered His full broad chest with garlands of fragrant wild flowers and *tulasī* leaves. Then they made Him sit on the ornate Viṣṇu throne of shining gold draped with flower garlands and leaves. When Lord Nityānanda sat down, Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita went behind the throne and held an open umbrella over His head.

The whole house now began to reverberate with jubilant sounds of human voices chanting the holy name mingled with the melody of musical instruments. Lifting their arms and begging the Lord to protect them, the devotees forgot all their

cares and worries and even their own bodies. Lord Nityānanda, now totally steeped in the ecstasy of His own divine self, glanced all around, emanating love of Godhead from His eyes, and also showered them with merciful drops of tears.

He called Rāghava Paṇḍita and ordered, “Dear Rāghava Paṇḍita, go and bring Me right this moment a garland of *kadamba* flowers. I am very fond of *kadamba* flowers. In fact I am always attracted to stay in the *kadamba* forest.” With folded hands Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita replied, “But my Lord, this is not the season for *kadambas*.” The Lord gently pressed, “Go and look carefully in the garden. Maybe a few can be seen blooming somewhere.” Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita went inside the house to the garden and was very astonished to see what met his eyes. Fresh and lovely *kadamba* flowers were blooming gleefully in his lemon tree. The flowers were a beautiful hue and gave out sweet fragrance. In fact, these extraordinary flowers could destroy all the material attachments of anyone looking at them. Śrī Rāghava Paṇḍita was beside himself with joy as he beheld this supramundane phenomenon.

He quickly gathered the *kadamba* flowers and began to deftly string them into a garland, and then brought it before Lord Nityānanda. Lord Nityānanda was greatly pleased to see the *kadamba* garland, and He placed it around His neck. The Vaiṣṇavas were intoxicated with the heady aroma of the flowers and were fascinated by the miracle. But soon another miracle took place. Suddenly the whole room was fragrant with a new scent. The delectable fragrance of Dona flower filled the air captivating everyone's mind. Laughing aloud, Lord Nityānanda teased saying, “Tell Me which flower smells like that.”

The devotees replied with folded hands, “The air carries the delightful scent of dona.”

Letting everyone speak first, Lord Nityānanda finally revealed to them a great secret. He said with overflowing compassion, “Pay good attention to this very mysterious happening. Lord Caitanya has come from Nīlācala and is present here and now to hear your *kīrtana*. He is laden with dona flower garlands He is wearing around His neck, and He has entered the form of a tree. The scent from these divine garlands has now permeated everywhere. He has come personally from Purī to hear your *kīrtana* and witness your dancing. Therefore, all of you leave everything else aside and just constantly chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. Let the nectar of the wonderful activities of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya infuse love of Godhead in you.”

Revealing thus this transcendental happening, Lord Nityānanda began to roar loudly, chanting, “Hari! Hari!” He glanced at everyone, His vision emanating sublime love of Godhead. The devotees, touched by the Lord's infinitely tender glance, were instantaneously transported to a region transcending the mundane plane of physical awareness. Dear readers, please try to comprehend the extraordinary potency of Lord Nityānanda, how He inundated the entire planet with the knowledge and taste of devotional service to the Supreme Lord. That superexcellent mood of devotional surrender of the damsels of Vṛndāvana as is described in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* was factually made available by the mercy of Lord Nityānanda to the whole world.

Lord Nityānanda was sitting on the throne, and all the devotees sang and danced in front of Him. Some of the devotees, unable to contain their surging glee, climbed up a tree and began to move on tender branches and twigs, but miraculously did not fall. Others roared thunderously and jumped down from the tree. There were others who circled their arms around a tree trunk and uprooted the whole tree all the while loudly chanting “Hari! Hari!” Some became surcharged with such immense spiritual strength that they ran to the nearby rows of betelnut trees and putting their arms around a few of them uprooted them all at once like a bunch of grass. Lord Nityānanda's extraordinary potency to infuse the devotees with blissful love of Godhead was so dynamic that their bodies began manifesting all the ecstatic symptoms of love of Godhead as described in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* like crying, shivering, being paralyzed, perspiring profusely, horripilation, roaring, hoarseness, turning pale, and so on.

Wherever Lord Nityānanda glanced, He saw everyone being showered by the nectarean rain of devotional ecstasy. As His transcendental glance rested on any devotee, he was instantaneously injected with divine love, and swooning, that devotee fell to the ground unaware of the loss of his clothing. Magnetically drawn to the Lord's divine person, the devotees stretched out in an attempt to reach Him. The Lord, a perfect picture of complacency, remained seated on His throne smiling benignly. All His main associates became imbued with extraordinary spiritual potency and mystic opulences. They became omniscient; their every word became true; their features flowered into Cupid's beautiful attractiveness. Whoever they touched became electrified with spiritual current thus making them lose any affiliations towards the mundane, even their own bodies.

Lord Nityānanda spent three months in Pāṇihāṭī performing transcendental pastimes with His associates. The three months passed quickly, carrying the devotees in the waves of divine ecstasy. Unconcerned about their physical needs, they sang and danced. Only the *Vedas* will try to fully describe in detail the activities that went on in Pāṇihāṭī. What Lord Nityānanda did in the span of an hour is practically impossible for anyone to narrate exhaustively. Sometimes He danced in a stately manner surrounded by the devotees, and then suddenly He decided to sit on the throne and ordered the devotees to dance before Him one by one.

During each of the devotees' dance performance, many incidents occurred. The dancing inspired transcendental loving emotions amongst the devotees, drowning them in a deluge of love of Godhead. All the spectator devotees fell swooning

in a moment when the ecstasy reached an apex. It looked like a cluster of banana trees being uprooted in a storm. The devotees did as directed by Lord Nityānanda. They constantly chanted Lord Caitanya's glories led by Lord Nityānanda. The whole atmosphere was spiritually highly volatile. Whoever came even to simply watch the happening would be so infected with this spiritual mood that they would also become totally involved, oblivious of everything else. Whatever the devotees desired was immediately fulfilled. Thus the three months seemed to fly by without anyone noticing.

One day during these three months, Lord Nityānanda felt the desire to decorate Himself with ornaments and fine dresses. No sooner He felt the urge and fineries were being brought by different people without prior information. All these gifts were very precious and of the best quality. The finest silks, exquisite gold jewelry studded with brilliant gems. The people came with their gifts and offered them to the Lord with great reverence. The Lord tried on all the different ornaments. There was such a wide variety of all shapes and designs of jewelry that one had never seen before. Gold ornaments studded with pearls, emeralds, rubies, the gold intricately worked upon to give exquisite designs.

He wore beautiful rings on all His ten fingers. Many brilliant necklaces of priceless gems decorated His neck and chest. Then showing special favor to Lord Śiva, He slipped two Rudrākṣa necklaces around His neck. As He moved, the light set afire the gems set into His golden earrings. The silver anklets around His lotus feet tinkled pleasingly. White, cream, blue and yellow silks draped Him in flowing grace. An enchanting sight it was indeed. Devotees had lovingly made beautiful garlands of fragrant flowers like *mālatī*, *mallikā*, *yuthi*, and *campaka* and now put them over His head to sit delicately on His chest with the rest of the shimmering gems. But with each motion they swayed. The fragrance of these garlands mingled with the aroma of fresh sandalwood paste that were applied on His body filled the air with a heavy sweet scent.

Soft shining silks of different hues were tied around His head to make a multicolored turban. Bright flower garlands were also neatly placed on the turban to make a unique headgear. His happy face exuded irresistible glowing charm enough to overshadow the brilliance of a million moons. Smiling, He constantly chanted the Lord's name. His lotus-eyed glance roved the room and released in every heart the floodgate of love of Godhead. Two iron rods that shone like silver stood on either side of His throne. He held one in His hand as Lord Balarāma holds His plough. His associates, who were actually the expansions of the cowherd boys of Vraja, took up different ornaments and instruments that decorate them as they go grazing the cows. They dresses themselves with armlets, belts, anklets, necklaces; tied horns, flutes and reeds to their belts; and looped the rope for tying cows around their shoulders.

Then Lord Nityānanda went out with all His associates as if going to graze the cows. They visited the houses of all the Vaiṣṇavas residing on both banks of the Ganges. Himself immersed in an ocean of ecstasy that was within Himself, the Lord blessed everyone with His association. The people were helplessly drawn to Him on sight, captivated by His power and beauty. He is the embodiment of all transcendental mellows, representing both the holy name and the Supreme Godhead Himself. Even the atheists and agnostics upon seeing Him began to offer prayers to Him feeling an urge in their melted hearts to offer everything to Him. The most munificent Lord showers causeless mercy upon all.

Wherever He went, whatever He did, Lord Nityānanda was constantly absorbed in *saṅkīrtana*. And when He began dancing and singing *kīrtana*, He sent everyone reeling in spirals of divine exultation. Even the young children exhibited wonderful powers in His presence. Children from ordinary households manifested such strength that they uprooted big trees roaring loudly like thunderbolts. They said, "I am a cowherd boy," and ran about. Hundreds tried to hold these children but failed to do so. This was such an extraordinary feat for a mere child. The children chanted jubilantly, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, jaya Nityānanda!" A more wonderful phenomenon then came to light. The children had gone without food for an entire month. Everyone was amazed, so before they lost their minds, they prayed to Lord Nityānanda and took shelter of Him. The Lord looked after the children like a father. He fed them, actually putting food in their mouths. Sometimes He bound them, making them sit next to Him. He would even beat them as a disciplinarian, and enjoying Himself, He would laugh out loudly.

One day Lord Nityānanda came to the house of Gadādhara dāsa feeling great affection for him. Śrī Gadādhara dāsa was always submerged in the ecstatic mood of the *gopīs* of Vraja. Lifting a water pot filled with Ganges water on his head, he would go around vending, "Who wants to buy cows milk?" Such was his absorption in the mood of Vraja. In his house he worshiped a beautiful Deity of Lord Bāla-gopāla, Kṛṣṇa. When Lord Nityānanda came inside the house and saw the charming Bāla-gopāla Deity, He immediately picked Him up and held Him to His chest. All the devotees began to chant Kṛṣṇa's name loudly, and Lord Nityānanda, roaring like a lion began to dance.

Śrī Mādhava Ghosh started singing. He was specially gifted with a very sweet voice, and so when his song described Kṛṣṇa's pastimes of levying taxes on the *gopīs*, Lord Nityānanda was overwhelmed with a surge of divine emotions. Thus the Lord was engaged in ecstatic pastimes with the most fortunate Gadādhara dāsa who never forgot for a moment that he was a *gopī*.

The Lord continued to dance so gracefully that it is impossible to describe His lissome movements. He manifested all the ecstatic symptoms and the transformations of ecstatic emotion of love of Godhead. His movements were like flashes of lightening, yet charming and delicate. The expressions with His eyes and eyebrows were subtle, and He always kept a mild smile playing on His lips. The movements of His head were expertly done like a seasoned classical dancer, knowing the correct nuances to express the various transcendental moods. Then bringing His exquisite feet together, He began to

jump with ease and flowing movements. He was the all-merciful Lord, so wherever He looked all the men and women felt drawn into an ocean of indescribable bliss. Such was the impact of His benign glance that everyone lost all sense of time, body and matter, and experienced only an overwhelming joy.

The divine devotional bliss that Lord Nityānanda showered on everyone without discrimination by His causeless mercy was the object of great value for very elevated yogis and sages. By His mercy, other miracles also came to be manifest. When a grown-up man as strong as an elephant has to fast for three days, he becomes weak. The children were fasting for a month, but now when they danced they seemed to have more energy and stamina than a lion. And although Lord Nityānanda manifested such miraculous powers, no one could understand how everything was happening due to the illusory potency of the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Lord Nityānanda spent a few days in Gadādhara dāsa's house drowning everyone in an ocean of transcendental bliss. Gadādhara dāsa felt divine exhilaration. Forgetting the mundane surrounding, he constantly chanted and made everyone also chant encouraging them tirelessly.

In that same village lived a very tyrannical Muslim priest, or Kazi. He was strongly opposed to the congregational chanting of the holy names. Intoxicated with spiritual ecstasy, Gadādhara dāsa one night made his way to the Kazi's house. Everyone was mortally fearful of the Kazi, but Gadādhara dāsa this night strode fearlessly to his residence. Never once did he stop chanting as he entered the house. The Kazi's friends and family members stared speechless in disbelief at Gadādhara dāsa. Gadādhara dāsa said, "Where is that rascal Kazi? He had better chant Kṛṣṇa's name or I will sever his head." The Kazi came charging in, fuming with rage, but seeing Gadādhara dāsa he calmed himself.

The Kazi inquired, "Why have you come here, Gadādhara dāsa?" Gadādhara dāsa replied, "I have some things to discuss with you. Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda have incarnated in this age and have inspired the entire world to chant Kṛṣṇa's holy name. Only you remain to chant, so I have come to urge you to chant Lord Hari's name. The Lord's holy name is all auspicious and supremely beneficial, and I take responsibility for saving you from all sinful reactions if you simply chant." Although the Kazi was known to be very cruel, now he was speechless and stupefied. Then smiling wanly, the Kazi said, "Listen, Gadādhara dāsa, tomorrow I will certainly comply with your request to chant 'Hari! Hari!' but tonight please go home." As soon as Gadādhara dāsa heard Lord Hari's name from the Kazi's mouth, he became jubilant. He said, "Why wait for tomorrow? Just now you have taken the Lord's name, and now you are completely free from all sins and inauspiciousness."

Saying this to the Kazi, Śrī Gadādhara dāsa began to dance like a madman clapping his hands. Then suddenly he turned around and left, leaving a surprised Kazi still staring after him. Gadādhara dāsa returned to his residence. Gadādhara dāsa was always absorbed in meditating on Lord Nityānanda. He is counted among the foremost of Lord Caitanya's associates. This Kazi was considered so evil that no saintly persons would come near him. In fact, they said his close proximity would contaminate anyone. Yet Gadādhara dāsa showed his mercy even to such a demoniac person as he was. Gadādhara dāsa was able to make him temporarily forget his malicious ways and inspire him to take Kṛṣṇa's holy name once.

The truth is that one who is imbued with love of Kṛṣṇa can never be attacked by snakes, tigers or any wild beasts, or be burned by fire. The devotional surrender to Kṛṣṇa, Lord Brahmā strives for, and the intimate loving exchanges of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana with Kṛṣṇa were all manifest in the persons of Lord Nityānanda's associates solely by the causeless mercy of Lord Nityānanda. Therefore, all of you, my brothers, please serve the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda. By His infinite grace one can attain the eternal shelter of Lord Caitanya.

A few days passed, and one day Lord Nityānanda had the urge to see mother Śacī. So He left the next day travelling towards Navadvīpa with His associates. On the way He came to a village called Khadadaha. He went to the house of Purandara Paṇḍita. The Lord felt such great ecstasy that He began to dance jubilantly. It is impossible to pin down His graceful and lithe movements. Purandara Paṇḍita was also a great devotee who was already mad with love of Godhead. He climbed up a tree and began to roar loudly like a lion. Another devotee named Caitanya dāsa had become so surcharged with spiritual ecstasy that he was oblivious of everything around him. He ran into the forest chasing away the wild beasts with his rumbling roars. Once he saw a tiger and jumped on his back. The tiger was helpless, unable to do anything. Such is the potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. He then picked up a huge python and placed it on his lap and began to play with it fearlessly as he had earlier played with the tiger. All these miracles were taking place by Lord Nityānanda's mercy.

Lord Nityānanda is especially inclined and affectionate to His devotees. He makes them very subtly taste the highest devotional mellows that even Lord Brahmā is hankering after. Śrī Caitanya dāsa was deep in ecstasy, totally forgetting himself. He continuously spoke his intimate thoughts. He remained in the water for several days without a trace of discomfiture. All his movements in this moment were practically unnoticeable, almost like an inert being. His devotional ecstasies were too numerous and subtle to be described. Śrī Caitanya dāsa was truly a very surrendered devotee, just like the great Murāri Paṇḍita. Even if the breeze that has touched his body touches someone, he can immediately feel growing attachment for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

There are some who call themselves Caitanya dāsa, or servant of Lord Caitanya, but even in their dreams they never glorify the Lord. Lord Caitanya is the heart and soul of Advaita Ācārya, and by the Lord's mercy and Advaita Ācārya's loving devotion to the Lord, that Advaita Ācārya is always situated in transcendence. All glories to Advaita Ācārya, whose devotion to the Lord is exemplary! He is supremely powerful due to the Lord's grace. The real devotees consider that this

relationship of Advaita Ācārya as Lord Caitanya servant has made Advaita Ācārya great, whereas the pretender devotees think that such descriptions of Advaita Ācārya diminishes His glory. How can such reprobates keep names like "servant of Lord Caitanya" and take shelter of Advaita Ācārya. As for those who refer to these sinful reprobates as Advaita Ācārya's followers, they also do not actually know the Ācārya's heart. Their keeping names like Caitanya dāsa is the same as when the demons keep names like *punyajana* or pious person.

Lord Nityānanda stayed on in Khadadaha for a few days and then left with His followers to the village of Saptagrāma. In this village, the famous seven sages (sapta ṛṣis) performed severe austerities sitting on the bank of the Ganges, and finally attained the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, Govinda. This place is known throughout the universe as Trivenī-ghāṭa. The three most holy rivers—Ganges, Yamunā and Sarasvatī confluence as this spot. The mere act of seeing this place purifies one of all sins. Lord Nityānanda and His associates bathed there feeling sublime joy. From there they went to Uddhāraṇa Datta's house, also situated on the banks of the Ganges and sojourned for a few days.

Śrī Uddhāraṇa Datta received the Lord with great love and reverence and worshiped Him with all his heart, body and words. In this way, Śrī Uddhāraṇa Datta inherited the transcendental fortune to serve Lord Nityānanda, who is the Supreme Lord eternally for His servitor Śrī Uddhāraṇa Datta. And because of Śrī Uddhāraṇa Datta, the entire community of traders became purified, of this there is no doubt. It was as if Lord Nityānanda had advented specifically to deliver this community and elevate them to receive loving devotional service of the Supreme Lord.

Lord Nityānanda spent all His time going from one trader's house to another performing congregational chanting of the holy name. The traders' families surrendered fully at the Lord's feet, taking His shelter. It was a rare and amazing sight to see how this inherently pious, shilling and pence community responded so spontaneously to the process of pure devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. This clearly indicates the unlimited potency of Lord Nityānanda that He could imbue in this materialistic and ignorant community the urge for self-realization. The Lord tirelessly kept up an enthusiastic *sankīrtana* with His associates as long as He stayed in Saptagrāma. His *sankīrtana* pastimes here will take more than a thousand years to fully describe.

The blissful feelings that one experienced in *sankīrtana* here in Saptagrāma reminded everyone of their ecstasy in Navadvīpa *sankīrtana*. People and devotees were so surcharged with the holy names that they ignored eating and sleeping. The whole village resounded with the holy name. Lord Nityānanda led the *sankīrtana* to every home through all the streets and localities of Saptagrāma. And when the people beheld the Lord's dancing form, it was impossible for anyone to check himself from swooning in joy. What to speak of others, even a meat-eating Muslim, who generally do not believe in Lord Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, was moved to tears of ecstasy, so much so that a *brāhmaṇa* derided himself for not being able to match his devotion. All glories to Lord Nityānanda, whose mercy can make the impossible possible! The days in Saptagrāma passed amidst such miracles and ecstasy, and Lord Nityānanda was its main actor.

Lord Nityānanda then traveled for a few days and came to Śāntipura and went directly to His beloved compatriot, Advaita Ācārya's, house. Śrī Advaita Ācārya felt an indescribable pleasure spreading through His heart upon seeing Lord Nityānanda. Roaring loudly "Hari! Hari!" Śrī Advaita offered repeated obeisances and circumambulated Him. He encircled His arms around the Lord in a loving embrace and bathed Him in His cascading tears of joy. Both of Them were almost unconscious with overwhelming spiritual emotions as loving exchanges welled up in their hearts. They rolled in the courtyard, tight in each other's embrace, and then both tried to touch the other's feet. Each of them roared continuously like a thousand lions, unable to contain Their madness. Finally, after a long time, they sat down quieting themselves.

Advaita Ācārya then folded His hands and began to pray to the Lord in sublime pleasure. He said, "Your transcendental form is saturated with eternal joy, hence You are named Nityānanda. You are the embodiment of Lord Caitanya's transcendental qualities. You are the embodiment of Lord Caitanya's transcendental qualities. You are the cause of liberation of the conditioned souls. You are also the firm pillar of religion unswayed by the destructive forces of total dissolution, the only shelter. You teach the science of love of Godhead, devotional service to Lord Caitanya. You are truly the solid main trunk of the tree of Lord Caitanya's family, possessing full spiritual potency. You are the supreme teacher of all devotees of the Lord like Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Nārada Muni and so on. Although everyone can attain the platform of devotional service to the Supreme Lord only through Your grace, yet You are not affected by pride in spite of this most elevated position. You are the deliverer of the most fallen souls never scrutinizing anyone's faults, thus only those who are endowed with volumes of piety are able to know You. You are personified supramundane knowledge; anyone can extirpate nescience simply by remembering You. No one can know You as You are unless You personally reveal Yourself. Transcendental qualities like freedom from anger and ever-blissfulness decorate Your personality. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the support and mainstay of Ananta Śeṣa and the other demigods.

You are Śrī Lakṣmaṇa, the slayer of demons; and in Vṛndāvana, You are Lord Haladhara, or Baladeva, the son of *agopī*. You have appeared in this material world simply to deliver the wretched conditioned souls. The pure devotion that is so intensely desired by great mystic yogis and philosophers is readily given by You to anyone." Speaking eloquently in the Lord's praise, Śrī Advaita felt an upsurge of great spiritual emotions, and He went into an ecstatic trance. Śrī Advaita is one of the few who are fully aware of Lord Nityānanda's real personality, for this knowledge is accessible to the meager few who possess sufficient spiritual insight.

The arguments and verbal fights that are sometimes seen between Lord Nityānanda and Śrī Advaita Ācārya are actually just mock, done in a spirit of deep commaderic affection for each other and not fathomable by all. Very few can comprehend the essence of Śrī Advaita's words. He is nondifferent from the Supreme Lord. But now they spent intimate moments together discussing topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. This increased their attachment and respect for each other. Lord Nityānanda finally begged permission from Śrī Advaita to leave, and proceeded to Navadvīpa.

On reaching Navadvīpa, Lord Nityānanda first went to meet mother Śacī. He offered obeisances at her feet. Mother Śacī was excessively happy to see Lord Nityānanda. She said, "My dear, You are truly the Supersoul who knows everything. I was yearning to see You, and immediately You appear from nowhere. Who can know Your true self? Now please stay in Navadvīpa for sometime so I can see You once in every ten days or so. I am miserable and I wanted to see You. You have come miraculously to wipe away my tears." Lord Nityānanda smiled gently as He listened to mother Śacī's words.

Lord Nityānanda was not confused about Śacīmātā's spiritual potency and position. He said, "Listen, Ai, you are the universal mother. The purpose of My coming to Navadvīpa is to see you. I also have a strong desire for your transcendental association, and so now I will remain in Navadvīpa in accordance with your instructions." Thus presenting Himself to mother Śacī and addressing her in a befitting manner, the Lord went about Navadvīpa doing His business.

Lord Nityānanda gathered His associates and went to every house in Navadvīpa performing congregational chanting. He was in constant ecstasy as He did incessant *saṅkīrtana*. The Lord dressed in a special and very attractive way that was a pleasurable sight. He wrapped many colored silk clothes around His head like a mahārāja, and on top of this turban were strand after strand of flower garlands. His chest was covered with innumerable glittering necklaces of gold, pearls and many studded gems. From His ears gently dangled golden earrings set with shiny white pearls. Bejeweled armlets and bracelets graced His hands and arms. His whole body was covered with countless jewelry of priceless value. Different parts of His body were exquisitely decorated with designs of sandalwood paste. Often He acted like Bāla-gopāla, Kṛṣṇa, as a small fat toddler of Vṛndāvana.

Sometimes He picked up an iron rod overcome with ecstatic emotions and held it with both hands, all His fingers decorated with golden rings. Multicolored silks draped all over Him. Cane, flute and horn were stuck in His belt with leisurely carelessness. His very sight captured the minds of the people. His gait was that of the royal elephant. With every step the silver ankle bells jangled musically. The Lord's transcendental glances immediately invoked spiritual love of Godhead wherever they rested. Lord Nityānanda moved about in the town of Lord Caitanya's birth with great pleasure, dressed in this wonderful fashion to give joy in the hearts of everyone.

Navadvīpa was like the capitol city of Mathurā, teeming with people. Many pious people lived there. They were so religious that wretched sinners could become free from their sins just by seeing them. So also there were such abominable reprobates that if their shadow touched anyone he would become bereft of all his piety. All these people, whoever they were, were inspired on the path of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness by the mercy of Lord Nityānanda. Lord Caitanya had earlier liberated so many of these people, and now Lord Nityānanda was purifying many others. He saved the thieves, rogues, derelicts and wretches.

Listen to the wonderful story of how Lord Nityānanda saved the most fallen. In Navadvīpa lived a young *brāhmaṇa* who was the biggest rogue and dacoit. Although born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, he was an arsenal of all depraved habits and was the leader of the dacoits. He was brutally malicious and killed without feeling. He was always in the company of rogues. Once this dacoit leader saw Lord Nityānanda bedecked with all the fineries and priceless jewels and gloated after this treasure wanting to steal it all. So pretending to be a member of the Lord's *saṅkīrtana* party, the dacoit went along with the chanting party wherever they went. He was biding time for the right opportunity to steal everything. Lord Nityānanda immediately knew his wicked intentions.

The Lord, learning of this, left His party and went quietly to live in Hiranya Paṇḍita's house. Hiranya Paṇḍita was a very pious *brāhmaṇa* and lived frugally, becoming of a true *brāhmaṇa*. In the meanwhile, the dacoit leader called his men and chalked out a plan. He said, "My brothers, why should we worry any longer? Our protector, goddess Candi has arranged for all the wealth to be in one place. This avadhūta has on His person gold, gems and jewelry worth lakhs of rupees. He is right now hiding in Hiranya Paṇḍita's house which is in a secluded and lonely part of town. Collect your swords and shields and we shall meet tonight and raid that house and loot everything." They dispersed quickly and quietly eagerly waiting for night to descend when they could carry out their nefarious crime.

That night the dacoits with their weapons collected near the house where the Lord was residing. They sent a spy to get proper information. The Lord was then enjoying a sumptuous meal with all His associates sitting around Him and chanting loudly. The devotees were all submerged in the bliss of chanting Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name. Some roared jubilantly like thunderclaps, others wailed loudly in insatiable joy, and still others clapped their hands and laughed in peals. All around, the devotees were crying out loudly to express their child-like unrestrained glee. They were all wide awake. The spy returned to his gang informing them, "The avadhūta is eating, and everyone else is wide awake and jubilant." So the dacoits decided that, "Let them eat and go to sleep, then we will attack the house."

They made themselves comfortable under a tree and settled down to wait. They started talking amongst themselves,

dreaming of their future fortunes. Someone said, "I want the gold bracelets." Another said, "I will take the pearl necklace." Another fancied, "The earrings are for me." Yet another dreamed, "I'll have the gold chains and necklaces." Someone else said, "But leave the silver ankle bells for me." And they went on daydreaming of enormous riches. Just then, by Lord Nityānanda's desire, slumber overcame the whole dacoit gang. Right there under the tree the dacoits went into a deep sleep. Such was the workings of the Lord's divine potency that they slept through the night undisturbed and almost in a state of unconsciousness.

The crows' harsh cawing woke them up early next morning. They became disheartened and frustrated to find that the night had passed. They collected their weapons, and keeping them in safe hiding they went to the Ganges for their baths. After the bath they began to blame each other. One of them accused the other, "You were the first to fall asleep," and he retorted, "So you were the one who stayed awake the whole night." Someone tried to pacify them saying, "Why do you have to fight like this? Be thankful that goddess Candi has saved us from total shame." The young *brāhmaṇa* dacoit leader said, "Of what use are these arguments? Whatever has happened is due to goddess Candi's desire. The passing of one day is not the end of everything. I can understand that because we did not worship mother Candi before, she has deluded us all. Today let us perform a grand Candi worship with a lot of meat and wine."

They eagerly collected the required ingredients and meat and wine and worshiped goddess Candi that night. The next day the dacoits sharpened and cleaned their weapons. In the night they came to Lord Nityānanda's residence dressed in dark blue clothes. The residents of the house were already in deep slumber. Hiding near the house, the dacoits saw that it was guarded by many sentries. The sentries were all well armed and were all loudly and continuously chanting the holy name as they walked about guarding the house. All of the sentries were giant-sized, able-bodied men. They carried many different weapons. The dacoits could easily make out that any one of the sentries could take on a hundred of them alone.

These sentries were not ordinary guards. They wore *tilaka* marks on their foreheads and bodies and *tulasī* beads around their necks. They constantly chanted Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name while Lord Nityānanda slept inside the house. The dacoits were taken by complete surprise. They slowly slouched to a distance away from the house and sat down. They wondered dejectedly, "From where did these sentries come suddenly?"

One of them said, "The *avadhūta* must have somehow known of our coming and He brought these sentries from somewhere."

His friend replied, "This *avadhūta* person is very knowledgeable and is a seer. I have heard this from many people. He can certainly protect Himself. The sentries that are on guard are all more formidable than normal sentries; they are almost superhuman. I suppose this is another display of His divine potency. No wonder they call Him Gosvāmī."

Another interjected, "I think you are quite ignorant, for one who eats and wears such fancy ornaments, how can He be called a Gosvāmī?"

Finally the dacoit leader, the young *brāhmaṇa*, spoke up saying, "I have calmly considered all the factors. I see that many powerful and influential people come to meet the *avadhūta*. These sentries must be the best soldiers of some powerful king come here to guard Him. And these sentries by His influence have become attracted to spiritual elevation, hence they also chant "Hari! Hari!" So as long as these sentries are here, we should stay away. I think after about ten days we can expect them gone, and then we can return, but now let us disperse quietly and go back to our houses." The dacoits stealthily left that place and were gone. Lord Nityānanda inside the house continued to perform His pastimes unperturbed.

Anyone can easily overcome all reverses just by remembering those souls who have taken full shelter of Lord Nityānanda's lotus feet. Who can harm such an omnipotent Supreme Lord when simply by remembering His servitors one can surmount the insurmountable ocean of nescience? Lord Ganesh, the remover of all adversities, along with his associates, are Lord Nityānanda's servants. The Lord's partial expansion, Rudra, Lord Śiva, is the destroyer of the entire material world. Another of the Lord's partial expansions, Lord Ananta, holds the cosmic manifestation on one of His hoods. If by chance He moves, there are terrible earthquakes. Who can make such a supremely powerful Lord fearful of anything or anyone?

The Lord is moving about in Navadvīpa freely performing ecstatic *kīrtanas* wherever He goes. Undisturbed, He eats, sleeps, and enacts His pastimes, His entire body still decorated with priceless gems and jewelry. He is Lord Baladeva, the son of Rohinidevī. Chewing pan mixed with camphor, He smiles enchanting the whole world. Fearless and with endless exuberance, the Lord, accompanied by His associates, roams everywhere. His devotees too were unassailed by any kind of anxiety.

The dacoits made another attempt to lay siege to Lord Nityānanda's residence. That night, by divine arrangement, the sky was overcast with black, billowing clouds that plunged the earth in pitch darkness. The streets were deserted. The dacoits held their weapons close to their bodies feeling insecure in this sudden terrible gloom. As they came close to the house, they were suddenly struck by blindness. They stumbled forward, groping as if in a dark abyss, their minds paralyzed, their intelligence unable to function. Some of them plunged into the moat surrounding the house and were immediately

attacked by leeches, insects, and giant mosquitos. Some of them lost their way into the refuse garbage pit and fell in. The insects and scorpions were unsparing and vicious. Some others walked straight into a bush of thorns and became completely entangled and bruised by the big cruel thorns. Afraid to move in the dark and be further punctured, they remained like prisoners, unmoving. Others had veered far from the house, and in the darkness falling inside the canal near the house and lay moaning and groaning in pain with fractured legs and hands. Many dacoits began to feel suddenly very feverish. They began to slowly consider their plight.

Just at this moment, Lord Indra with great pleasure sent down sheets of rain accompanied by raging storms and ominous lightning. Already the dacoits were being ravaged by leeches, scorpions, and insects, and now they were being further inflicted by the merciless downpour. Then came the large pieces of hail pounding them endlessly. Although the dacoits did not die, they were tossed about in an ocean of excruciating pain and misery. Blinded and drenched, they began to shiver with the clammy coldness, standing helpless against the fury of nature. Lord Indra knowing that the dacoits had come to harm Lord Nityānanda, became angry and punished them specially hard.

After taking the punishment for awhile, the dacoit leader, the young *brāhmaṇa*, was suddenly struck by a thought. He reasoned in his mind, "This Nityānanda is not a mortal; He is certainly the Supreme Lord. The first time, He put us in deep slumber, and I did not understand by His illusory potency. The next time, it was these very strange and almost superhuman sentries, but even then I could not realize the truth. Hence I deserve this misery because I am such a sinful reprobate that I wanted to steal the Lord's wealth. Now who can deliver me from this calamity? I think no one can save me except Lord Nityānanda Himself."

Thinking in this manner he began to meditate on Lord Nityānanda's lotus feet taking full shelter in Him. The result of taking shelter and remembering the Lord's lotus feet is that such a person, even though the lowest of sinners is immediately saved.

The young *brāhmaṇa* prayed, "You are the Supreme Lord, Bāla-gopāla, please save me, please protect me. You are the maintainer of all living entities. O Lord, a person who falls to the earth, his only shelter is mother earth herself. Similarly one who commits offenses at Your lotus feet can seek the only shelter, Your lotus feet, by which all miseries are mitigated. And You are so merciful that You forgive all the offenses of the most wretched living entities. I am the black sheep and destroyer of the *brāhmaṇa* society, a slayer of cows. There is no one more degraded than myself. Yet it is also true that even if the most sinful person prays for Your shelter, then he can become free from this material imprisonment. O Lord, You sustain all the living entities throughout their lives, and at the end only You are there to protect them. So Lord, please save me today from this predicament, and if I remain alive, then I have certainly learned my lesson. I only desire that I can have You birth after birth as my Lord and master, and I Your eternal slave."

Lord Nityānanda is the most munificent Supreme Lord. When He heard the piteous prayers of the dacoit leader, He immediately alleviated their misery. Suddenly, the dacoits found themselves able to see again. By the Lord's divine powers, the storm and gale did not afflict them further. Gradually they began to move and walk as if they had risen from their graves. They returned to their individual houses, and right away bathed in the purifying waters of the Ganges. The dacoit leader had different feelings; he began to weep incessantly. He did not go anywhere, but went inside the house wanting to meet and throw himself at the Lord's feet.

Inside, the Lord of the universe, Lord Nityānanda, was sitting and glancing benignly at all the miserable conditioned souls. The devotees all around Him were chanting loudly, and the Lord Himself roared like thunder with divine bliss. At this moment the dacoit leader entered in the Lord's presence. He threw his arms in the sky, and crying out, "Save me!" he threw himself down before the Lord. His whole body quivered, and the hair on his body stood on end as tears flowed out in streams. Totally absorbed in sublime ecstasy, he became oblivious of everything around him, and he roared like a lion, unable to stop the surge of divine emotions.

Such was the spiritual influence of Lord Nityānanda that the *brāhmaṇa* began to suddenly dance with his arms raised high chuckling in irrepressible glee. He sang continuously, "O Lord Nityānanda, savior of the fallen souls, You are my only master."

The devotees and the other people assembled there were astounded at this sight. They exclaimed, "What a miraculous transformation; from a deadly dacoit to this condition."

The more cautious ones said, "Maybe this is just a trick. Suddenly he will start his real business of looting."

Others said, "Our Lord Nityānanda is the savior of the most abominable sinners. By His mercy this reprobate has been transformed."

Seeing this display of extreme spiritual emotions, Lord Nityānanda smiled and said, "*Obrāhmaṇa*, please explain the reason for your present behavior. I have noticed some wonderful expressions in you. What have you seen or heard relating to Lord Kṛṣṇa that has prompted you to act in this manner. Tell us everything without being constrained."

The fortunate *brāhmaṇa* remained dumbfounded for some time hearing the Lord's words, only unrestricted tears flowed freely from his eyes. He then rolled on the ground and sometimes cried loudly, sometimes laughed out loudly, then suddenly springing up he began to dance and sing. All his actions were spontaneous and natural.

The *brāhmaṇa* calmed himself after a while and began to speak in the Lord's presence. He said, "O Lord, I am a resident of Navadvīpa and a *brāhmaṇa* in name only. Actually my demeanor is that of the lowest caste of caṇḍālas or dog-eaters. My nature is as vicious as a hunter's. From my early days I have always been in the company of thieves and dacoits, hence I know only violence, hate and murder. The residents of Navadvīpa shake in fear at my sight and there is not a sin left that I have not committed. When I saw Your beautiful ornaments I wanted to steal them. So one night I gathered my dacoit gang and came to loot those jewelries from Your transcendental body. But that night You put everyone of us into deep slumber, yet by Your illusory potency I could not understand Your hand behind this extraordinary phenomenon.

"A few days later we made another attempt. This time we had properly worshiped goddess Candi and then came with well-oiled and sharpened weapons. Yet another miraculous spectacle awaited us. We saw Your house surrounded by tall and stout guards marching about, chanting the holy name loudly. All of them were wearing long garlands reaching down to the knees. You were safe and unperturbed sleeping inside the house. We are so wretched that even then we could not recognize Your divine status. Disgruntled we muttered, "Who knows where these sentries have come from." and then shuffled away to our houses.

"Before our third attempt we waited for quite a few days then yesterday we came, and instantly upon arrival we lost our vision. We stumbled into the compound of this house unable to properly see and fell into ditches and thorny bushes. The storm, hail and rains mercilessly tortured us but we were helpless against them. After we had gone through hellish punishment and pain, everyone gradually became enlightened about the boundless mercy of the Lord. By Your grace we began to remember Your lotus feet. Our sight returned, and we were able to see in the true sense. Such is Your causeless mercy, hence You are the savior of the most fallen souls. You are so magnanimous that simply by thinking of You I was let free from the hellish distress. Anyone can factually enter the spiritual world extirpating the nescience within just meditating on You." Speaking in this manner, the *brāhmaṇa* began to cry and dance with raised flaying hands. Such are the superexcellent pastimes of the Supreme Lord Nityānanda.

The assembled devotees were astounded hearing the *brāhmaṇa* speak, and they felt great regard for him and offered him respect. The *brāhmaṇa* began speaking once more, "O Lord, now I beg permission to leave. I have no desire to maintain this body any further. As I have nurtured malicious intent in my heart towards You, I must repent. I will cast this useless body into the Ganges and finish my life." The Lord and the devotees were moved by the *brāhmaṇa*'s sincerity. The Lord then replied, "O *brāhmaṇa*, you are truly a very fortunate soul. You are an elevated servitor of Lord Kṛṣṇa. How is it otherwise possible for you to witness this miracle? Because you are the recipient of the Lord's mercy and His beloved servant. The Supreme Lord Caitanya has advented to save the most fallen souls, of this there is no doubt.

Now listen carefully, O *brāhmaṇa*, From this moment if you give up your ghastly sinful activities then I am willing to take responsibility for all your previous misdeeds. No more aggression, violence, looting or murder; forever get rid of them. Practice religious life and chant the holy names of the Supreme Lord. Then later you can also save others. Go and meet other dacoits and murderers and bring them to the path of pure religious living."

The Lord then took the garland from His neck and placed it over the *brāhmaṇa*'s head being very pleased with him. The air was resounding with the devotee's jubilant cheers of the holy name. The shackles of material nescience broke away from the *brāhmaṇa*.

The *brāhmaṇa* threw himself at the Lord's feet and grasping tightly he began calling out His name again and again, tears streaked down his cheeks. He cried out, "O Lord Nityānanda, You are the savior of lost souls. Please allow this wretch a little place at Your lotus feet. I was so abominable that I was malicious to You, and so there is no place for me to go."

Lord Nityānanda is an ocean of compassion. He placed His lotus feet on the *brāhmaṇa*'s head. The *brāhmaṇa* became instantly purified of all offenses. Later this converted dacoit brought many others to take shelter of Lord Caitanya by chanting and leading a pure life. All of them discarded their old bad ways of looting and murder and began to behave gently. They were chanting lakhs of holy names, and soon became experienced and fixed in devotional service to the Supreme Lord. They absorbed themselves all the time in singing the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa with divine love. Such is the magnanimity of Lord Nityānanda. In none of the previous incarnations was the Supreme Lord so compassionate as Lord Nityānanda. Lord Nityānanda gives liberation and love of God instantly to the conditioned souls. Hence if anyone, even an elevated *brāhmaṇa*, disregards Lord Nityānanda, then such a person is degraded to the level of dacoits and murderers.

The ecstatic symptoms of love of Godhead which are so intensely desired by the master yogis who want to experience crying, shivering, horripilation and other such spiritual emotions is now made easily available to rogues and thieves by the wonderful divine potency of Lord Nityānanda. Therefore all of you please worship such a merciful Lord Nityānanda. By His grace one can attain the shelter of Lord Gauracandra. One who hears Lord Nityānanda's pastimes will indeed reach Lord Caitanya. And one who hears properly this story of the deliverance of the dacoits is assured to see face to face both Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya. In this way Lord Nityānanda performs His pastimes undisturbed and with great

pleasure.

Lord Nityānanda went daily on congregational chanting to different villages all over Nadia with His associates. He visited Khancanda, Badagaci, Dogacia, and sometimes they crossed to the other side of the Ganges to Kuliā village. Badagaci village folk were especially fortunate because of their piety. Lord Nityānanda spent a lot of time there. One cannot gauge the amount of blessings the residents of Badagaci received.

Lord Nityānanda's associates were always in very blissful spirits. They had no other business than chanting and dancing and accompanying the Lord as He went everywhere. Steadily the mood of Vṛndāvana cowherd boys increased in them. They were now always dressed as cowherd boys with cowhorns, flutes, and strings for tying the calves, wearing garlands of Gunja flowers around the neck, a metal bangle on the wrist, and small foot bells around the ankles. They constantly exhibited sublime ecstasy, sometimes crying, sometimes shivering, and again at times horripilating in love of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Each one's beauty blossomed to match Cupid's good looks as they joined in the congregational chanting.

With an inspiring and fearless master like Lord Nityānanda always leading them, the devotees were submerged in divine exhilaration. The transcendental excellences of the Lord's associates are so limitless that even in a thousand years I will be unsuccessful in fully describing them. Yet I must still mention the names of as many associates as I can remember and try to describe their glories. Just by recollecting the names of Lord Nityānanda's associates, a person can transcend this material existence. All these associates are incarnations of the family members of Nanda Mahārāja of Vraja. They are cowherd boys and damsels from Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana. Lord Nityānanda has specifically instructed His associates not to mention their previous names and identities.

Śrī Rāmadāsa Mahāśaya is a very great devotee of Lord Nityānanda. He spoke from a transcendental level as if the Supreme Lord were Himself speaking. Nobody could fathom his words. He carried Lord Nityānanda always in his heart. Śrī Rāmadāsa was considered amongst the associates as the most feeling devotee submerged in ecstatic thoughts. Lord Kṛṣṇa on a particular occasion entered his body for three months.

Murāri Gupta is famous as Lord Caitanya's intimate servitor. He was so fearless that he actually played with a tiger and a snake. Śrī Raghunātha Upādhyāya, an Ayurvedic doctor, was a pure devotee, and by his mere glance he invoked devotional attraction for Lord Kṛṣṇa in others. Śrī Gadādhara dāsa was always tasting the transcendental nectar of divine mellows. The very sight of him cleansed others of all sinful reactions. Śrī Sundarānanda was like an ocean of devotional ambrosia. He was one of the foremost of the Lord's associates. Śrī Kamalākānta Paṇḍita was at every moment exuberant in devotional service. Lord Nityānanda gave him the village of Saptagrāma.

Śrī Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita is a most fortunate soul. He served Lord Nityānanda with his body, mind, and words. Indeed the Lord was his very life. Śrī Purandara Paṇḍita was extremely peaceful and grave, always experiencing divine ecstasy in the Lord's association. Lord Nityānanda is also the life and soul of Śrī Parameśvari Ṭhākura. The Lord being especially inclined towards him is always present in his body. Śrī Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita was a stalwart preacher of *bhāgavata-dharma*, so Lord Nityānanda made His permanent residence in his heart. Śrī Balarāma dāsa was always absorbed in loving devotional service. Anyone in his presence became free from all sinful reactions.

Śrī Yadunātha Kavicandra was incessantly swimming in a nectarean ocean of love of Godhead. His constant guide and shelter was Lord Nityānanda. Śrī Jagadīśa Paṇḍita emanated spiritual brilliance everywhere he went. Lord Nityānanda was his prime source of divine inspiration. Śrī Puruṣottama Paṇḍita appeared in Navadvīpa. He was fully surrendered at the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda. In His earliest pastimes, Lord Nityānanda stayed in his house. By his mercy one is drawn to the divine lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda. Śrī Dvija Kṛṣṇadāsa appeared in the Rāḍhadeśa district in Bengal, as did Lord Nityānanda. He is amongst the foremost of the Lord's eternal associates. Śrī Kālīyā Kṛṣṇadāsa is famous in all the three worlds. Simply by remembering him one attains the association of Lord Caitanya.

Śrī Sadāśiva Kavirāja was also a very blessed personality. The glorious Puruṣottama dāsa was his son. Śrī Puruṣottama dāsa was always in deep meditation, oblivious to his own body and surroundings. Lord Nityānanda is forever situated within his heart. Śrī Uddharaṇa Datta was a very magnanimous Vaiṣṇava who was especially qualified to render direct service to Lord Nityānanda. Śrī Maheśa Paṇḍita and Paramānanda Upādhyāya are stalwart devotees of the Lord, grave and compassionate. Śrī Gaṅgādāsa, son of Caturbhujā Paṇḍita, also received the Lord's special mercy because the Lord stayed in his house. Ācārya Vaiṣṇavānanda was a very magnanimous soul. Previously he was famous by the name of Śrī Raghunātha Purī.

Śrī Paramānanda Gupta was a very eminent person. Lord Nityānanda also spent a long time staying in his house. The pious Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa, who lived in Badagaci was another very fortunate soul, because Lord Nityānanda also stayed with him. Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa, Śrī Devānanda, and the spiritual instructor Ācārya Candra, were all very elevated and pure Vaiṣṇavas, whose only attraction was the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda. The two brothers, Śrī Mādhavānanda Ghosh and Śrī Vāsudeva Ghosh, were famous for their nectarean singing. They constantly relished spiritual mellows. Śrī Jīva Paṇḍita was the recipient of the Lord's special mercy. The Lord had stayed in his house. Then there were the four who were very dear to Lord Nityānanda. They were Śrī Manohara, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa and Śrī Devānanda.

In a thousand years I would not be able to enumerate the names of all the servitors and associates of Lord Nityānanda. The hundreds and thousands of devotees were all heart and soul surrendered to Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda. By receiving Lord Nityānanda's mercy His associates are all spiritual guides for the whole world. They constantly meditated on Lord Caitanya. I have but mentioned only a few who I know personally. Later Vedavyāsa will reveal more divine personalities.

The last of Lord Nityānanda's servitors is Vṛndāvana dāsa (the author). He was conceived in the womb of Śrīmatī Nārāyaṇī, who had received the remnants of Lord Caitanya's foodstuff. Even today the Vaiṣṇavas glorify her as the one who ate Lord Caitanya's remnants, which was recognized as a rare blessing.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, humbly offer this song at Their divine lotus feet.

Chapter 6

All glories to Lord Gauracandra and Lord Nityānanda. All glories to all the Lord's associates.

Lord Nityānanda continued His congregational chanting pastimes and experienced great joy in the association of all His eternal associates and servitors. Lord Nityānanda performed His pastimes here in Navadvīpa just like He had done in His previous incarnation in Vṛndāvana. He attracted every living entity with amazing simplicity to surrender at the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya.

Lord Nityānanda was like the brilliant sun surrounded by His inspired and enthusiastic devotees as they roamed all over Navadvīpa performing *kīrtana*. His divine body was covered with ornaments and flower garlands. His lips were ruby red from chewing betel and camphor. Seeing the activities of Lord Nityānanda, some experienced divine exhilaration, but there were others who became suspicious.

A certain *brāhmaṇa* residing in Navadvīpa and who had studied together with Lord Caitanya became suspicious of Lord Nityānanda's behavior. The *brāhmaṇa* was very attached to his devotion to Lord Caitanya, but unfortunately he was unaware of Lord Nityānanda's transcendental potencies. One day the *brāhmaṇa* decided to go to Nilācala, Purī, and stayed there immersed in sublime joy. Every day, he visited Lord Caitanya and felt a gradual increase in attraction for the Lord. On one of his daily visits he suddenly felt the urge to ask the Lord some questions in confidence.

The *brāhmaṇa* inquired, "O Lord, I have a request. If you allow me then I can present it before You. If You consider me as one of Your servants, then I would like to hear Your views on certain points. Lord Nityānanda, the *avadhūta*, is now in Navadvīpa. I cannot understand His behavior. People say He is in the renounced order of life, namely *sannyāsa*, yet I see Him chewing betel and camphor all the time. A *sannyāsī* is not supposed to even touch certain things like gold, silver, precious gems, and so on, but I see Him decorating His entire body with ornaments made from these substances. Instead of a saffron loin cloth He is putting on flowing silk robes and using sandalwood and flower garlands.

Another of the Lord's quaintness is that He does not carry the *sannyāsa* staff but an iron rod. He is always seen in the company of *sūdras*, persons coming from lower castes. I could not see Lord Nityānanda always acting strictly according to the instructions of the scriptures, hence I am assailed with doubts about Him. Many persons hail Him as a great personality, yet why does He not act in a way befitting His position as a *sannyāsī*? O Lord, please remember that I am just Your menial servant. Please tell me what all this actually means."

The pious *brāhmaṇa* thus inquired submissively at an opportune moment from Lord Caitanya, and the Lord revealed to him the esoteric meanings of everything without reservations. The Lord smiled gently at the *brāhmaṇa*'s words and spoke the following. He said, "Listen carefully, O *brāhmaṇa*. One who is very elevated and a realized soul is free from all faults. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.36) it is stated, 'Those who are free from unwanted desires such as attachment for things separate from Lord Kṛṣṇa; those who have transcended the mundane vision of seeing only the material covering of the soul, namely this gross body, and have risen to the platform of perceiving the spiritual spark in every living entity, thus having attained equal vision; those who have become elevated to the spiritual platform of seeing face to face the Supreme Lord, who is beyond the three modes of material nature—these great souls, who are dedicated to Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, do not have to enjoy or suffer the results of either pious or impious activities nor do they have to act according to rules and regulations.'

Lord Nityānanda is absolutely pure. He is in this material world like the lotus which is untouched by the water it stands in. O *brāhmaṇa*, know for certain that Lord Kṛṣṇa is eternally within Him. If any person tries to imitate Lord Nityānanda, then he will suffer terrible consequences and incur heavy sinful reactions. If anyone other than Lord Śiva tries to drink deadly poison, then he will surely die. The scriptures carry sufficient examples to substantiate this fact. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.29-30) it is stated: "No one should try to act in this manner, not even in the mind. Just as if a person other than Lord Śiva tries to drink the deadly poison that came out of the ocean will certainly die, similarly if due to

foolishness someone tries to imitate the pastimes of the Supreme Lord he will surely be destroyed.'

'O King, the fire is all-consuming, yet it remains unaffected and uncontaminated by any sin or dirt, similarly a very powerful and potent personality should not be condemned for transgressing religious laws or staring lustily at a woman.'

Therefore if anyone criticizes Lord Nityānanda's activities, he will have to suffer severe reactions life after life for his mistake. Even if a very elevated soul acts in a derogatory manner, if he is criticized, nay even ridiculed, then he is surely doomed.

All these conclusions one can learn from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but only if it is explained by a pure Vaiṣṇava. Listen attentively what the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has to say about the person who laughed and ridiculed a great personality.

Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma were staying and studying in the house of Their guru. After completing Their education They wanted to return home, so They inquired from the guru what They could offer him as *adakṣina*, or donation. The guru consulted his wife and then told Them that he and his wife would like to have their dead son brought back to life. Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma immediately went to see Yamarāja, the lord of death. On request from Them all the formalities were concluded and the son was brought back alive to Their guru.

When mother Devakī heard about this wonderful happening, she also wanted her dead sons back. So one day she approached Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma and begged them saying, 'O Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, please listen to me. You are the Lords of the mystics. You are both the original Lords, eternal and absolutely pure. You are the father of this universe. I know You are the cause of all causes. Creation, maintenance, and annihilation of this universe are carried out by the partial expansion of Your expansions. Yet in spite of these potencies, You both have appeared in this world as my sons only to alleviate the suffering of this world.

'Just as You have brought back Your guru's son from the abode of Yamarāja as a parting donation to Your guru and his wife, similarly I also yearn to see my six sons which the mean Kamsa mercilessly murdered. The guru's son had long been dead, and yet You brought him back to life by Your mystical potencies. Then kindly satiate my thirst to see my sons and bring them back to life.'

As soon as They heard Their mother's wish, They immediately proceeded to Bali Mahārāja's palace. When Bali Mahārāja saw that the visitors were his most worshipable Lords, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, he felt a surge of spiritual bliss in his heart. He surrendered all he possessed—his wealth, wife, children, and his own self—at Their Lordship's lotus feet. The ecstasy of love of Godhead was building up inside him. Horrification appeared all over his body, and he began to shed tears of divine bliss. He fell at Their feet, and clutching them to his heart, he offered prayers to Them.

Bali Mahārāja prayed, 'All glories to Lord Ananta, who has appeared as Lord Śaṅkarsaṇa. And all glories to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the crest jewel of Gokula. O Lord Balarāma, Haladhara, You are the best friend and leader of all the young cowherd boys. And Lord Kṛṣṇa is the most precious treasure of His surrendered devotees. O Lord, both of You are rarely to be seen even by great purified sages who are on the transcendental platform. Yet, my Lord, You are so magnanimous that You have appeared before me, a demon steeped in dark ignorance. Therefore, as is described in the Vedic literature, You have no friends or enemies, and this I am witnessing at this very moment. The one who came to murder You by making You suck her poisoned breast got liberation to the Vaikuṇṭha planets after being killed by You. Hence it is difficult to understand Your heart. Even the *Vedas* and the great mystic yogis have failed to do so.

"Your illusory potency is so unfathomable that masters of mysticism fail to grapple with it. Then how can a sinful demon ever understand it? O Lord of the universe, my only prayer is that You do not cast me down to the dark well of material existence. I fall at Your lotus feet. Please just let me live under a tree and pass my days in peace. Kindly count me amongst Your servitors and give me their association, that I may never desire for anything else." Bali Mahārāja prayed in this manner at Lord Kṛṣṇa's and Lord Balarāma's lotus feet.

Gaṅgādevī, or Bhāgīrathī, springing from Lord Nārāyaṇa's lotus feet purifies the abodes of personalities like Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā as she flows through them. Now Bali Mahārāja and his family having washed Their Lordship's lotus feet were drinking and sprinkling over their heads that same sacred Ganges water. Bali Mahārāja then worshiped Their Lordships offering Them incense, perfumed oils, flowers, camphor, ghee lamps, clothing, and beautiful ornaments. He then prayed to the Lord, "O Lord, kindly instruct me if You consider me Your servant. Whoever follows Your instructions easily transcends all rules and regulations." Bali Mahārāja's words pleased Their Lordships and now They attended to the business at hand.

The Lord said, "Dear Sir Bali, please hear Our reason for coming here. My mother's six sons were murdered by the wicked Kamsa. Later he was killed as a reaction to this grievous sin. Mother Devakī is greatly afflicted by this calamity and whenever she remembers this she cries piteously. You have these six boys with you, so I have come to take them to please my mother. All six of them were Brahmā's grandsons and they were perfected beings. I will relate to you how they landed themselves in this distressful situation. Previously they were the six sons of Lord Brahmā's son, Marici.

“Once very surprisingly Brahmā was struck by Cupid's arrow. Blinded with lust, he chased his own daughter. The six young boys began to smirk and laugh seeing this scene, and this caused them to fall down instantly from their godly positions. Because they had ridiculed a great personality, they had to take birth in the family of the vicious demon, Hirāṇyakaśipu, who had avowed to live by the sword and put everyone into subjugation. During the fight between the demigods and the demons, Indra vanquished these six with his powerful thunderbolt weapon. They died after much torment.

“Yogamāyā then arranged for them one by one to be born as mother Devakī's sons. In this life they also suffered greatly from birth. Even while mere infants they were murdered by their own maternal uncle, Kaṁsa. Mother Devakī, of course, is unaware of these hidden facts. She considers them to be her sons. I want to return them to My mother, Devakī, hence My presence here. When they drink mother Devakī's breast milk, they will be instantaneously acquitted of all their previous sins.

“Take heed, O Bali Mahārāja. The consequences of ridiculing a devotee of the Lord are very severe. Even perfected yogis suffer heavily if they disrespect a Vaiṣṇava, what to mention about lesser humans. A Vaiṣṇava offender has to pay a heavy price life after life. I am delving on this subject for your benefit so you may learn from this and never insult a Vaiṣṇava. If a person worships Me and chants My name, but offends a Vaiṣṇava, he has to suffer severe setbacks in his devotional life. And as for those who love and respect My devotees, I make Myself easily available to them.”

In the *Varāha Purāṇa* it says, ‘There may exist some doubt about the success in attaining perfection by serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but there is no doubt whatsoever in achieving perfection by serving the pure devotees of the Supreme Lord.’ Further, in the *Hari-bhakti-suddhodaya* (13.76) it states, ‘Those who only worship Lord Govinda, Kṛṣṇa, but do not worship and serve the Lord's devotees, are highly insolent. They never receive the Lord's blessings.’

“Dear Bali, you are dear to Me and you are My servitor, hence I have revealed these esoteric meanings of the scriptures to you.”

Bali Mahārāja felt divine exhilaration from hearing the Lord's instructions. He acted on that moment and brought the six sons and offered them as gifts to the Lord. Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa escorted the six boys to Their mother, Devakī. Mother Devakī was overwhelmed with joy and love seeing her six dead sons now before her. Her breast milk flowed out of affection and she suckled the six sons. When these six boys sucked mother Devakī's breast milk, they were in fact taking the remnants of the Supreme Lord. This gave them instant realization of the truth. They fell flat on the ground like sticks offering obeisances to the Supreme Lord and everyone else.

The Lord looked kindly upon them and started instructing them. He said, ‘Now you may return to the heavenly abodes of the demigods, your actual residence. But remember never to ridicule or laugh at a great spiritual personality. Lord Brahmā is an expansion of the Supreme Lord, hence is to receive equal respect as the Supreme Lord. He is not to be condemned even if found doing wrong. You have already suffered severe consequences by deriding him, so in the future beware of such mistakes. Now you must go and beg forgiveness from Lord Brahmā, then only will you feel cleansed and blissful.’

So, my dear *brāhmaṇa*, I have related to you these topics from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* so that you may give up your suspicions about Lord Nityānanda. Lord Nityānanda is in the highest transcendence. Persons with little knowledge and piety cannot comprehend His position. And if any person becomes attracted to Him because of the miracles He performs from time to time, then also he will attain liberation. Lord Nityānanda has advented only to liberate the fallen conditioned souls. They will be actually liberated because of His causeless mercy.

Lord Nityānanda's behavior is beyond the jurisdiction of any rules and regulations. Who has the capacity to understand His mind? Without properly gauging His extraordinary and supramundane character, if anyone criticizes Him though he may be serving the Supreme Lord still he will lose all his devotion. So you must immediately leave for Navadvīpa and make everyone there understand these esoteric facts about Lord Nityānanda. If by any chance someone criticizes Him, then no one can save him from his imminent doom. On the other hand, whosoever loves and respects Him is true in his devotion to Me. This I confirm firmly. If Lord Nityānanda marries a Muslim girl or enters the drinking house, His lotus feet are still most worshipable, even for Lord Brahmā.”

Lord Caitanya's potent words acted effectively in the *brāhmaṇa*'s heart. He became blissful and his faith and love for Lord Nityānanda increased tremendously. The *brāhmaṇa* came to Navadvīpa. The first thing on arrival he went to meet Lord Nityānanda. The *brāhmaṇa* honestly admitted his offenses to the Lord. The Lord in turn heard him patiently and then graced him with His causeless mercy.

Lord Nityānanda's activities and character are the most confidential topics in the *Vedas*. They are inscrutable by human norms. He is the supreme mystic who is also known as the original Supreme Lord, Ananta, holding up the entire material creation on one of His thousand hoods. His body is absolute and transcendental. Without Lord Caitanya's mercy it is impossible to fully understand Him.

Different people know Lord Nityānanda in different ways. Some say He is exactly like Lord Balarāma. Another says He if

the foremost and dearest of Lord Caitanya's devotees. Again someone says He is supremely potent, an expansion of the omnipotent Lord. Many persons honestly admit that they cannot fathom His character. In this manner people freely aired their opinions about the Lord. Whatever the people might say about Lord Caitanya or Lord Nityānanda, may Their lotus feet be permanently imprinted in my heart. I pray at everyone's feet to invoke their blessings that birth after birth I can remain the Lord's servant and He my eternal master. This is my only desire.

After hearing all this about Lord Nityānanda's boundless mercy, if anyone is so degraded and sinful as to still criticize the lord, then I firmly kick him on his head. Lord Caitanya is the Lord of my Lord and master, Lord Nityānanda. This fact gives me great hope and strength. Will I ever be blessed to see my Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya sitting on a throne surrounded by all Their servitor associates? All glories to Lord Caitanya. O Lord Gaurāṅga, kindly bless me so that I may have Lord Nityānanda's shelter. Along with this plea I further pray that even after gaining Lord Nityānanda's association I may never forget Your lotus feet. Wherever You and Lord Nityānanda appear as incarnations, there I want to be eligible to be Your eternal servitor. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda Prabhu are my life and soul. I, Vṛndāvana dāsa, humbly offer this song at Their lotus feet.

Chapter 7

All glories to Śrī Gauracandra, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. All glories to Śrī Nityānanda, the personification of the Lord's service. All glories to Śrī Advaita and Śrīvāsa, the abode of love. All glories to Gadādhara and Śrī Jagadānanda, my very life. All glories to the Lord, who is the life and soul of Paramānanda Purī and Svarūpa Dāmodara. All glories to the Lord, who bestows good on Vakreśvara. All glories to the Lord, who enchants Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. All glories to the Lord of Govinda, His servant. Please glance mercifully on the living entities.

In this way Lord Nityānanda spent His days at Navadvīpa in the blissful ocean of love of God. Lord Nityānanda would constantly engage in *saṅkīrtana* along with His devotees, for whom the chanting and dancing became their only occupation. Just as the Lord sported with the cowherd boys of Gokula previously, in the same way Lord Nityānanda enjoyed Himself by manifesting His blissful pastimes of Gokula in the form of *kīrtana*.

The supremely independent Lord Nityānanda desired once to again meet Gauracandra. Taking permission from Mother Śacī, Lord Nityānanda started for Nīlācala by the will of Śrī Caitanya.

Lord Nityānanda was overwhelmed chanting the names and qualities of Śrī Gauracandra as He traveled on the path to Nīlācala with His associates. The associates of the Lord would constantly cry out, dance and shout loudly.

After a few days they arrived at Nīlācala after passing the whole trip absorbed in love of Kṛṣṇa. As they arrived at Kamalapura, Lord Nityānanda fell unconscious upon seeing the palace. Constant tears flowed from His eyes and He loudly shouted, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya!"

Lord Nityānanda stopped there at a flower garden. Who can understand His desire other than Śrī Caitanya? Śrī Gauracandra, understanding Lord Nityānanda had arrived, left His devotees and came there.

Śrī Gauracandra arrived there as Nityānanda was sitting absorbed in transcendental bliss. When Lord Gauracandra saw Nityānanda thus sitting in meditation, the Lord began to circumambulate Him.

The Lord was filled with love, and He recited a verse describing the glories of Lord Nityānanda as He circumambulated Him. Please hear the verse describing the glories of Nityānanda which Śrī Caitanya recited. By hearing this verse one's mind will be attracted to Lord Nityānanda.

"Even if Lord Nityānanda associates with women or enters the liquor shop, still He is worshipable by Lord Brahmā."

Reciting this verse, the Lord was filled with ecstasy as He circumambulated Lord Nityānanda. At that moment Lord Nityānanda with great awe and reverence got up while chanting, "Hari! Hari!"

The happiness Lord Nityānanda felt by seeing Śrī Gauracandra is difficult to describe. Roaring like a lion, Lord Nityānanda fell to the ground with great love of God.

Then both the Lords circumambulated and offered obeisances to each other. They embraced with ecstasy and cried as They held each other's shoulders. They then rolled on the ground feeling transcendental happiness as They roared like maddened lions.

Their wonderful reciprocation of love of love was like that between Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. They both recited verses glorifying the other and then with folded hands They offered obeisances to each other.

Flow of tears, shivering, laughing, loss of consciousness, hairs standing on end, and change of bodily color—all these and

other transformations due to devotional love were fully manifest in these two Lords. Lord Caitanya personally experienced these symptoms and caused Lord Nityānanda to also experience them. Such a wonderful loving devotional exchange can be seen by a staunch servant of the Lord.

After some time Lord Caitanya began to offer prayers to Lord Nityānanda, “O Lord Nityānanda, You are the personified form of the holy name. You are the abode of all the Vaiṣṇavas and You Yourself are Lord Ananta.

“All the bodily ornaments of Your transcendental body are incarnations of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is the truth, the truth, the truth. You wear an engraved garland of gold, pearls, diamonds, *rudrākṣa*, etc., which represents the nine processes of devotional service.

“All the fallen, lowborn entities will now be delivered by Your mercy. The devotional service which You have given to the mercantile community is desired by the devas, yogis, siddhas, and munis.

“Kṛṣṇa is proclaimed as fully independent in the *Vedas*, yet You are able to sell Him. Who has the power to know Your glories? You are the personified form of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental mellows. You are day and night engaged in glorifying the qualities of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and thus You have forgotten external activities.

“Lord Kṛṣṇa always resides in Your heart and Your personality is the abode of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Therefore it is certainly true that Kṛṣṇa will never leave anyone who becomes attached to You.”

Thereafter Lord Nityānanda humbly spoke to the Lord as follows, “Although You are the Lord, You offer prayers to Me. This is proof of Your affection to Your devotees. Whether You circumambulate Me, offer obeisances to Me, kill Me, or protect Me, this is all by Your will. What can I say before You? You can see everything through Your transcendental eyes. You are the Lord and the life of all.

“Whatever You make Me do, I simply follow. You have induced Me to accept *adaṇḍa* and then You Yourself made Me reject it. Giving up the duties of a mendicant, I accepted armlets, anklets, a stick, flute, buffalo horn and rope.

“You have given austerity and devotional service to the *ācāryas*, who are dear to You. You have induced Me to give up the mendicants duties and made Me an object of joke for the common people. I am only a dancer in Your hands, I dance for Your pleasure as You wish.

“You alone can either show mercy or neglect, the proof is that You have induced even the trees to chant Your name.”

The Lord replied, “The nine processes of devotional service are nothing but the ornaments on Your body. Hearing, chanting, remembering, and offering obeisances are all Your eternal ornaments.

“Just as people cannot understand why Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa in His form as Ananta spread His hoods over Lord Śiva, who in the spiritual world is as dear as life to Ananta, in the same way people cannot understand Your deep character, and they therefore criticize You, resulting in their activities ending in failure.

“With My body, mind, and speech, I do not see anything in Your transcendental body other than the mellows of devotional service. For Your own pleasure, You have willingly accepted these ornaments in the mood of the residents of Vṛndāvana headed by Nanda Mahārāja. Any fortunate person who takes pleasure hearing these topics will certainly see Kṛṣṇa's beautiful face.

“You are always adorned with a stick, flute, buffalo horn, *guñja* garland, flower garland, and sandalwood pulp. The boys who associate with You are as attractive to Me as Śrīdāmā and Sudāmā. I therefore think that all the boys who used to play with You in Vṛndāvana are all with You now.

“All those different moods, the charm, and the potencies which were manifested by the residents of Vṛndāvana are all present in Your body, therefore whoever loves You or Your servants factually loves Me.”

Who can find the limit of whatever Mukunda and Ananta speak in Their own ecstatic mood? In this way after some time the two Lords regained Their external consciousness and sat in the secluded flower garden.

The conversation between the Lord and the Supreme Lord is known perfectly only to the *Vedas*. Whenever Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda meet each other there is usually no one else nearby. Therefore by the desire of Lord Caitanya, whatever these two Lords, who are personified bliss, do is not known to anyone else.

Knowing the desire of Lord Caitanya, Lord Nityānanda always meets Him alone. In this way the Lord would not disclose the glories of Lord Nityānanda so that His identity would remain hidden.

The heart of the Supreme Lord is very soft and difficult to understand. This is confirmed by Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva in

the Vedic literatures. People chant the glories of the Lord, however, what to speak of others, even Lakṣmī cannot know or understand Him.

In this way the Lord enjoyed ecstatic pastimes, which He did not disclose to anyone. Everyone thinks that they are the best amongst those beloved to the Lord. They think that the Lord confides in them secrets that He would divulge to no one else. Thinking to take up the occupation of a sage to wholeheartedly worship Kṛṣṇa, they think there is no reason to give up such duties for taking up a stick, flute, peacock feather, *guṇja-mālā* and rope.

Someone says that as many names there are of devotees, there are more than that cowherding pastimes of the Lord in Vṛndāvana. One may become a friend of the Lord's as a *gopa* or *gopī* in Vṛndāvana only after performing many austerities. Such a position is desired by demigods such as Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva. Only a most fortunate person can achieve this mood of the resident of Gokula, a mood desired by Uddhava.

"I repeatedly offer my respects to the dust of the feet of the women of Nanda Mahārāja's cowherd village. When these gopīs loudly chant the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the vibration purifies the three worlds." (*Bhāg.* 10.47.63)

Whatever conclusions the Vaiṣṇavas reach is always accepted by Lord Gauracandra. The Lord by His own will makes everyone dance. This is His pastime. By the mercy of the Lord, all are overwhelmed in transcendental happiness, but sometimes they would engage in loving quarrels. Whoever takes sides with one, criticizing the other, is most unfortunate. All the devotees are nondifferent from the Lord, as the legs, fingers, and arms are nondifferent from the body.

"A person with average intelligence does not think the head and other parts of the body to be separate. Similarly, My devotee does not differentiate Viṣṇu, the all-pervading Personality of Godhead, from any thing or any living entity." (*Bhāg.* 4.7.53)

Still the Vaiṣṇavas conclusion is that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is the Supreme Lord of all. They glorify the Lord as the controller, maintainer, creator, and unknowable Truth.

In whomever the Lord manifests, devotional service is attained through their mercy. The Lord imparts all strength and the ability to understand anything to such persons, and at the same time the Lord gives punishment to offenders.

In spite of this Lord Caitanya kept special affection for Nityānanda Prabhu and Advaita Ācārya and He never hesitated to glorify Them. Even if these two commit millions of social transgressions, still Lord Gauracandra does not say anything.

In this way, Lord Gaurāṅga and Avadhūtacandra, Śrī Nityānanda spent some time together in great ecstasy. Then Lord Caitanya returned to His residence and Lord Nityānanda happily went to see Lord Jagannātha. By hearing about this meeting of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, one is freed from all bondage.

Lord Nityānanda was overwhelmed by seeing Lord Jagannātha and fell to the ground. He fell on the stone floor with such force that a hundred people could not break His fall. Nityānanda Prabhu then cried after seeing Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā. And the *brāhmaṇas*, understanding Nityānanda's influence, garlanded Him again and again with the Lord's garlands.

All the servants of Lord Jagannātha became jubilant on seeing Nityānanda. Anyone who didn't know the Lord's identity inquired from others who replied, "He is the brother of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya." Lord Nityānanda took them on His lap and soaked them with His tears.

After seeing Lord Jagannātha, Lord Nityānanda along with His associates went to meet Gadādhara Paṇḍita. The transcendental affection between Nityānanda and Gadādhara can be described only by the Supreme Lord.

The son of Nanda Mahārāja, in the beautiful form of Gopīnātha resides in the house of Gadādhara. Lord Caitanya once took this Deity of Gopīnātha on His lap. Even offenders forget everything upon seeing that Deity.

As Nityānanda Prabhu saw the form of beautiful face of Gopīnātha, which was adorned with the flute, His tears could not be checked. When Gadādhara understood that Nityānanda had arrived, he immediately left his recitation of *Bhāgavatam* and came to receive Him.

Upon seeing each other they embraced and both began to cry. They then offered obeisances and glorified each other. They both exclaimed, "Today my eyes have become purified and my life has become successful." Both were devoid of external consciousness and they floated in an ocean of bliss.

Seeing such a manifestation of love and devotion, the servants there began to cry. What wonderful affection is there between Nityānanda and Gadādhara—one of them will never speak to an offender of the other. This is the vow of Gadādhara; he will never see the face of an offender of Nityānanda's lotus feet. For one who does not have love for Lord

Nityānanda, Gadādhara will never be seen.

Then after some time, both Prabhus became pacified and sat to engage in Lord Caitanya's auspicious *saṅkīrtana*. Gadādhara then invited Nityānanda to have lunch there that day.

Lord Nityānanda had carefully brought one mound (40 kilos) of rice for Gopīnātha. He had brought this rice from Bengal—very fine white rice, fit to be offered to the Lord. Along with the rice He offered a beautiful colored cloth to Gopīnātha.

Lord Nityānanda told Gadādhara, “Take this rice, cook it, and, after offering it to Gopīnātha, then eat it.”

Seeing the rice, Gadādhara laughed and thought, “I have never seen such rice before. He must have brought this rice for Gopīnātha from Vaiṣṇava. Only Lakṣmī cooks this rice which Kṛṣṇa eats and the devotees then enjoy His remnants.

Glorifying the rice in this way, Gadādhara took it along with the cloth for offering to Gopīnātha. After decorating Gopīnātha with that divine colored cloth, Gadādhara became jubilant seeing the beauty of the Lord. Gadādhara then made arrangements for cooking.

He himself picked the sak from his compound. Although no one had planted it, the sak grew there naturally. This sak was picked and cooked by Gadādhara. Gadādhara picked soft newly grown tamarind leaves, which he ground and mixed with salt water. The fortunate Gadādhara then prepared a sour preparation with this.

As he offered the preparation to Gopīnātha, Śrī Gauracandra arrived there in great joy while chanting, “Hare Kṛṣṇa! Hare Kṛṣṇa!” Lord Gauracandra then called out, “Gadādhara! Gadādhara!” and Gadādhara quickly came and offered his obeisances to the Lord.

Lord Caitanya then smilingly asked Gadādhara, “Am I not included amongst your invitees? I am not different from either of you. Even if you don't offer Me, still I can take by force. I certainly have a share in the ingredients brought by Nityānanda, the remnants of Gopīnātha, and the items you cooked.”

Hearing this merciful statement of the Lord, Nityānanda and Gadādhara both merged in an ocean of happiness. In great satisfaction, Śrī Gadādhara then brought the *prasāda* and placed it before Lord Gauracandra.

The fragrance of the rice permeated the whole compound. Lord Caitanya in a devotional mood repeatedly offered prayers to the rice. Then He said, “Divide this rice in three portions and we will sit together and eat.”

In this way, being attracted by the rice brought by Nityānanda Prabhu, Lord Caitanya sat to honor *prasāda*. Gadādhara and Nityānanda sat at the sides of the Lord, who glorified the rice and vegetable preparation. The Lord exclaimed, “Without a doubt, just by the fragrance of this rice one will attain devotion to Kṛṣṇa.”

“O Gadādhara, what a wonderful cook you are! I have never eaten such sak before. O Gadādhara, what an amazing cook you are that you can make such a nice subji with tamarind leaves. I can understand that you cook in Vaiṣṇava. Why, therefore, are you hiding yourself?”

In this way the three Prabhus ate while laughing and joking amongst themselves. The relationship between these three is known to them only. Lord Gauracandra would not disclose this to anyone. After finishing their meal, they departed, while the devotees shared the remnants.

Whoever hears or reads about this blissful eating pastime achieves Kṛṣṇa and His devotional service. Whoever receives the merciful glance of Gadādhara—he can know Nityānanda. And whoever Lord Nityānanda is pleased with, he can know Śrī Gadādhara.

In this way Lord Nityānanda enjoyed pastimes with Lord Gauracandra while at Nilācala. In Nilācala these three would always stay together. They would visit the temple of Lord Jagannātha together and become overwhelmed with ecstatic love while performing *saṅkīrtana*.

I, Vṛndāvana Dāsa, offer my humble song at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who are my life and soul.

Chapter 8

All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu! All glories to Nityānanda Prabhu, who has made the three worlds glorious! All glories Śrī Gaurāṅga and His devotees! Just by hearing the glories of Lord Caitanya one attains devotional service.

Please hear now about the arrival of the Vaiṣṇavas headed by Advaita Ācārya. When the time for Ratha-yātra arrived, all the devotees came to Nīlācala. By the instruction of the Lord, the devotees would come every year to attend the Ratha-yātra. Keeping Advaita Ācārya in front, the devotees came on their way to Nīlācala.

Coming with the devotees was Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, in whose house Lord Caitanya performed many pastimes. Also coming was Candraśekhara Ācārya, in whose house the Lord danced as Devī. Also happily coming with the devotees was Gaṅgādāsa Paṇḍita, by whose remembrance one's fruitive bondage is destroyed. Coming along in ecstasy was Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi. While remembering him, the Lord cried loudly. Happily coming with was Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, who danced while the Lord performed *kīrtana*. Also coming along was Pradyumna Brahmācārī, with whom Lord Nṛsiṃha speaks. Coming along with great happiness was Haridāsa Thākura, as well as Chota Haridāsa, who stayed at the shore of the ocean. Also coming along was Vāsudeva Datta, unto whom Lord Kṛṣṇa sold Himself. Coming with was Mukunda Datta, Lord Kṛṣṇa's singer. Others headed by Śivānanda Sena brought their families along. Govindānanda came along overwhelmed with love of God. By his remembrance the ten directions are purified. Also coming along was Śrī Govinda Datta, who leads *kīrtana* along with the Lord. Śrī Vijaya Dāsa, the writer, who was called Ratna-bahu by the Lord, also came. Also coming was the pure-minded Sadāśiva Paṇḍita, in whose house Lord Nityānanda previously resided. Also joyfully coming was Purusottama Saṅjaya, who was the Lord's principle student when He taught. (according to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, Purusottama Saṅjaya are two people—see Cc. 1.10.72) Śrīman Paṇḍita also came chanting Hari bol! He carried a torch to light the way when the Lord performed *kīrtana*. Nandana Ācārya, in whose house Lord Nityānanda first stayed, also came. Coming also was Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī, from whom Gaurahari begged and ate rice. The destitute servant of Kṛṣṇa, Śrīdhara, also came. Lord Visvambhara drank his water. Also coming was Bhagavān Paṇḍita, the writer, in whose body Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared. Also coming was Gopinātha Paṇḍita and Śrīgarbha Paṇḍita, who are both certainly as good as Kṛṣṇa. The auspicious Vanamālī Paṇḍita also came. He saw in the Lord's hands a golden club and plow. Absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Jagadīśa Paṇḍita and Hiraṇya Bhāgavata also came. In His childhood the Lord on one Ekādaśī ate in their house the grains offered to Kṛṣṇa. Also coming was Buddhimanta Khān, whose only purpose of life is the order of Lord Caitanya. Śrī Ācārya Purandara also happily came. Śrī Gaurasundara accepted him as His father. The magnanimous Rāghava Paṇḍita, in whose house Lord Caitanya secretly performed many pastimes, also came. Śrī Murāri Gupta, the lionlike doctor who cures the disease of material life also came. Gaurāṅga secretly stays in his body. Śrī Garuḍa Paṇḍita also happily came. By the influence of the holy name he was saved from the poison of a snake. Śrī Gopīnātha Siṃha also came. Lord Gauracandra would address him as Akrūra. Śrī Rāma Paṇḍita, who was very dear to the Lord, also came along with Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita.

After seeing Mother Śacī, Dāmodara Paṇḍita also returned to Nīlācala. Innumerable devotees of Lord Caitanya whose names are not known, but who were the abodes of ecstatic love, also came.

The lionlike Advaita Prabhu, after taking permission from Mother Śacī, also came along with the devotees. Whatever foodstuffs are dear to the Lord, He brought along to offer. All along the way the devotees performed *saṅkīrtana* and purified the places along the way. Hearing the tumultuous sound of 'Hari! Hari!' all the people of the three worlds became purified. Bringing along their wives, sons, and servants, they all came in great ecstasy to see Lord Caitanya. Wherever they stopped along the way, that place became like Vaikuṇṭha.

Please listen dear brothers to the auspicious topics which are sung by Lord Śeṣa. In this way all the great devotees happily traveled the path to Nīlācala. At Kamalapura, seeing the flag on the temple of Lord Jagannātha, they all offered obeisances and began to cry.

Understanding that all the devotees had arrived, Lord Caitanya desired to go and greet them. Out of affection for Advaita Ācārya, the Lord sent *mahā-prasāda*. There is no end to the Lord's love and affection for Advaita Ācārya. The Lord even sent *prasāda* up to Cuttack for Him.

"I was lying in the ocean of milk, but due to the calling of Nāḍā, My sleeping was broken. This incarnation of Mine is due to Śrī Advaita Ācārya." Lord Caitanya repeatedly would speak like this. Therefore all the mahants, who are as good as the Lord, offer full respect to Śrī Advaita.

Hearing of the arrival of Advaita Prabhu, Lord Caitanya, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, took along His associates and went to greet Him. Nityānanda, Gadādhara, and Śrī Puri Gosvāmī forgot everything else and happily accompanied the Lord. Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, Kāśī Mīśra, Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Saṅkara Paṇḍita, Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita Bhagavān Ācārya, and Śrī Pradyumna Mīśra, who are all foremost in devotion, accompanied the Lord. Paramānanda Puri, Rāmānanda Rāya, the Lord's doorkeeper saintly Govinda, Brahmānanda Bhārati, Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana, Raghunātha Vaidya, Śivānanda, Nārāyaṇa, the eldest son of Advaita Śrī Acyutānanda, Vaninātha, Sikhi Mahiti—these and innumerable other devotees, whose names are unknown to me all forgot everything and went along with the Lord to greet the devotees.

Śrī Advaita Ācārya, with the other Vaiṣṇavas arrived in Atharānala, while the Lord came past Narendara Sarovara and thus the two groups met. As the groups of devotees approached each other, they all fell flat and offered obeisances to each other. Seeing Advaita Ācārya from a distance, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha offered obeisances with tears in His eyes. Similarly, as

Śrī Advaita saw the Lord of His life in the distance, He offered repeated obeisances.

Tears of love, shivering, perspiration, fainting, hairs standing on end, loud roaring, and offering obeisances were the only things seen at that time. Although the two groups of devotees offered their obeisances to one another, no one knew who was offering to whom, because they were all absorbed in Lord Caitanya's loving mellows. Whether one is small or big, learned or not, they all chanted the names of Hari and offered obeisances.

Along with the devotees the Lord also offered His obeisances, and Advaita Ācārya did likewise. In this way after finishing offering obeisances, the two groups of devotees met one another. At this place, the blissful meeting of the devotees took place along with the loud chanting of the name of Hari and ecstatic crying.

A human being can not possibly describe all this, only Vedavyāsa and Ananta Śeṣa are able.

Seeing Advaita and taking Him on His lap, Lord Caitanya soaked Him with His tears. Reciting a verse and offering obeisances to the Lord, Advaita Prabhu appeared to be an incarnation of bliss. Advaita Prabhu thus forgot about whatever items He had brought for worshipping the Lord. In great happiness, Śrī Advaita loudly roared and repeatedly exclaimed, "I brought You! I brought You!"

The loud chanting of the holy name of Hari filled the universe. What to speak of the Vaiṣṇavas, even the fools cried and chanted, "Hari bol!" All the devotees embraced and chanted the name of Hari as they cried in joy. They all offered obeisances to Advaita Prabhu, for because of Him Lord Caitanya had incarnated.

Then all the devotees began to loudly perform *saṅkīrtana*. No one knew who was dancing where, who was singing in which way, and who was falling on which side. They all became overwhelmed with happiness seeing the most auspicious Lord who danced amongst them.

Lord Nityānanda and Advaita Prabhu embraced each other and danced like two mad lions. With great happiness the Lord embraced each and every Vaiṣṇava. Lord Caitanya, who is the Lord of the devotees, who is controlled by the devotees, and who is the life of the devotees cried as He embraced the devotees.

By the desire of Lord Jagannātha, thousands of garlands and sandalwood pulp arrived at that time. Seeing the garlands, Śrī Gaurasundara became very happy and He garlanded first Śrī Advaita Ācārya. With His own hands the Lord garlanded and applied sandalwood on each devotee. Seeing this display of the Lord's mercy, all the devotees raised their hands and cried loudly.

The devotees held the lotus feet of the Lord and asked the following benediction, "May we never forget You life after life. Whether we become human beings, animals, birds, or wherever we may take birth, may we always see Your lotus feet. O Lord! O ocean of mercy! Please give us this benediction!" Thus the devotees wept as they held the feet of the Lord.

The chaste wives of the Vaiṣṇavas remained at a distant place, and, seeing the Lord, they began to cry. There is no end to their affection for the Lord as they are also great Vaiṣṇavīs. They are all as good as their husbands in knowledge and devotion. This is the verdict of Lord Caitanya.

In this way all the devotees accompanied the Lord with singing, dancing, chanting, and the playing of musical instruments. There was such a manifestation of love that not even a single person was unhappy.

Lord Caitanya came in ten *daṇḍas* from Atharanala to the bank of Narendra-sarovara. At that time Jagannātha and Balarāma in the form of Govinda, the *vijaya-vigraha*, arrived there for performing water sports.

There was a tumultuous sound of the chanting of "Hari! Hari!" mixed with the sounds of *ṣaṅkha-bheri* (a kind of horn), and *jaya-dhāka* (a large drum). The scene was beautified on all sides with thousands of umbrellas, flags, and *cāmaras*. No other sound could be heard other than the loud chanting of, "Jaya! Jaya!" and "Hari! Hari!" In this way with great pomp the Deity of Govinda was brought down to the water.

The associates of Lord Jagannātha and the associates of Lord Caitanya mixed together and everyone forgot themselves while glorifying the Lord. The happiness of Vaikuṇṭha seemed to personally manifest by the ecstasy felt as the groups combined together.

On all sides people felt endless happiness simply due to the mercy of Lord Caitanya. Then Lord Govinda was placed in a boat, while the devotees fanned Him with *cāmaras*. Seeing the boat festival of Lord Govinda, Lord Gaurāṅga felt satisfied. Then the Lord and His devotees all jumped into the water of Narendra-sarovara.

O brothers! Please hear the pastimes of Lord Caitanya in the waters of Narendra-sarovara. Just as previously in the Yamunā the Lord with His cowherd friends sported in a circle in the water, in the same way the Lord and His devotees now held each other's hands and formed a circle.

Lord Caitanya first began a well known Bengali sport named "Kayā." Calling out, "Kayā! Kayā!" the Lord clapped His hands in the water, and the devotees followed. The devotees became absorbed in the mood of the boys of Gokula and the Lord accepted the mood of Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Gokula. Absorbed in ecstasy, they devotees forgot everything and fearlessly splashed water on the Lord.

Lord Caitanya and Advaita Ācārya first began to splash water in great sport on each other. While forcefully splashing water in the eyes of each other sometimes Advaita would be defeated and the next moment the Lord would be defeated.

Nityānanda Prabhu, Gadādhara, and Puri Gosvāmī all began to battle each other, though none were defeated. Mukunda Datta and Murāri Gupta repeatedly battled and in ecstasy they shouted loudly. The two friends, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi and Svarūpa Dāmodara smilingly splashed each other in ecstasy. Overwhelmed in the ecstasy of Lord Caitanya's pastimes, Śrīvāsa, Śrīrāma, Haridāsa, Vakreśvara, Gaṅgādāsa, Gopinātha, and Candrasekhara all splashed water on one another.

As Govinda, the *vijaya-vigraha* of Jagannātha and Balarāma, rode in a boat, millions of people all enjoyed the water sports. In the waters of Narendra-sarovara, the *sannyāsīs*, *brahmacārīs*, and materialists all sported and floated in the waves of bliss.

The influence of Lord Caitanya is such that less fortunate persons could neither see nor enter into that place for they could not be counted amongst the associates of Lord Caitanya, who is controlled only by devotion. Without devotion there is only misery. Nothing can be achieved simply by knowledge and austerities.

Just see the evidence at Nilācala with the blissful *saṅkīrtana* performed by Lord Caitanya. All the so-called *mahājanas* and *sannyāsīs* couldn't experience this due to their misfortune. They would comment, "This Caitanya left Vedānta to perform *kīrtana* which is just a disturbing noise. the occupation of a *sannyāsī* is to always do *prāṇāyāma*, but instead He is dancing and crying. This is not proper."

The best of the *sannyāsīs* however would say that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is a real *mahājana*. Someone would say that He is a *jñānī*, someone would say He is a great devotee. In this way they would praise Him without knowing His real identity.

In this way all the Vaiṣṇavas would sport in the water with the Lord. As previously they enjoyed water sports in the Yamunā, in the same way Lord Caitanya with His same associates now enjoyed those same pastimes. The same mercy attained by the Ganges and the Yamunā was now attained by Narendra-sarovara.

All these pastimes were performed to deliver the living entities. By hearing and studying these topics one's bondage to fruitive activities is destroyed.

After finishing His water sports Lord Caitanya with His devotees went to see Lord Jagannātha. The Lord and His devotees all began to cry in ecstasy on seeing Lord Jagannātha. By seeing Jagannātha, Lord Caitanya became overwhelmed and His whole body became wet with His tears. All the devotees headed by Advaita Prabhu saw this with great satisfaction and floated in an ocean of bliss.

The devotees fell flat offering obeisances to both the moving and nonmoving Lord of the universe. Kāśī Miśra then brought Lord Jagannātha's garlands and decorated the devotees.

Lord Caitanya, who is Nārāyaṇa, the original instructing spiritual master, dressed as a *sannyāsī* accepted the garland of Lord Jagannātha with great reverence and devotion. Only Lord Caitanya knows the glories of the Vaiṣṇavas, *tulasī*, the Ganges, and *mahā-prasāda*—no one else.

The Lord demonstrated Vaiṣṇava behavior by offering respects to other Vaiṣṇavas. Even a father offers respect to his son after the son accepts *sannyāsa*. Therefore the *sannyāsa* order is respected, and everyone, including other *sannyāsīs*, offer obeisances to a *sannyāsī*. Still the Lord who is Kṛṣṇa, the *śikṣa-guru*, broke *āśrama-dharma* to offer obeisances to other Vaiṣṇavas.

Now please hear attentively how Lord Caitanya offered obeisances to *tulasī*. One day the Lord took a small clay pot, filled it with mud, and planted *tulasī* in it. The Lord then said, "If I don't see *tulasī*, I cannot survive just as a fish cannot survive out of water."

Whenever the Lord would chant japa while walking in the street, someone would carry a *atulasī* plant before Him. Coming behind, the Lord would thus see *tulasī* and tears of ecstasy would flow down His body. When the Lord would sit to chant japa a *tulasī* plant would be placed beside the Him. The Lord would constantly look at *tulasī* while chanting. Who can understand this principle of devotional service? After finishing His rounds, the Lord would then return with *tulasī* again kept in front.

Whoever accepts what Nārāyaṇa, the siksa guru, teaches, only he receives protection from the Lord. After seeing and

offering obeisances to Lord Jagannātha, Gaurāṅga returned to His residence with His devotees.

Whatever desires those devotees had within their hearts were all fulfilled. The Lord treated the devotees like His children, and they would always followed behind the Lord. All the Vaiṣṇavas from Bengal and Nīlācala stayed together with the Lord, blissfully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By the mercy of Lord Caitanya, people were able to see all the devotees who reside in Sveta dvīpa.

Even Advaita Ācārya repeatedly said, “All these Vaiṣṇavas can not be seen even by the demigods.” Crying while holding the feet of Lord Caitanya, He said, “Only because of You can I see all these Vaiṣṇavas!”

The Lord who is the source of all incarnations, would first have His devotees appear in this world and then He Himself would advent. Just as Pradyumna, Aniruddha, and Saṅkarṣaṇa accompanied the Lord as Lakṣmaṇa, Bhārata, and Satrugṇa; in the same way the Vaiṣṇavas appeared with the Lord according to His will.

Therefore the Vaiṣṇavas neither take birth nor die, but they come with the Lord and return with the Lord. There is no birth, fruitive activity, or duties for the Vaiṣṇavas. This is clearly stated in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

“Just as Lakṣmaṇa, the son of Sumitra, and Bhārata, and just as Saṅkarṣaṇa and others appeared in this world by their own will, similarly all the Vaiṣṇava associates of the Lord appear with the Lord and then return to the Lord's eternal abode with the Lord. Like the Lord, the Vaiṣṇavas do not take birth according to their past karma.”

In this way all the devotees always remain full absorbed in love in the Lord's association. Whoever faithfully hears these pastimes with devotion attains the association Lord Gaurāṅga along with His devotees.

I, Vṛndāvana Dāsa, offer my humble song at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who are my life and soul.

Chapter 9

All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the husband of the goddess of fortune! All glories to the only beloved Lord of the Vaiṣṇavas! All glories to the merciful Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. Please bestow Your auspicious glance on the living entities.

In this way all the devotees remained with the Lord enjoying the ecstasy of *saṅkīrtana*. All the Vaiṣṇavas knew what foodstuffs the Lord liked in His childhood, therefore they all lovingly brought those items for offering to the Lord. The devotees would affectionately cook those items and invite the Lord to accept their offering. Whenever the Lord was invited to the residence of a devotee, He would eat there with great affection.

All the wives of the Vaiṣṇavas are expansions of Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune. Therefore their cooking was so wonderful I can't describe it. Their eyes were always filled with tears and their mouths were always filled with the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. These Vaiṣṇavis knew what vegetable preparations the Lord liked when He was in Navadvīpa, therefore with devotional love they cooked accordingly, and the Lord with great love ate all their offerings.

One day the magnanimous, lionlike Advaita Ācārya requested the Lord, “Please take Your food at My house today. I only cook a handful of rice. Please accept it so that My hands will become glorious.”

The Lord replied, “Whoever eats Your rice certainly in every respect attains Kṛṣṇa and His devotional service. O My dear Advaita, Your rice is My life. When You feed someone, Kṛṣṇa has certainly eaten. When You cook something, I am ready to beg to get it.”

Hearing these affectionate words of the Lord, who can understand what ecstasy Śrī Advaita Prabhu felt? In great satisfaction, Advaita then returned home and made arrangements for the Lord's meal.

Advaita's chaste wife, who is an expansion of the goddess of Lakṣmī, began to delightfully prepare for cooking. Whatever ingredients she had brought from Bengal, she gave to Advaita for cooking. Advaita Mahāśaya then began cooking, while keeping Lord Caitanya in His heart.

The chaste wife of Advaita made preparations for cooking different vegetables according to the inspiration she felt within. She knew the Lord is very fond of sak, therefore she arranged to cook ten different varieties.

Advaita Ācārya cooked and His wife assisted, and in this way they both floated in an ocean of happiness. Advaita said, “O mother of Kṛṣṇadāsa, listen. I will tell you something I have on My mind. I don't know how the Lord will accept all these preparations that we have arranged, because if He comes along with the other *sannyāsīs* I'm certain He will not eat much. Generally everyday all the *sannyāsīs* accompany the Lord to take their meals. They all respect the Lord and lovingly take

their meals with Him.”

Advaita Prabhu thought, “How nice are all these preparations. If the Lord comes alone I can make Him eat all these items. But how can I fulfill this desire of Mine?” As He cooked, Advaita Prabhu continued to think in this way.

Meanwhile after finishing His counting of the holy name, the Lord prepared to do His noon duties. The *sannyāsīs* who take their meal with the Lord also began to come. At that time however, Lord Indra sent rain and strong winds for the benefit of Advaita. Hailstones began to fall everywhere, the wind blew fiercely, and it rained without limit. Everything became dark due to dust in the air and no one could find their way to proceed further. The wind was so forceful that no one could stand straight and no one was able to know which way anyone else had gone.

The place where Advaita Ācārya was cooking had however only a little rain and wind. The *sannyāsīs* who generally took their meals with the Lord disappeared and no one knew where they could be found. Lionlike Advaita finished cooking there and after cleaning up, He arranged all the preparations in order.

There was rice and various vegetable preparations as well as ghee, yogurt, milk, cream, butter, *piñṭaka* (a sweet preparation made with rice), other sweets like *sandēśa*, and also bananas. After putting a *tulasī-mañjarī* on each preparation, Advaita sat to meditate on bringing Gaurahari.

Advaita Prabhu meditated on the Lord coming alone, and it is a fact that by the desire of Advaita, Śrī Gauracandra came to His house alone. Chanting, “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.” in ecstasy, the Lord came before Advaita Ācārya. Advaita offered obeisances with awe and reverence, and then He offered a sitting place on which Gaurahari sat.

Seeing the Lord alone, Advaita Prabhu became overwhelmed with ecstasy. Along with His wife, Advaita happily washed the Lord's feet, offered Him sandalwood, and fanned Him. Lord Gauracandra then sat down to eat, and Advaita began to serve Him. Whatever vegetable was placed before the Lord, the Lord lovingly accepted. Whatever vegetable the Lord ate, He would leave something behind.

Lord Caitanya then smiled and said, “Do You know why I am leaving these remnants? I left something behind because I want to know what each vegetable is that I have eaten.”

Again smiling the Lord inquired, “Where have You learned to cook all these preparations? I have never before eaten such sak. Whatever You have cooked is wonderful.”

Whatever Advaita offered, the Lord ate for the Lord is like a desire tree, fulfilling all the desires of His devotees. Yogurt, milk, ghee, cream, *sandēśa*, whatever was given by Advaita, the Lord accepted. In this way the Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya took His meal and satisfied the desires of Advaita Simha.

When the Lord finished eating, Advaita offered prayers to Lord Indra: “O Indra today I have come to know your influence and glories. Today I have come to know that you are certainly a Vaiṣṇava. From today I will offer you water and a flower, for today you have certainly purchased Me.

Lord Caitanya inquired, “Today You are offering nice prayers to Indra. Please tell Me what is the reason?”

Advaita Prabhu replied, “You please eat. What need is there for You to hear this?”

The Lord said, “O Ācārya! Why are You trying to hide this. Whatever rain and winds there were was all Your doing. This is not the season for strong winds, yet still suddenly strong winds and rain came. All these disturbances were created by Your desire. That I have clearly understood. I will now tell You why You had this done by Indra. You thought that if I were to come alone then Your own desire to feed Me would be fulfilled. Therefore by creating all these disturbances You have forbidden the other *sannyāsīs* from coming. Indra is just an order carrier, it is his good fortune that he got an opportunity to serve You.

“Even Lord Kṛṣṇa does not refuse Your request and You can make Him appear anywhere. Whatever You ask, Kṛṣṇa fulfills. Is this wind and rain wonderful? He whose order Yamarāja, time, and death carry on their head, and He whose lotus feet are desired by the best of the yogis and munis—that is You. Simply by remembering You, one is freed from all bondage, so what is wonderful in some wind and rain? There is no one in this world who knows You perfectly, indeed only by Your mercy can one get the fruit of devotional service.”

Advaita said, “You are very affectionate to Your devotees. This quality of Your I respect with My body, mind, and words. May I remain a lion at all times by the strength of Your devotion. Please bestow the benediction that You will never abandon Me.”

In this way as the two Prabhus relished conversing with each other, Lord Caitanya happily finished His meal. The words from Advaita's lotus mouth are all certainly true. There is no other possibility. Anyone who doesn't relish hearing this

narration is the lowest of men and will certainly be bereft of the merciful glance of Advaita Ācārya.

The loving exchanges between Hari and Sankara are not understood by materialistic persons. If someone dislikes either of them, they will both be displeased. This same relationship between Hari and Sankara is manifested between Lord Caitanya and Advaita.

The kind hearted Advaita Prabhu always describes these topics for the deliverance of world. Know that whoever understands the statements of Advaita Ācārya is intimately connected with the Lord. And whoever hear these pastimes with devotion will achieve the most auspicious devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

After fulfilling the desire of the lionlike Advaita, Lord Caitanya returned to His residence. In this way by taking meals at the houses of the devotees headed by Śrīvāsa, the Lord fulfilled the devotee's desires. The Lord would take all His devotees and constantly engage in *sankīrtana*—He would dance Himself, and induce others to dance.

After going to Navadvīpa to see Mother Śacī, Dāmodara Paṇḍita quickly returned to Nīlācala. When Lord Caitanya saw Dāmodara, He took him to a secluded place and inquired from him about Mother Śacī. The Lord asked, “You stayed with My mother, now tell Me the truth, does she have devotion to Lord Viṣṇu?”

On hearing this question, Dāmodara Paṇḍita, who is very austere and neutral, became angry and replied, “O Gosāñi, what do You say? What are You asking for, whether Your mother has any devotion? Your devotion to Viṣṇu is by Your mother's mercy. Whatever You have is by her power. Know for certain that whatever devotion to Viṣṇu You have, it is by her mercy. Crying, shivering, perspiration, fainting, standing of hairs on end, and loud crying, all these transformations of love are constantly visible on the body of Mother Śacī. The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is always on her tongue. O Gosāñi, You ask about the devotion of Mother Śacī, but listen, what is called *Viṣṇu-bhakti*, that is Śacīmātā. I tell You she is herself the personification of *Viṣṇu-bhakti*. Although You know this, still You are asking me as if You did not know. Even in the material sense, if someone utters the word Āi, by the influence of that sound, he is freed from distress.

Hearing the glories of Mother Śacī from the mouth of Dāmodara Paṇḍita, the happiness of Lord Gauracandra increased without limit. Holding Dāmodara Paṇḍita in loving mood, the Lord repeatedly embraced him in satisfaction.

“O Dāmodara, today you have purchased Me because you have disclosed all this from your mind. Whatever wealth of devotion to Viṣṇu I have is by her mercy. There is no doubt about it. I am living in this world by her will. Therefore I will never be able to repay her. O Dāmodara, please listen. I am always bound by her affection, and I always see her.”

After blessing Dāmodara Paṇḍita in this way, Lord Gaurahari sat down with His devotees. The inquiry of the Lord about Mother Śacī was only to teach the people of this world. Just as a friend inquires from another friend, “Please tell me are our friends doing well?” by inquiring whether a person has devotion, the Lord revealed the meaning of ‘well.’

If someone has devotion, then everything is well, but without devotion, even the position of a king is inauspicious. If one has wealth, fame, and material enjoyment but is bereft of devotion, then everything is inauspicious. And if someone has no food for today and there is no end to his poverty, if he has devotion to Lord Viṣṇu, then he is the richest person. While taking meals in the houses of the devotees, the Lord disclosed this topic.

When invited to take a meal Lord Caitanya smilingly replied, “First you should be a *lakṣapati*. I only take meals in the house of a *lakṣapati*. Hearing this, the *brāhmaṇas* became worried. (*Lakṣa* means a hundred thousand, and *pati* here means owner. The term *lakṣapati* generally refers to someone who possesses a hundred thousand rupees.)

The *brāhmaṇas* offered prayers to the Lord, “O Gosāñi, What to speak of a *lakṣa*, none of us have even a thousand. If You don't accept meals in our house, then let our houses be burnt to ashes.”

The Lord replied, “Do you know who is a *lakṣapati*? He is someone who chants everyday a *lakṣa* of names. I only take meals in that person's house, no one else.”

Hearing this merciful statement of the Lord, the *brāhmaṇas* gave up their anxiety and became joyful. “O Lord, we will take a *lakṣa* of names, please take Your meals in our houses. It is our fortune that You are teaching us in this way.” All the *brāhmaṇas* then began to chant a *lakṣa* of names everyday in order to offer food to Lord Caitanyacandra.

In this way the Supreme Lord and hero of Vaikuṇṭha enjoyed inducing others to take up the process of devotional service. The mission of His incarnation was meant for this purpose to distribute the process of bhakti. For this reason He doesn't ask anything other than devotion service.

The Lord said, “Whoever has devotion to Kṛṣṇa always has well-being and auspiciousness.” Whoever does not speak about the glories of devotional service, Gauracandra does not even see his face.

One day the Lord asked His spiritual master, Keśava Bhāratī, about bhakti and *jñāna*. The Lord inquired, “Which is greater

jñāna or bhakti? Please consider and tell Me conclusively.”

After considering for some time, Keśava Bhāratī spoke to Gaurasundara: I have considered the truth in my mind and I have found that the glories of bhakti are superior to all.”

The Lord asked, “Why is bhakti greater than *jñāna*? All the *sannyāsīs* say that *jñāna* is greater.”

Keśava Bhāratī replied, “They have not understood the conclusion which all the *mahājanas* have followed. The Vedic literature teaches one to accept the path of the *mahājanas*. Leaving aside that path a fool accepts another. Brahmā, Śiva, Nārada, Prahlāda, Vyāsa, Śukadeva, the four Kumāras, the Pāṇḍavas, Priyavrata, Prthu, Dhruva, Akrūra, and Uddhava are all called *mahājanas*. They always beg for the devotional service of the Lord's lotus feet. If *jñāna* is greater, why would they beg for bhakti? Don't think that without consideration these *mahājanas* are rejecting liberation and always begging for bhakti. All their statements are supported by the Purāṇas. What benediction did Brahmā ask from the Lord?”

My dear Lord, I therefore pray to be so fortunate that in this life as Lord Brahmā or in another life, wherever I take my birth, I may be counted as one of Your devotees. I pray that wherever I may be, even among the animal species, I can engage in devotional service to Your lotus feet. (Bhag. 10.14.30)

“O my Lord, in this birth as Brahmā or in whatever other birth I may take let me be Your servant and always engage in Your service.” In this way all the *mahājana sampradāyas* reject everything else and desire only devotional service.

In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (1.20.18) it is stated: “O Lord Acyuta! Wherever I may be born amongst the thousands of species of life, let the infallible devotional service of Your lotus feet be mine. O Lord Hṛṣīkeśa! In whatever species of life I take birth in as a result of my past fruitive activities, let me remain always fixed in Your devotional service.”

Wherever we are made to wander about this world by the Supreme Lord's will, in accordance with the reactions to our fruitive work, may our good works and charity always grant us love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. (Bhag. 10.47.67)

Therefore the path given by the *mahājanas* is the best in every respect. This is confirmed in all the scriptures.

In the *Mahābhārata* it is said, “Dry arguments are inconclusive. A great personality whose opinion does not differ from others is not considered a great sage. Simply by studying the Vedas, which are variegated, one cannot come to the right path by which religious principles are understood. The solid truth of religious principles is hidden in the heart of an unadulterated self-realized person. Consequently, as the *śāstras* confirm, one should accept whatever progressive path the *mahājanas* advocate.”

Hearing from the mouth of Keśava Bhāratī that bhakti is greater, in ecstatic love, the Lord loudly shouted the name of Hari. “I will stay for some more time in this world. I am telling you, this is the truth. If you would have told Me that *jñāna* was greater, I would have entered the ocean today.”

With satisfaction, the Lord caught hold of the feet of His guru, and His guru affectionately offered his obeisances. The Lord said, “Whoever does not discuss the devotional service of the Lord, for him giving up the sikha and thread, as well as his practice of austerity is all useless.”

The Lord does not discuss anything besides devotional service because Lord Caitanya is the incarnation of bhakti rasa. Forgetting whether it was day or night the devotees constantly engaged in chanting and dancing.

One day Advaita Prabhu, intoxicated with ecstasy, said to all the devotees, “Please listen My dear brothers. Let us all together glorify Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Today we will not glorify any other incarnation other than Lord Caitanya, who is the source of all other incarnations. This Lord is the deliverer of the whole universe, and He has incarnated for our benefit. Because of Him, we are worshiped everywhere and it is He who introduced the wealth of *saṅkīrtana*. I will dance while you all sing the glories of Lord Caitanya, for if I sing as a lion, you will all be frightened.”

The Lord generally conceals Himself, so they were afraid He might become angry. Still, Advaita's instruction could not be disobeyed, therefore the devotees began singing the glories of Lord Caitanya. Advaita Prabhu danced and was overwhelmed in ecstasy as all around Him the devotees sang the glories of Lord Caitanya. All the devotees became stunned with ecstasy as they heard the chanting of the name and glories of this most recent incarnation.

As He danced, Advaita Prabhu also sang the glories of Lord Caitanya, who is the deliverer of the whole universe: * “Śrī caitanya-nārāyaṇa karuṇā-sāgara! duḥkṛterā bandhu prabhu, more dayā kara. O Lord Caitanya, You are an ocean of mercy, Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself. You are the friend of the distressed. Please be merciful on Me.” By chanting this verse which issued from the mouth of Advaita Simha, one's all wealth is increased.

Someone chanted, *jaya jaya śacīnandana!* And someone chanted, * *jaya gauracandra-nārāyaṇa. jaya saṅkīrtana-priya Śrī gaura-gopāla, jaya bhakta-jana-priya pāṣaṇḍira kāla.*

Advaita Simha danced uncontrollably as the devotees sang the names, qualities, and pastimes of Lord Caitanya.

Śrī Rāga

"Just behold the incarnation of Lord Caitanya. As the devotees chant His glories their hairs stand on end and they roll on the ground in ecstasy. The Hero of Vaikuṇṭha, Hari, has incarnated in the form of a *brāhmaṇa* and enjoys pastimes of *sankīrtana*. his complexion is like gold and with hands extending to His knees, His form is most attractive. He accepts the form of a *sannyāsī* and is overwhelmed in His own mood. I don't know how jubilantly He dances. "

(The following song is composed by Advaita)

jaya śrī gaurasundara, karuṇā-sindhu,
jaya jaya vṛndāvana rāyā.
jaya jaya samprati jaya, navadvīpa purandara,
caraṇa-kamala deha' chāyā

"All glories to Śrī Gaurasundara, the ocean of mercy. All glories to the King of Vṛndāvana. All glories to He who has just advented as the Lord of Navadvīpa. Please give me the shade of Your lotus feet."

Thus all the devotees chanted, while Advaita Prabhu danced and meditated on the lotus feet of Gaurāṅga. Hearing the new verses glorifying the most recent incarnation, all the Vaiṣṇavas chanted the name of Hari in great joy. The bliss of that *kīrtana* was wonderful, indeed only Lord Nityānanda can describe it.

Hearing the tumultuous sound of that *kīrtana*, the best of the *sannyāsīs* arrived there. When the devotees saw the Lord had arrived, their joy increased and, as they sang, Advaita danced jubilantly. Due to intense ecstasy the devotees did not fear the Lord's presence and they continued to chant His glories in His presence.

The Lord however, always enjoys the mood of a servant, and He would never claim anything except, "I am Kṛṣṇa's servant." Who had the power to stand before the Lord and address Him *asīśvara* instead of *dāsa*? Still by the strength of Advaita, the devotees fearlessly glorified Lord Caitanya. The Lord stood there for a moment and on hearing His glorification, He became somewhat shy. Then the Lord, who is the instructing spiritual master, in order to teach everyone, left that place for His own residence.

Even then the devotees did not become fearful, rather they chanted with more enthusiasm. Absorbed in ecstasy, everyone lost external consciousness and they saw the Lord dancing in their midst. They all chanted the glories of Lord Caitanya like madmen. The pious onlookers felt happy, while the impious onlookers felt distressed. Whoever does not have attraction for the glorification of Lord Caitanya, what is the use of his being a *sannyāsī* or *brahmacārī*?

In this way, all the devotees always engaged in *sankīrtana*, chanting the holy name of the Lord in transcendental ecstasy. Whoever reads or hears about these blissful pastimes certainly joins them.

While chanting and dancing in this way, all the devotees came to meet the Lord at His residence. As Lord Caitanya heard His glories being chanted, He laid down to induce fear in the devotees. The pious Govinda informed the Lord, "All the Vaiṣṇavas have come to see You."

On Lord Caitanya's order, Govinda brought the devotees in, but the Lord continued lying down ignoring them. Then all the devotees became fearful, and they began to think of Gauracandra's lotus feet. After a moment, the Lord, who is *bhakta-vatsala*, began to speak: "O Vaiṣṇavas. O magnanimous Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. What are you doing today? Please tell Me. Instead of glorifying Kṛṣṇa and His name, what are you singing?"

The great speaker Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita replied, "O Gosāṇi. There is no independence at all for the living entity. I tell You clearly that whatever the Lord makes us do or sing, that is what we have done today."

The Lord said, "You are all learned scholars, if someone wants to remain hidden, why are you exposing him?"

Hearing the Lord's words, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita smiled within as he tried to cover the sun with his two hands. The Lord then asked him, "What is this sign you are making with your hands? Please explain."

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said, "If You want me to tell You, I was covering the sun with my hands. But is it possible to cover the sun with one's hands? In the same way there is no possibility of hiding You. Even if somehow or other the sun is covered by one's hands, still You will never be able to hide Yourself. He who could not be hidden in the ocean of milk, how could we hide Him in this world? From the Himalayas to Setu Bandha, throughout the world, Your spotless glories have filled all directions. The chanting of Your glories has filled the whole universe; how many people will You punish in what way?"

The Lord always increases the glories of His devotees. At that time something wonderful happened at the doorstep. All of a sudden thousands of people came from having *darśana* of Lord Jagannātha to see Lord Caitanya. Some people came

from Tripura, some came from Cāṭigrāma, some came from Śrī Haṭṭa, and some came from Bengal. Thousands of people performed *kīrtana*, glorifying Lord Caitanya.

“All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who wears a garland of forest flowers. All glories to He who eagerly enjoys the mellows of His own devotional service. All glories to the Lord who has accepted the form of *asannyāsī*. All glories to Murāri who is most attached to the process of *saṅkīrtana*. All glories to the king of the *brāhmaṇas* who always enjoys in *Vaikuṇṭha*. All glories to the Lord who is the greatest benefactor of the world. All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya the son of Śacī.” In this way hundreds of people chanted and danced.

Then Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita quipped, “O my Lord, what will You do now? The whole world is singing Your glories. Where will You hide? Have I taught all these people? Still the whole world is chanting Your glories. Although You are unseen and unmanifest to the nondevotees, You are the Lord of all and have now mercifully manifest before the people of this world. You hide Yourself and You manifest Yourself; only one who receives Your favor can know You.

The Lord said, “By manifesting your potency, you have made these people glorify Me. This I have understood. O Paṇḍita, I have been defeated by you and have come to know that you possess all potencies.”

It is the nature of the Lord to always increase the victories of His devotees. This is confirmed in the *Vedas* and the *Bhāgavatam*.

Then, smiling on the devotees, the Lord bade them off and they returned to their residences. Such is the affection shown to the devotees by Lord Caitanya, whom everyone glorifies as Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Lord Nityānanda, Advaita Ācārya, and all other leading devotees all say that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Whoever doesn't accept their statement and accepts someone else as Kṛṣṇa is unfortunate. The Supreme Lord's symptoms are: He lies on Śeṣa Nāga, he is the husband of the goddess of fortune, His chest is decorated with the mark of Śrīvatsa and the Kaustubha jewel, and His carrier is Garuḍa. Know for certain that all these symptoms are found in Kṛṣṇa, and therefore mother Ganges does not appear from the lotus feet of anyone else. Except for Lord Caitanya, these symptoms are not possibly found anywhere else. This is the statement of the Vedic literatures and Vaiṣṇavas. Whoever respectfully accepts the statements of the Vaiṣṇavas is victorious everywhere.

In this way Śrī Gaurasundara always enjoys pastimes with His devotees. One day all the devotees were sitting around the Lord like the stars surrounding the moon. The Lord of *Vaikuṇṭha* and jewel amongst the *sannyāsīs* was sitting in the middle and incessantly speaking the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa. At that time two fortunate souls came before the Lord. The Lord then mercifully glanced on those two brothers, Śākara Mallika and Rūpa. From a distance the brothers fell flat offering obeisances to the Lord.

Taking straw in their mouths, they spoke with great humility: “All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, by whose mercy all people are made fortunate. All glories to the Lord who is kind to the fallen and the benefactor of the world. All glories to the Supreme Lord who has accepted the form of a *sannyāsī*. All glories to the unlimited Lord who enjoys pastimes of *saṅkīrtana*. All glories to the Lord who is the beginning, middle, and end of everything. You have incarnated as a Vaiṣṇava, and by giving out devotional service, You have delivered the whole world. Then for what reason my Lord do you not deliver us? Are we not from this world?

Since our birth we have been illusioned by sense gratification, therefore we have not worshiped Your lotus feet nor have we done anything for our benefit. We have not associated with Your devotees nor have we chanted and heard Your *kīrtanas*. You have deceived us by making us ministers of a king, then why have You given us this human form of life? The demigods pray for a human birth, yet even though You have given us a human birth, You have deceived us. Please therefore be merciful on us this time, without duplicity, so that we may live under a tree and chant Your name. May we be blessed with the opportunity to have the remnants of Your dear servant in his house.”

In this way the two brothers Rūpa and Sanātana offered prayers that were heard by Lord Caitanya. The Lord then mercifully glanced at the two brothers and began to speak with compassion. The Lord said, “Both of you are fortunate for you have broken the knots of material life and come out. The whole world is bound by the knots of material enjoyment, which you have crossed over. Now if you desire prema-bhakti, then grab the lotus feet of Advaita Prabhu. Śrī Advaita Prabhu is the keeper of the storehouse of devotional service; devotional service is achieved by His mercy.”

Hearing the Lord's instruction the two *mahājanas* fell flat at the feet of Advaita Prabhu. “All glories to Śrī Advaita, the deliverer of the fallen souls. We are most fallen, please therefore deliver us.”

The Lord then said, “Please listen Advaita Gosāṇi. There are no such renounced persons in Kali-yuga as these two. They left kingly happiness and accepted only a loin cloth and quilt. Staying in Mathurā, they always chant Kṛṣṇa's name. Please bestow pure devotional service on them so that they do not forget Kṛṣṇa life after life. You are the storekeeper of devotional service; if You don't give, no one can get devotion to Kṛṣṇa, association of Kṛṣṇa's devotees, or Kṛṣṇa Himself.”

Advaita Prabhu replied, “O Lord, You are the giver of everything. If You order Me, then I can give. By the order of the proprietor, the storekeeper can dispense the goods. In this way, whoever you want to bestow mercy on, he will receive it. With My body, mind, and speech I bless them both to have *prema-bhakti* in every respect.”

Hearing the merciful statement of Advaita, the Lord loudly chanted the holy name of Hari. Lord Caitanya then began to speak to Dabīra Khāsa, “Now you have received loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Devotional service is possible by the mercy of Advaita Prabhu. Know for certain that He possesses all the potencies of Kṛṣṇa. Both of you remain here for sometime to see the lotus face of Lord Jagannātha, then go to Mathurā to stay. Then you may both distribute the mellows of devotional service to the people of the west who are under the influence of *rajo-guna* and *tamo-guna*. Later I will come to Mathurā. Arrange a secluded place for My stay.”

The Lord then changed the name of Sākara Mallika to Sanātana (and Dabira Khāsa to Rūpa). Even today the two brothers Rūpa and Sanātana are world famous by the mercy of Lord Caitanya.

Śrī Caitanyacandra always preaches the glories of the devotion and magnanimity of the devotees, whether Nityānanda Prabhu, Advaita Prabhu, or any other dear associate. Lord Caitanya proclaims their glories with great satisfaction. The Lord would reveal the glories of the devotees—how they appear, which Vaiṣṇava family they appear in, their activities, and how they are respected.

One day as Lord Caitanya sat amongst the devotees headed by Advaita and Śrīvāsa, the Lord asked Śrīvāsa about Advaita Ācārya. The Lord said, “O Śrīvāsa, please tell Me what kind of Vaiṣṇava you think Advaita Prabhu is.”

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita considered in his mind and replied, “In my mind, I think He is as good as Śukadeva or Prahāda.”

Hearing the comparison of Advaita with Prahāda and Śukadeva, the Lord became angry and beat Śrīvāsa. As an affectionate father beats his son to teach him, in this way the Lord gave one slap to Śrīvāsa, saying, “What did you say? What did you say? You are saying My Nāḍā is like Śukadeva or Prahāda? You accept Śukadeva is fully liberated, but in front of My Nāḍā, he is like yesterday's child. How dare you say such things about Advaita Ācārya? O Śrīvāsa, you have made Me broken hearted today.”

Saying this the Lord in an angry mood took a fishing pole in His hand and ran after Śrīvāsa to hit him. Śrī Advaita Ācārya stood up with reverence and modestly caught hold of the Lord's hand saying, “O Lord, a father teaches his sons out of compassion; within the three worlds who is a recipient for Your anger?”

Hearing the words of Advaita Ācārya, the Lord gave up His anger and in rapture began to profusely glorify Advaita saying, “All of you are like My children, therefore all My anger is vanished. Is there anyone who could know the truth of Advaita, who has awakened Me from sleep and brought Me here? O Śrīvāsa is this your respect for My Nāḍā? Śuka and others are like His children; He is the cause of their birth. I have incarnated only due to Advaita Prabhu. His loud crying is still ringing in My ears. I was lying down in the ocean of milk and this Advaita woke Me and brought Me here with His loud cries.”

Śrīvāsa, who naturally loves Advaita, became very happy when he heard these statements of Lord Caitanya. Shivering out of great fear, Śrīvāsa said, “O my Lord, I have offended You. Please forgive me! You alone know the truth about Advaita. If You disclose this, then other servants can know. Today I am fortunate and everything is auspicious for I have received the fruit of Your instructions. Today the strength of my mind has increased due to Your influence. From today my resolve is that even if Advaita Prabhu touches wine and women, still I will have staunch devotion towards Him. I make this promise before You.”

The Lord became satisfied by hearing Śrīvāsa's words. The three of them then sat down happily as before.

All these auspicious narrations are most confidential and by hearing these topics one surely attains Kṛṣṇa. The omniscient Lord Gauracandra alone knows the influence and devotion that the devotees have. He knows their power as well as who is senior and who is junior. Whoever serves the Lord without duplicity can also know these things.

Just as the truths of Lord Viṣṇu described in the Vedas are difficult to understand, in the same way the truths of the Vaiṣṇavas are also hard to understand. The character of a perfect Vaiṣṇava is most extraordinary; not understanding this, people criticize them and thus suffer. The character of a perfect Vaiṣṇava is most extraordinary. Just see yourself the example given in the *Bhāgavatam*.

Bhṛgu Muni, the great Vaiṣṇava son of Lord Brahmā, always thinks about the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu. That Lord Viṣṇu who he worships, was kicked by Bhṛgu in the chest, yet he is still accepted as a topmost Vaiṣṇava. Please hear the statements of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* regarding Bhṛgu in this connection.

Long, long ago, many great sages assembled gathered to perform sacrifices and hear from the Purāṇas on the bank of the River Sarasvatī. Those sages were all learned in the śāstra and accustomed to perform austerities. In this particular meeting

they began to discuss the Absolute Truth and the following question was raised: Amongst the three predominating deities of this material world; namely, Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva, who is the Supreme?

Someone said that Brahmā is the greatest, someone said that Śiva is the greatest, and someone said that Viṣṇu is the greatest of all. Even in the Purāṇas different statements are given; somewhere it is said Śiva is the greatest and somewhere it is said Nārāyaṇa is.

Then all the sages requested Bhṛgu to test all three predominating deities and report to the assembly as to who is the greatest: "You are the mind-born son of Lord Brahmā. You are senior to us in every respect, and you are the best of the knowers of the Truth. You go and determine who is the greatest, then return and destroy our doubts; whatever you say we will accept."

Hearing this, the great sage Bhṛgumuni first of all went to his father's residence in Brahmāloka. Bhṛgumuni first went to the assembly of his father, Lord Brahmā, and he stood before him with a proud attitude. Seeing his son, Brahmā became satisfied and inquired about Bhṛgu's welfare. Because Bhṛgu wanted to test whether Brahmā had the quality of goodness, Bhṛgu purposely did not offer his respects to his father, either by listening attentively, offering obeisances, or by offering prayers. He neglected whatever behavior is expected of a son or a disciple before his father or spiritual master.

Seeing the disrespectful behavior of his son, Lord Brahmā became very angry and he appeared like an incarnation of Agni. When Bhṛgu saw the angry mood of his father, he ran away fearing he would be cursed and turned to ashes.

Everyone present held the feet of Lord Brahmā and pacified him saying, "Please don't be so cruel to your son." Then due to affection for his son, Lord Brahmā controlled his anger just as fire is extinguished with water.

After testing Lord Brahmā, Bhṛgumuni went directly to Kailāsa, where Lord Śiva resides. Seeing Bhṛgumuni, Lord Śiva and Pārvatī happily got up with due respect. As the elder brother of Bhṛgu, three-eyed Lord Śiva personally rose to embrace Bhṛgu. But when Lord Śiva approached, Bhṛgumuni refused to embrace him. "My dear Mahēśa," he said, "Please do not touch me. You associate with all kinds of *pāṣaṇḍīs* and you always keep Bhūtas, Pretas, Piśācas, and other untouchables around you. Your behavior is full of contradictions. What scripture says that you can wear bones and ashes? If you touch me, I will have to bathe, therefore please keep your distance from me, O king of the Bhūtas."

Bhṛgumuni spoke like this in order to test Lord Śiva, otherwise he never criticizes Śiva. When Śiva heard Bhṛgu's insult, three-eyed Lord Śiva became angry and at once picked up his trident. Lord Śiva forgot any respect that an elder brother gives to his junior, and he assumed a devastating form. As Śiva took up his trident to kill Bhṛgumuni, Pārvatī came and caught hold of Lord Śiva's hand. Goddess Pārvatī grabbed the feet of Lord Śiva and said, "O Lord should you become so angry at your older brother?"

Hearing Pārvatī's words, Lord Śiva felt shy, and Bhṛgu went on to Vaiṣṇava, the abode of Lord Nārāyaṇa. The Lord was lying on a jeweled bed and Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, was engaged in massaging His lotus feet. At that time Bhṛgumuni came and kicked the Lord's chest with his foot.

Seeing Bhṛgumuni, the Lord immediately got up from His bed offered respectful obeisances to the *brahmana*. Then the Lord, along with Lakṣmī, washed Bhṛgumuni's feet, and offered him an excellent sitting place. With His own hand the Lord then smeared sandalwood pulp on Bhṛgu's body.

The Lord begged forgiveness from Bhṛgu as if He were an offender, "I am very sorry that when you first entered I could not receive you properly. It was a great offense on My part, and I beg you to pardon Me. This water which was used to wash your feet is so pure it can sanctify the places of pilgrimage. All the *brahmāṇḍas* situated within Me as well as the universal heads—all of us have been purified by this water which has washed your feet. Therefore let your character remain ever-glorious. The mark of your footprint, as well as the dust, I will eagerly keep on My chest. I have given you a place on My chest along with Lakṣmī, which will be called the mark of Śrīvatsa by all the Vedas."

Hearing the Lord's words and seeing His humble behavior, Bhṛgumuni concluded that Lord Viṣṇu is certainly beyond the influence of lust, anger, greed, and illusion. Bhṛgumuni was struck with wonder and he lowered his head in shame.

Whatever Bhṛgumuni did was not done on his account, rather this was all arranged by Providence. Bhṛgumuni then regained his external consciousness and, after seeing the exhibition of the Lord's love and devotion, he was filled with devotional love and began to dance. The son of Brahmā was absorbed in devotional sentiments and he exhibited the *satvika-vikaras*, namely smiling, shivering, perspiring, loss of consciousness, hairs standing on end, and shouting loudly.

"Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of all!" Declaring this truth, the son of Brahmā danced. After observing the humble and peaceful behavior of the Lord, Bhṛgumuni concluded that such love and devotion is not possible anywhere else. Bhṛgumuni's eyes became filled with tears of ecstasy. He became stunned with devotion and was unable to speak. He thus fully surrendered to the Lord and then returned to the assembly of great sages.

Seeing Bhr̥gumuni, everyone became joyful and inquired, “What behavior have you seen? Whatever you say is conclusive.” Then Bhr̥gumuni described his experience.

He explained in detail the different characteristics of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, and then he spoke the following words in conclusion. "Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha is the greatest of all. This is the truth, the truth, the truth. Kṛṣṇa is the controller and father of all, even Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva work under His direction. Lord Nārāyaṇa is the doer, creator, and protector. Therefore one should worship His lotus feet without doubt. Know for certain that religiosity, knowledge, pious activities, opulences, and renunciation, as well as one's exalted position and influence all emanate from Kṛṣṇa. Therefore sing the glories of Kṛṣṇa and worship Him." Lord Caitanya is that same Lord Kṛṣṇa, and He has appeared to enjoy the pastimes of *sāṅkīrtana*.

After hearing Bhr̥gumuni's statement with great attention, the sages became free from doubt and concluded Viṣṇu is the greatest. The sages then offered due respect to Bhr̥gumuni saying, “You have cleared our doubts and made our minds peaceful.”

All the sages then accepted the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa with determination and they worshiped Brahmā and Śiva with the understanding that they are devotees.

I have thus explained the extraordinary character of a perfect Vaiṣṇava, but who can understand this? Lord Brahmā and Bhr̥gumuni exist by the mercy of the Lord, so how could Bhr̥gumuni kick the Lord? I don't see any other conclusion than that the behavior of an exalted personality is not understandable and cannot be imitated.

In order to broadcast the glories of devotional service, Lord Kṛṣṇa entered the body of Bhr̥gumuni and caused this to take place. Bhr̥gumuni could never perform such an act knowingly, but Kṛṣṇa wanted to increase the glories of His pure devotee. Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva appeared to become angry and frightened Bhr̥gumuni in order to increase the Kṛṣṇa's glories. Just as the devotees always sing the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa, in this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa glorifies His devotees even more.

If one criticizes an exalted Vaiṣṇava without understanding his behavior, there is no deliverance. Sometimes an exalted Vaiṣṇava exhibits the same activities as a materialistic person. The conclusion is that only by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa can one understand a great Vaiṣṇava; otherwise one may be liberated and one may be destroyed.

But I have found a wonderful solution to this problem. That is: we should always glorify and behave humbly with all. Surrender to Kṛṣṇa, concluding oneself a fool, and carefully listen to the words of the *ācāryas*. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa will impart one with transcendental intelligence by which he is always delivered without hinderance.

Whoever listens to the activities of Lord Caitanya with devotion will certainly be happily freed from material bondage. I, Vṇḍāvana Dāsa, offer my humble song at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who are my life and soul.

Chapter 10

All glories to Śrī Gauracandra, who is nondifferent from Lord Nārāyaṇa. All glories to the jewel of Śacī's womb, the protector of Sanātana-dharma. All glories to Gaurāṅga, who is Kṛṣṇa and has come to enjoy the performance of *kīrtana*. All glories to the Lord who is dear to the devotees and death to the miscreants. All glories to Śrī Gaurāṅga along with His devotees. By hearing these topics about Lord Caitanya, one attains devotional service.

In this way the hero of Vaikuṇṭha, in the form of a *sannyāsī*, enjoyed blissful pastimes with His devotees. One day as the Lord was sitting, Advaita Prabhu came before the Lord. Advaita Prabhu offered His obeisances and sat down. Lord Caitanya smiled with satisfaction and asked Him, “Where have You come from? What were You doing?”

Advaita Ācārya replied, “I went to see Lord Jagannātha and then came here to see You.”

The Lord however asked, “After seeing Lord Jagannātha, what else did You do?”

Advaita replied, “After seeing Lord Jagannātha, I circumambulated the temple five or seven times.”

Hearing the word "circumambulated" the Lord laughed and said, “You have lost. You are defeated.”

Advaita Ācārya inquired, “What have I lost? Show Me the symptom, then I can believe You.”

The Lord then said, “Listen carefully about how to circumambulate. As long as You are walking behind the Lord, You are

bereft of the Lord's *darśana*. When I take *darśana* of Lord Jagannātha My eyes do not move anywhere else. I do not look to the left or right, nor do I circumambulate. I only gaze on the beautiful face of Lord Jagannātha.”

Advaita Prabhu folded His hands and said to the Lord, “In this way let Me be always defeated by You. But let Me tell You frankly, besides You there is no one in the three worlds qualified like this. You alone are qualified. Therefore I accept defeat.”

Hearing this conversation, all the Vaiṣṇavas smiled and raised an auspicious tumult by chanting, “Hari! Hari!” In this way, all of Lord Caitanya's topics are amazing. The Lord always showed great affection for Advaita Ācārya.

One day Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita asked the Lord about the initiation mantra he had taken, “After giving my initiation mantra to someone, I am not getting any realizations. You please give that mantra to me again, and then my mind will be happy.”

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The Lord warned Gadādhara, “You already have a spiritual master, so be careful, don't become an offender. What to speak of the mantra, even your and My life cannot be used while our spiritual master is alive.”

Gadādhara replied, “He is not here now, so You can do it in his place.”

The Lord then said, “Your spiritual master, Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi, will soon come and you will easily meet him by the arrangement of Providence.” The best of all knowers knows everything, and He told Gadādhara, “Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi will soon arrive in Puri. You can meet him here in ten days, for he is coming to see Me. I always remember Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi, now I understand that you have attracted him to come here.

In this way the Lord would happily spend His days hearing *Bhāgavatam* from Gadādhara. Whenever Gadādhara would recite *Bhāgavatam*, the Lord would manifest various symptoms of love. The Lord would hundreds of times carefully hear the glories of Prahlāda and Dhruva. He had no time for any other activity but would always hear and chant the names and qualities of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Just as Gadādhara was expert in reciting *Bhāgavatam*, Svarūpa Dāmodara was expert in performing *kīrtana*. Whenever Svarūpa Dāmodara chants the qualities of Kṛṣṇa, who is one without a second, Lord Gaurāṅga would become overwhelmed and dance in ecstasy. Tears, shivering, laughter, unconsciousness, hairs standing on end, loud crying, and other transformations of love remained in the body of Lord Caitanya in their personified forms. And when the Lord danced, they danced with Him.

When Lord Caitanya heard the loud chanting of Svarūpa Dāmodara, He lost consciousness and fell to the ground. Among all the *sannyāsa* associates of the Lord, no one was equal to Svarūpa Dāmodara. As Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was very affectionate to Paramānanda Puri, He was similarly affectionate to Svarūpa Dāmodara. Indeed Svarūpa Dāmodara is the personification of melodious singing. Hearing him sing, the Lord dances.

Svarūpa Dāmodara wandered incognito so no one could recognize him as he wandered around the city. Just as Nārada, by chanting and playing on his tambura, induces the Lord to dance, Svarūpa Dāmodara alone was able to do by his *kīrtana*.

Amongst the *sannyāsī* associates of the Lord, the dearest was no one other than Paramānanda Puri. Paramānanda Puri and Svarūpa Dāmodara are the two most qualified devotees amongst the *sannyāsīs*. These two personalities accepted *sannyāsa* after the Lord and then always remained with Him. Paramānanda Puri was always engaged in meditation, and Śrī Svarūpa was always engaged in chanting *kīrtana*. In this way these two *sannyāsīs* were like the arms of Lord Caitanya.

Day and night, Lord Gaurāṅga enjoyed performing *kīrtana* with Svarūpa Dāmodara. During sleep, or eating, or moving about, Svarūpa Dāmodara would never leave the Lord even for a moment. In his previous *āśrama*, Svarūpa Dāmodara was known as Puruṣottama Ācārya, and he had a dear friend named Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi. While walking on the road, the Lord would remember the songs sung by Svarūpa Dāmodara and become mad with ecstasy and forget the way. The Lord would sometimes

Being absorbed in Dāmodara's love, the Lord would sometimes fall on the ground. Sometimes in the water, sometimes on the ground, sometimes in the forest, and sometimes in the bushes. The Lord would not know where He was, but He would just cry out. Svarūpa Dāmodara would perform *kīrtana* alone and with the Lord, who was falling in the forest or bushes. The limit of Svarūpa Dāmodara's good fortune is exemplified by Svarūpa Dāmodara is himself.

One day Lord Caitanya was completely absorbed in love and He fell down inside a well. Seeing this, Advaita Ācārya and other devotees became illusioned and held their hands and started crying. The Lord, enjoying ecstatic love, didn't know what happened and simply floated in the well like a child.

At that moment the well became like butter and there was no scratch on the body of the Lord. This is not very wonderful by the influence of devotional service. Even the Vaiṣṇava doesn't feel the pain of a thorn while dancing. All the devotees

headed by Advaita Prabhu then pulled the Lord out of the well. The Lord did not know that He fell in the well and inquired from the devotees, “What is going on, what are your crying?”

Due to ecstatic love, the Lord lost external consciousness and inquired from others as if He did not know what happened. Hearing the nectarine words from the mouth of the Lord, the devotees headed by Advaita Prabhu floated in ecstasy. In this way while the Lord enjoyed the mellows of devotional service, He understood that Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi came.

As soon as the Lord remembered Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi, Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi came there to meet Him. Seeing Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi, the Lord smiled and said, “My father has come. My father has come.”

Śrī Premanidhi became overwhelmed in ecstatic love and his heart filled with auspiciousness. The Supreme Lord, who is affectionate to His devotees, embraced Puṇḍarika to His chest and began crying. Thus all the Vaiṣṇavas on all sides began weeping as they experienced the happiness of Vaikuṇṭha. The Lord along with all the assembled devotees felt their love for Premanidhi incessantly increase.

Dāmodara Svarūpa was his old friend, and now they met each other in front of the Lord. They both desired the dust of the other's feet so they pulled and pushed each other and fell on the ground. They were both strong and powerful, and therefore neither was defeated. Lord Gaurāṅga, who inspired them in this way, smiled and eagerly watched.

Then the Lord regained His external consciousness and requested Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi to stay in Nīlācala for sometime. Premanidhi became very satisfied on hearing this request. Considering himself fortunate, he remained with the Lord. At this time Gadādhara Paṇḍita again accepted mantra initiation. What more can I say about the glories of Premanidhi. He has a disciple such as Gadādhara Paṇḍita. This is the limit of his love.

His activities are glorified by Advaita Prabhu, Śrīvāsa, Murāri, and Haridāsa. There is not a single Vaiṣṇava who does not appreciate him. Similarly, Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi would serve the devotees with his body, mind, and speech. There is not a speck of false ego in his person. I cannot understand what a wonderful candidate for Lord Caitanya's mercy _____. Let me write something regarding Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi's position as a dear servant of Kṛṣṇa (which I have heard from the mouth of Gadādhara Paṇḍita).

The Lord kept Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi with Him in Jagannātha Puri, and assigned his residence at Yameśvara on the shore of the ocean. Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi, who is very dear to Svarūpa Dāmodara, would see Lord Jagannātha everyday. They would go together to see Lord Jagannātha and then discuss topics of Kṛṣṇa.

Soon the festival of Oḍana-ṣaṣṭhī came, during which Lord Jagannātha wears a new dress. By the Lord's desire, on this day His servants dress Jagannātha in a starched dress. Taking along all His devotees, Lord Gaurasundara came to see this festival (of _____) *Mṛdaṅga*, *muharis*, conches, and *dundubhis* were loudly played. On that day Lord Jagannātha wears various dresses. This continues from Aguhan Sukla Sasthis to the end of Magha (_____). the offering of dresses goes on till the end of night.

Lord Caitanya along with His devotees saw this festival floating in love. Lord Caitanya is Himself the worshiper and worshipable Lord, who can understand His mind without His mercy? In the form of the Deity, Lord Caitanya sits on the throne; and in the form of a *sannyāsī*, He practices devotional service.

Fine white, yellow, and blue silk clothes decorated with pearls and gold were offered to the Deities. After offering the dresses, the Lord is decorated with flower ornaments, flower bangles, flower mukut, and flower garlands. The Lord is then worshiped with sixteen items such as sandalwood pulp, flowers, incense, and ghee lamp and various types of foodstuffs are offered. After seeing off all the Vaiṣṇavas, the Lord remains alone in His own ecstatic mood.

All the devotees left for their respective residences except Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi who always stayed with Svarūpa Dāmodara. They both disclosed their minds to each other without hesitation. After seeing Lord Jagannātha wearing starched dress, Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi became doubtful. He asked Svarūpa Dāmodara, “Why do you offer starched dress to Lord Jagannātha? The *śruti* and *smṛti* are prominent in this place, so why is starched dress offered before washing?”

Svarūpa Dāmodara replied, “Please listen. There is no fault in it because this is the custom here. Even if one knows *śruti* and *smṛti*, he does not always follow. This festival is always observed in this way. This must be Lord Jagannātha's hearts desire. Otherwise why the king does not stop it?”

Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi said, “Whatever the Lord desires is all right, but why do the servants imitate the activities of the Lord? And why do the *pūjārīs*, *pandas*, dress makers, managers, and carriers touch the unwashed dressed? Lord Jagannātha is the supreme controller, for Him everything is possible. But how can others act on His platform? If one touches the starched cloth, he would wash his hands to purify himself. Why they don't have this good intelligence? Royal personalities are fools because they do not consider this. The king even wrapped this starched cloth on his head.”

Svarūpa Dāmodara replied, “Please listen, My dear brother. I understand there is no fault in this Oḍana festival, because

Lord Jagannātha is the incarnation of the Supreme Brahman. Rules and regulations, do not apply to Him.”

Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi said, “Please listen brother. The Deity of Lord Jagannātha is the Supreme Brahman in all respects. There is no fault in Him even if He breaks the rules and regulations. But do you think these people have all become Brahman by staying in Nilācala? They have given up their normal dealings and have become like incarnations of God.”

Saying this they laughed and laughed while walking down the road. The two friends held each other's hands and laughed as Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi found fault in Lord Jagannātha's servants. No one can understand the activities of the Lord's servants, only Kṛṣṇa can know their attachment for Him. After bewildering His devotees, Kṛṣṇa then feeling compassion and destroys their illusion. First the Lord bewildered Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi, now please hear how He destroyed that illusion.

In this way the two intimate friends went to their residences to continue their Kṛṣṇa consciousness duties. After taking their meals they returned and took rest with Lord Gaurāṅga. The omniscient Lord Caitanya in the form of Lord Jagannātha appeared before Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi in a dream. Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi saw in the dream that Lord Jagannātha or Balarāma appeared before him. Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi saw that Lord Jagannātha was angrily holding him and slapping him on his face. Both brothers, Jagannātha and Balarāma, slapped him on his cheeks so hard that his face became swollen. Feeling pain Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi fell at Their feet exclaiming, “Kṛṣṇa save me! Forgive my offenses! O Lord, for what offense are You beating me like this?”

The Lord replied, "There is no end to your offenses. As I am not of any caste, so My servants do not belong to any caste. This you must have learned by staying here. Then why are you staying in a place where you will lose your caste. If you want to protect your caste you better go home. Since I have started the traditional observance of this festival, how can you think there is any improper behavior in it? You consider that I am the Supreme Brahman, but you offend My servant by seeing fault in their dressing Me with starched cloth.”

Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi felt great fear in his mind placing his head on the lotus feet of the Lord, he cried. "Please forgive all the offenses of this most sinful person! I'm defeated! I apologize! O Lord with this mouth I have laughed at Your servants, so now You have properly punished that mouth. This is an auspicious morning of a good day for my face and forehead were touched by Your lotus hand.”

The Lord replied, “In order to bestow My causeless mercy on you, I have punished you, considering you My servant. In this way the Lord mercifully glanced on Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi in the dream and the two brothers Jagannātha and Balarāma returned to Their temple.

After the dream was over, Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi woke up, and seeing the slap marks on his cheeks, he began to laugh. His cheeks were swollen due to being slapped by the lotus hands of the Lord. Seeing this, Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi said, “This good! As I have committed an offense, I have received proper punishment. I have received a token punishment for the Lord is very merciful.”

Just see the glories of Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi. This is the limit of the Lord's mercy toward His devotees. In order to teach something the Lord does not beat even His own son Pradyumna. His consorts, Jānakī, Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, and other goddesses are also bereft of this compassion of the Lord. If someone commits an offense he is directly punished, but to receive mercy in the form of punishment in a dream is never seen. If someone receives punishment or wealth in a dream, when he awakens nothing remains. But if the Lord punishes or bestows mercy on someone in a dream, the results are seen by everyone. There is no one so fortunate in the world, because the Lord does not speak to a nondevotee even in a dream.

Now you can directly understand the behavior of the *yavanas* who blaspheme and commit violence. Even if they want to understand the Lord in a dream, due to their blasphemy and envy they are unable to dream about the Lord. What to speak of the *yavanas*, even pious brāhmaṇas, are also bereft of such mercy due to their constant offenses. An offense is punished in the life and the next and the Lord does not teach a sinful nondevotee even in a dream. Whoever receives instructions from the Lord in a dream considers himself most fortunate. Everyone saw the mercy Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi received when he was beaten by the Lord in a dream.

As Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi got up in the morning he saw that his cheeks were swollen due to being slapped. Everyday Svarūpa Dāmodara would come and together they would go to see Lord Jagannātha. As usual Svarūpa Dāmodara came and seeing Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi still lying down inquired, “Every morning you come with me to see Jagannātha. But why is it today you have not got up yet.”

Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi replied, “ O brother, please come here and sit down and I will explain everything.” When Svarūpa Dāmodara came near he saw Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi's cheeks were swollen with slap marks.

Svarūpa Dāmodara asked him, “What is this? Why are your cheeks swollen? Did you get hurt?”

Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi smilingly replied. "Please listen brother. All my doubts were vanquished yesterday. Due to being doubtful about Lord Jagannātha's starched clothes, see the punishment I have received on my cheeks. Last night Lord Jagannātha and Balarāma appeared before me in a dream and slapped me without break for two *daṇḍas*. 'You have criticized the clothes I wear.' Saying this They both slapped my cheeks. See the marks of Their fingers on my cheeks. I was not able to reply to Them.

"I will not speak to anyone out of shame, only when my cheeks become normal will I go out. It is not proper to disclose this incident anywhere else but because in my heart I consider you my brother and very fortunate therefore I am telling you. According to my offense I have received proper punishment, otherwise I would have fallen into a deep dark well."

Seeing the Lord's affection towards Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi, Svarūpa Dāmodara floated in ecstasy. By seeing the good fortune of a friend, a friend becomes happy therefore they both laughed in great happiness. Svarūpa Dāmodara said, "Listen my brother, I have never heard about or seen such wonderful punishment. The Lord appeared in a dream and punished you directly. I have not heard of such a thing but I see it now on you. In this way the friends floated in satisfaction and enjoyed topics of Kṛṣṇa without knowing whether it was day or night. Such was the influence of Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi whom Lord Gaurāṅga called 'bap.' Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi doesn't take bath in the Ganges, fearing to touch here with his feet, he would simply take *darśana* and drink the water. Lord Gaurāṅga would call this devotee Puṇḍarika while crying

Whoever hears the activities of Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi will certainly achieve the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.