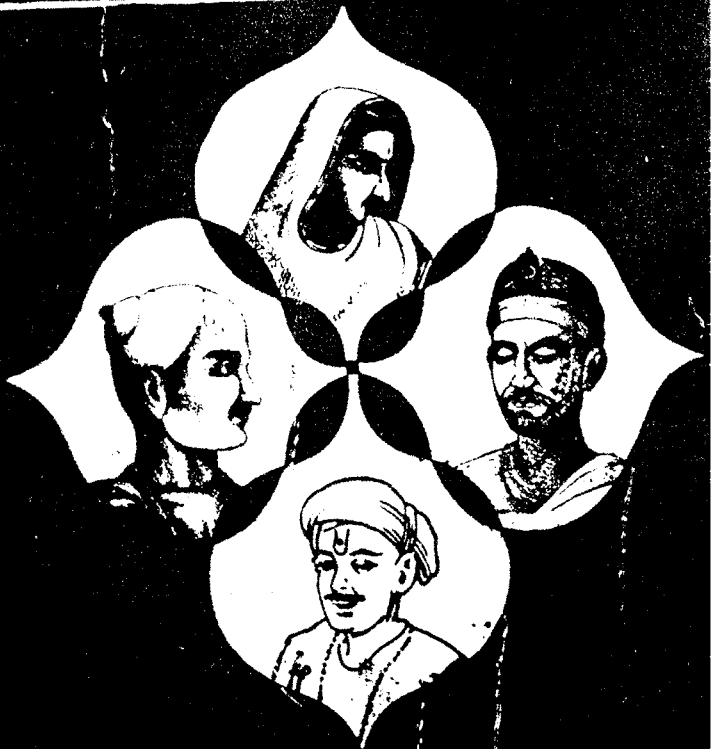


JUSTIN E. ABBOTT

Stories of
**Indian
Saints**

N.R. GODBOLE

STORIES OF INDIAN SAINTS



**DR. JUSTIN E. ABBOTT
PANDIT N. R. GODBOLE**

STORIES OF INDIAN SAINTS

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Translation of Mahipati's Marathi

BHAKTAVIJAYA

by

Dr. JUSTIN E. ABBOTT

and

PANDIT NARHAR R. GODBOLE

An Introduction by

Dr. G. V. TAGARE

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FOREWORD

BY

J. F. Edwards

How the *Bhaktavijaya* was Translated

This book contains the first published English translation of Mahipati's *Bhaktavijaya* which consists of forty thousand lines of beautiful Marathi poetry and is rightly regarded as one of the classics of a language spoken by over twenty-one million people in present-day India. Who Mahipati was will be found on another page and each of his joint-translators speaks for himself in his own separate Preface. Since one of these joint-authors is no more, and the other is a self-effacing Indian Pandit, our first task in this Foreword is to introduce their work to English readers by indicating some of the limitations under which this work has been prepared. This English translation of one of the great Marathi classics is published under the provisions of the last will and testament of the late Dr. Justin E. Abbott who passed away at Summit, New Jersey, United States, on June 19, 1932. Born at Rahuri in the Ahmednagar District on Christmas Day 1853, it was as a loyal son of Maharashtra that he took in hand the translating into English of important sections of the lives and writings of the Poet Saints of Maharashtra. Eight volumes had been published when he died, and the ninth volume entitled *Ramdas* we published a year ago. The present work is planned to appear in two volumes, the second being already in the Press. The foundation for these two volumes had been well and truly laid in the completion of the first draft translation by Dr. Abbott before the final stages of his physical weakness. On this task the patient scholar spent about eighteen months of the last two years of his

life. His method of work during those last months was to follow the Marathi text from a volume placed on a movable book-rest attached to his couch or bed, while he dictated his translation into a dictaphone whenever he felt fit for work, a lady attendant (see page xx) afterwards typing off the translation as repeated by the dictaphone. Though kept to his bed continuously for several weeks during this period, sometimes in a serious condition, he nevertheless pursued his task with his usual cheerfulness. When we stayed with him in New Jersey for a month in early 1930 it was quite clear that daily fellowship with the Poet Saints was a great comfort in his loneliness. And as we have worked over this translation which was produced under such conditions of physical disability, we have done so with the feeling that we were permitted to gaze upon a monument of heroic industry and endurance.

The Editor's Task

Let us emphasize at the outset that our own share in this undertaking has been strictly editorial. It need hardly be said that this editorial task has been no sinecure. Knowing Dr. Abbott's passion for exactitude, and knowing also that his translation had been committed to paper under the peculiar conditions just now indicated, which included the important factor that the typist neither knew Marathi, nor how to spell or pronounce Marathi proper names, nor could her copy be corrected by the translator—in view of these and similar facts we felt there was no alternative but to compare the entire translation with Mahipati's original of ten thousand Marathi verses of four lines each. This we began during the last hot weather at Mahableshtar and completed in the weeks following under the competent guidance of Pandit N. R. Godbole who is rightly given his place on the title-page as joint-author of the book (see page xx). Dr. Abbott's punctilious care even in his growing

weakness is shown by the fact that no more than a hundred lines had been overlooked by him in translating the forty thousand lines of Mahipati's entire work, the major portion of the alterations that were necessary having arisen from the confusion caused by the three stages of sound in the typing of the manuscript, viz., the voice of the person dictating, the sound as emitted by the dictaphone, and the word-sound as understood and typed by the non-Marathi typist. For all errors of proof-correction we must bear final responsibility. Following on two proofs read by the Pandit, ours was the task of reading the third or fourth proof of every page throughout the book, sometimes a fifth being necessary. In this connection we owe a heavy debt of gratitude to the manager and workmen at the Aryabhushan Press for their uniform patience and courtesy.

Dr. Abbott's English Style

A word seems necessary about Dr. Abbott's English style in his translation, in view of a stray opinion that has mingled here and there with the high praise bestowed on preceding volumes. His aim throughout the series has been to let the Marathi Poet Saints speak for themselves as far as that is possible through the medium of a translation. This is the answer to an observation made by one reviewer, a well known Englishman, that the translation is 'painfully literal, jerky, disjointed.' That Dr. Abbott's translation is 'literal' may be regarded as one measure of its success, for this was one of his chief aims in order to let English readers see what the Poet Saints themselves actually say. That it is also 'jerky' and 'disjointed' is due to the attempt to turn oriental poetry, and that Mahipati's difficult *ovi* poetry, into occidental prose. As Dr. Abbott himself remarked to the present writer in a personal letter dated 1926 regarding this series: 'Anyone wishing to make a further study of these Marathi Poet

Saints will know where to turn for material. By translating Mahipati, I kill two birds with one stone. I make Mahipati known, as a graphic interesting writer; and I show his characters, his heroes and heroines, not in my language, or from my point of view, but through the Indian eye.' That Dr. Abbott has succeeded in this worthy aim is shown by the appreciative remarks made by the same reviewer referred to above. See also a later reference by the same pen on this subject given below.

Mahipati's Place in Literature

What claim on our time and study has this Mahipati, one of whose masterpieces is translated in this book? Unquestionably his first claim arises from the rare quality of the Marathi literature he has given us. For evidence on this point turn to two of Mahipati's students in the ranks of the Indian Civil Service. Mr. L. J. Sedgwick, I. C. S., who when he passed away a few years ago had just completed his able survey as 1921 Indian Census Superintendent for the Bombay Government, wrote in *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bombay Branch* (1910, volume 23, No. 65, pp. 109-110): 'Viewed from any standpoint of criticism the *ovi* poems of Mahipati, and the *abhangs* of Namdev, Eknath, Tukaram and Ramdas must be placed among the finest of the poetic productions of the world.' Another acknowledged authority on Marathi literature among the ranks of the Indian Civil Service is the Hon. C. A. Kincaid, I. C. S., joint author with Rao Bahadur D. B. Parasnis of a three-volume *History of the Maratha People* and who in his interesting *Tales of the Saints of Pandharpur* (pp. 3-4) affirms: 'Had Mahipati used a linguistic medium more widely known than Marathi, he would have ranked high among the world's poets. Even a foreigner can appreciate the easy flow of his stanzas; his musical rhymes and above all his unrivalled imagery.' No one can work steadily

through the *Bhaktavijaya* of Mahipati without being driven to the same conclusion. It is one of the most fascinating of religious story-books. By the title *Bhaktavijaya* is meant *Triumphs of the Saints*, and concerning Mahipati's entrancing poetical narratives of the saints the late Narayan Vaman Tilak once said he was 'reminded of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.' Though a critical estimate compels the conclusion that the *Bhaktavijaya* conveys an 'atmosphere rather than exact history,' supplying rich 'biographical material rather than biography,' and though many of Mahipati's embellishments can only be viewed as beautiful 'legends,' yet he has so thoroughly succeeded in investing with the true *bhakti* (devotional) spirit the daily life of rich and poor, high caste, low caste and out-caste alike, among the Marathi-speaking people, that ever since he died in 1790 this work has rightly been regarded as one of the source-books concerning the Marathi Saints who lived from the 13th to the 17th centuries. On his trustworthiness see pp. xxiii-xxviii.

How To Understand the Indian Heart

A translation such as this is, of one of the incomparable portions of India's religious literature, enables all who wish to understand the heart of India to do so without the laborious task of acquiring a strange language. If this applies to all across the seas who desire to acquaint themselves with India's religious point of view, it applies with double force to all those from other lands who come to India for whatever purpose. In a recent speech H. H. The Maharajah of Mysore observed: 'There are diverse religions in this land of ours and frequently there exists a most irreligious hostility between them. This being so, the creed and custom of each religion among us is surely worthy of reverent study by the followers of every other.' If such an attitude is desirable on the part of all foreigners

in India, it is nothing less than a sacred duty on the part of those foreigners who come to India for the purpose of helping its people religiously. Surely one of the first duties of a missionary should be to become acquainted with the religious point of view of the people of the land, and a book such as this enables this to be done even before the language has been acquired. As the Chaplain of Simla, the Rev. P. N. F. Young M. A., said in a thoughtful address before the Simla Y. M. C. A. recently: 'I think the Christian should be keen to learn about and understand other religions, firstly because they are worthy of study, and because they are the result of a sincere search after God. Secondly, because we can best commend our own faith if we appreciate sympathetically those who differ from us. And thirdly, because there is a real bond between all those who in these secularised days hold to a spiritual interpretation of the Universe.'

India's Insurrection Against Religion

Mahipati's matchless stories make a distinctive contribution in the direction indicated by H. H. The Maharajah Gaikwar of Baroda at the conclusion of his eloquent address at the opening of the Second World Parliament of Religions at Chicago in September this year when he said: 'Let us humbly and in the spirit of partnership combine against the common enemies: ignorance, selfishness and materialism.' In the second chapter of his wonderful Marathi poem entitled *Christayan*, Narayan Vaman Tilak ascribes to India the glowing phrase, 'enthroned as *guru* of the earth.' If this high place is to be won and retained by India, her educated people need to guard against the growing tendency to leave the heart's throne empty after having dethroned whatever false gods may have occupied it hitherto. Every one of us must welcome every sign of insurrection against any form of religion that may be

false and unworthy, and no doubt much of the religious rebellion in India to-day is against degrading and unworthy ideas of God. But some aspects of India's insurrection against religion are against religion in any form both false and true. They are like that South Indian paper called *Revolt*: they revolt 'against both heaven and hell, both God and Satan.' That the shrine in the soul of young India to-day is too often an empty shrine was shown by Gandhiji not long ago when he said he was 'inundated with letters from young men...about the void that their unbelief has made in their lives.' As an able Indian barrister remarked some time ago: 'The kirk I stay away from is Hinduism.' An Indian Christian educational leader of Bengal, the Rev. S. K. Chatterji of Bishnupur, stated some two years ago: 'The rising generation in India is inclined to throw over religion altogether. In its place they want to put Secularism. They seem to think that it is religion and faith in God which has made India effeminate and weak, and that no independence and progress are possible so long as there is religion in this land. These secularists are not mere materialists, in the sense that they believe only in wealth and power; no, a great many of them believe in social reform, in the emancipation of women, and in education. What they do not seem to believe in, is *God*. They do not seem to have any use for religion or religious practices. We shudder to think of a god-less India; yet we find her on the very brink of it.'

Why do we call attention to this state of things? Because Mahipati and his *bhakti* saints had just the very opposite ideal of life to the secular ideal which shuts God out. Also because there is so much in them calculated to call back those who are drifting into the anti-religious attitude. Though from our standpoint to-day these poet-saints may have had a defective ideal, yet we need to

remind ourselves of the state of things that prevailed in their days. In an age when the worship of the Unseen was almost entirely through stocks and stones, these *bhaktas* in Mahipati's pages urged upon their hearers the total inefficacy of the customary modes of purification and of the attainment of God, such as pilgrimages, vows, fasts, penances and sacrifices. These *bhakti* poets also inculcated upon their readers 'the omnipresence of God, and His being neither stock nor stone.' In their teachings they further placed 'a special emphasis upon purity of heart, humility, self-surrender, forgiveness, and the love of God they severely condemned religious practices which concerned the body only, and all mechanical rites and ceremonies; and they strongly enforced the absolute necessity of striving for the attainment of pure devotion to God.'

The Nationalizing and Democratizing Value of *Bhakti*

There is another reason why Maharashtra in these days may well turn its mind from being anti-religious to Mahipati and his *bhaktas*, and the reason is that these provide a unifying, nationalizing and democratizing, and larger purifying, influence in these days of national aspiration. Justice Ranade in his *Rise of the Maratha Power* shows how 'the *bhakti* movement tended to unite the hearts of the Marathas in the cause of establishing the independence of their motherland, and how the Maharashtra mystics were a source of living moral inspiration and influence over the people and how they by their example, preachings and writings, through the medium of the spoken language of the country, kindled the warlike fire in the heroic race of the Maratha people and infused and awakened the long slumbering sense of the patriotic spirit in them The political revolution was in fact to some extent caused by a religious and social upheaval which moved the entire population.'

Untouchability Still In Vithoba Worship

We wish we could get all the citizens of the Maharashtra of today to see with clearness that these things have a practical application to India's great fight against Untouchability, a fight in which some of India's greatest and noblest have dedicated themselves. One of these incomparable stories of Mahipati tells of how the untouchable Mahar poet Chokhamela was turned out of the temple of Vithoba because he was a Mahar. See the story in full on pages 377-384, and remember that one of the chief boasts in connection with Vithoba worship has been its democratic character and that *all* castes have been welcomed by it. But even yet, in this enlightened 20th century, Vithoba worship has not become democratic enough to welcome the out-caste. For the benefit of any who may be inclined to doubt this we will quote a moving appeal made in that Brahmin newspaper, the *Kesari*, whose Marathi editorial of October 14, 1932 we translated as follows in our *Dnyanodaya* English columns of a few days later on October 27:—

More than 500 years ago there lived a simple Maharashtrian saint named Chokhāmelā who it seems was not allowed to take the vision of Vithoba. After him were hundreds and thousands of Mahars, Mangs and Chambhars who became Varkaris, the chief devotees of Vithoba at Pandharpur. They played their instruments, lifted high their banners, founded their guilds, and in the very vicinity of the god built even their schools. *But* these were all compelled to satisfy their hungering hearts by bathing in the sacred river Chandrabhaga near by and by gazing from a distance at the spires of Vithoba's temple. Why should not this three hundred years' penance of gazing at the temple spires now have its due reward? Why should they not now be permitted to look into the holy of holies where the god abides in serene contemplation, standing on the sacred brick with hand on hip, beneath those spires on which they have feasted their eyes for generations past? May not Vithoba himself be weary with the long vigil as he beholds their distress?

Why should not these untouchables now be reckoned to have completed their long probation ?

India's Yearning For a Personal God

But there is more than the democratizing influence of *bhakti* to be learned from Mahipati's *Bhaktavijaya* stories. They show how wide and deep has been India's revolt against the deadening philosophy of the Hindu Vedants. Many of these stories illustrate the truth that while Vedantism may fascinate and enthrall the metaphysical type of mind, it is not a religion by which common people may live. These stories in the *Bhaktavijaya* disclose how passionately India wants a personal God, that she will refuse to be satisfied until she finds such a God, or is found by Him, as the New Testament affirms; and that for a thousand years past India 'has been driven by the inner urge of the heart to a conception of a Personal Lord or *Ishwar* which the most strenuous efforts have not been able to reconcile with the older philosophy. No more convincing demonstration of the inability of the human mind and heart to be content with non-personality as Supreme, has been given the world, than by India. The Vedants still gets lip-service; but it is the Personal God as pictured by the *Ramayana* of Tulsi Das, the Hymns of Tamil and Maratha saints, and the school of Ramanuja, etc., that receives the heart's devotion of India. The "God" of which Gandhiji and other educated modern Hindus speak is not by any means the "Brahma" of the Upanishads, but a Personal Being toward whom many Hindus feel the deepest love and devotion.' It is because all these important matters receive impressive illustration on every page of Mahipati's *Bhaktavijaya* that such practical value attaches to the translation appearing in the present work, especially for missionaries and for all who would understand the yearnings of the Indian heart and do something to satisfy those yearnings. That distinguished Hindu

editors recognize the existence of deep religious yearnings in present-day India is impressively illustrated concerning another part of India in *The Indian Review* for December 1933. An Indian writer is there quoted as referring to the Tamil Saint Thayumanavar whose date largely synchronized with that of Mahipati. The article states :

The great realities of religion called for his zealous pursuit of them. He began to ask seriously : What is sin ? What is the way to freedom ? How am I to get knowledge which will free me from fear both in this life and the next ? When I think of birth and death my heart is terrified. Both my eyes become sleepless. My body melts day and night like gold in fire. What is the cause of all these ? If Thou dost not grant me the blessed stage of *nishta*, because of my soul's thirst, I will be destroyed. If I die before realising this, what shall I do, O God ? He gives expression to his restless mind thus :

When I, the way of love not knowing,
 Was moved and stirred to love by Thee,
 My spirit with love-languor fainted.
 Thy doing all, for whom love-longing
 I pine, and pining gain no rest.
 Thou comest not, I cry for comfort;
 Unpitied and alone I live.

Mysticism In Maharashtra

Literature dealing with Marathi *bhakti* has been greatly enriched during the present year (1933) by the appearance of a substantial volume of 500 pages on *Mysticism in Maharashtra*, the seventh volume in the *History Of Indian Philosophy*. This new volume on Maharashtra Mysticism is by Professor R. D. Ranade, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Allahabad, and was preceded by four 'source-books' giving selections illustrating the main theme of the larger work. To enter upon a discussion of Professor Ranade's great effort would take us far beyond the purpose of this Foreword, and happily this has been rendered unnecessary by an able review from the competent pen of the Rev Alexander Robertson,

formerly of Poona and now of Nagpur, in the *N. C. C. Review* for October this year. Professor Ranade expresses warm appreciation of 'the panorama of Marathi Literature' exhibited by Dr. Abbott in this series on the 'Poet Saints of Maharashtra.' In one of the December Indian magazines to hand just as this Foreword goes to press, Professor Ranade's book on *Mysticism* is reviewed, though not with equal competence, by the English reviewer we have mentioned above who repeats his earlier criticism by observing: 'Dr. Abbott's translations must rank among the worst—in style and language—of any translations ever published:' adding also: 'His industry in execution was not paralleled by felicity of expression.' We have already given reasons for showing that to have aimed at 'felicity of expression' from the English language point of view would have been to rob the Poet Saints of the opportunity of largely speaking for themselves, uncouth though they may be from the standpoint of our later day. As for the first remark, its last five words ('of any translations ever published') are rich indeed. For the real question is: How *many* translations of the Poet Saints of Maharashtra have been 'published' with which to institute such a comparison? The *Bhaktavijaya* for example, translated in the present work, has never appeared before as a whole in an English dress. If the comparison is with certain poetical versions of Marathi that have appeared in English, the answer is that it is widely accepted that very much more has occasionally been *put into* such translations than appears in the Marathi original, resulting in religious interpretations rejected by certain schools of Marathi scholarship. In view of this state of the case it is encouraging to note that the same critical reviewer in another place can say of this Poet Saints series: 'which I have found very useful.' As for the departed scholar whose latest work is found in this book, he himself would say of

any critic : 'Of course my translation is very imperfect; please do not argue in its defence; whatever merits it may have, let them speak for it.' And let it be remembered that the Mystics of Maharashtra differ as much among themselves as do their present-day interpreters and critics.

The Heart A Safer Guide Than the Head

As we are desirous of avoiding anything of the nature of controversy we cannot better conclude this Foreword than by quoting something Dr. Abbott wrote to us in a personal letter a few years ago as follows:— 'Oh! that the eyes of good men, who want to help this sad world, could be opened to see that the path of controversy is the wrong path. The head, however well or logically directed, however historically correct, however true to doctrines traditional or new, has *never* made the heart better, nobler, Christlike. Emphasis therefore should be on the *heart*, to move it to love and kindness and gentleness, unselfishness, tolerance and all the virtues idealized in Christ. Controversy stirs anger, unkind thoughts, divisions. Controversy has been the curse of Christendom through all its history, and the great cause of putting back the Kingdom of Christ in India and other lands. The battle *about* Christ, the contentions on doctrines *relating to Him*, are as far away from *Him* as are the horrors of war from the peace of a home where the Christ-spirit lives.'

United Theological College
of Western India,
7 Sholapur Road, Poona,
December 7, 1933

J. F. Edwards

CHIEF AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Mahipati was born in the little village of Taharabad, in the Ahmednagar district, in the year 1715, and died in the year 1790. He was a Brahman by birth, and the first we hear of him is that he was employed as the town-scribe of Taharabad. The story told of him is that one day he was summoned by an official of the town to come at once. When the messenger arrived he was sitting performing the worship of God. He replied to the messenger that he was 'busy with his worship and could not come now, but would come later.' The messenger, however, would not take 'No' for an answer and insisted that he should come with him. Mahipati finally agreed to go, but mentally resolved to give up his secular employment and devote himself wholly to the religious life. He went with the messenger, performed his duty, and returned vowing never again to use his pen in secular employment. He resigned from his office and devoted himself solely to religion.

Naturally he became interested in the lives of those who had given up their secular lives, because they had become indifferent to its attractions. He then began to write the stories connected with the lives of the *bhaktas* (those who with love and devotion worshipped God) who were known in Maharashtra (the great nation, meaning the Marathi country included in the Bombay Presidency).

He evidently began at once to accumulate the books that told of the lives of those saints. He mentions some of them, such as the work of Nabhaji and Chidghan. He possessed the *Gathas* (poems) of one Nama Vishnudas. For if we compare the stories told by that Nama we find indisputable evidence that Mahipati used them in writing his own account. It is to be presumed that other books were avail-

able, but are now non-existent, through time, rats, white ants and other enemies of manuscripts. Whether the stories of the different saints are real or legendary, matters little, but from them we learn what was popularly considered their conception of God, and their way of approach to Him. That they considered an image of an *avatar* like Rama or Krishna a way of approach cannot be doubted. Tukaram's enthusiasm before the image at Pandharpur and the devotion of Ramdas to images of Rama give abundant evidence. But it should also be remembered that the approach by way of the idol was not their only way. They practised and taught what is called *manas puja*, that is, worship with the mind alone. It was their way of going as it were into their inner chamber and closing the door to pray in secret to God, whom they called Mother and Father. If Hindus of the present day would follow the ideas of their saints, they need not seek approach to God through an idol but can use the method of *manas puja* (mental worship).

Not all the *bhaktas* in these stories held to the ideal of *bhakti* and *Vairagya* (renunciation) as did Tukaram and Ramdas. Many were sincere *bhaktas* while carrying on their worldly business, but they had the spirit of *Vairagya*; that is, their indifference to worldly things (or their *Vairagya*) was one of spirit. It meant that they did not look upon their riches as acquired for their own happiness, but to help the needy. They understood that they should not lay up the temporary riches of this world, but those supreme spiritual riches that are eternal.

Saints like Eknath, Tukaram and Ramdas tried to live the life of *complete* indifference to worldly things. They obeyed literally the precepts, ' Give to him who asketh of thee,' ' Take no thought for the morrow; what ye shall eat or drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.'

They trusted God for everything. But as I have elsewhere intimated they did not press this upon others unless others so chose it. Others were to continue in the business of life, doing their respective duties, but always with the unselfish spirit of *Vairagya* or of indifference to worldly things.

As will be noticed on the title-page, Pandit Narahar R. Godbole will appear as a collaborator with me in the production of the remaining books of the 'poet saints of Maharashtra' series. He has translated a portion of this book and will help me in that same manner in completing the remaining three. The knowledge he has acquired of the language and style of the ancient writings he is making available for me in the laborious work of translating such large books as the *Bhaktavijaya* and the *Bhaktalilamrit*.

As on former occasions my thanks are due to the Rev J. F. Edwards for reading the final proofs of this book.

Included in my physical weakness is my inability to use a pen. Anyone who has helped me in typing my translation deserves special thanks and a public acknowledgment of it. My nurse, Miss Joan Maree, has learned the art of typing in order to help me, and to her I owe a debt of gratitude.

Pandit N. R. Godbole has been fortunate in obtaining for comparison a rare manuscript of the *Bhaktavijaya*. He has discovered that the printed versions have omitted several passages that are found in this manuscript. It has seemed to me therefore worth while to publish these passages, and so give the book the form that possibly it originally had.

Summit, N. J., U. S. A.
October 1981

Justin E. Abbott

PANDIT'S PREFACE

The Preface to this book has already been written by the Late Dr. Abbott, for the Manuscript of the translation of the *Bhaktavijaya* was just completed in his lifetime. On the title-page the learned Doctor has put my name under his as the second author. Nobody need remind me that I do not deserve this high honour, for I know better than anyone else my inability and unworthiness. But he treated me all along with a motherly indulgence, and my joint authorship with him is one consequence of it. I had the boldness to request him to drop my name from the title-page but in reply he commanded me to accept his decision.

While working for Dr. Abbott I was often impressed by the meagreness of my knowledge of Marathi, and I have often found that his English translation has enabled me to elucidate the meaning of the Marathi text. This fact I told several Marathi scholars whose comparisons of his English translation with the original text often filled them with admiration. Some of them therefore urged me to make known to the public the learned doctor's masterly knowledge of Marathi, which I would have done very readily had it not seemed like trumpeting the fame of my master whose salt I was eating. I am still eating his salt but as he is not living I cannot now be accused of flattery. Many times have I asked him in letters if the Husband of Rukmini had given him the correct interpretation of some difficult Marathi sentence in a dream. On one occasion I wrote a letter to him in the form of Marathi verse and to my great astonishment he sent his reply to me in Marathi verse. In May 1928 I presented copies of Dr. Abbott's first and second publications to the learned Shri Shankaracharya, Dr. Kurtakoti, who was so delighted with

them that he was pleased to confer on their author the high title of *Bhashabhushan* (' an ornament to the language ').

Great, however, as was his scholarship and learning, his character was greater still. Mahipati says that ' Saints conquer their opponents by the strength of peace and forgiveness ' and Dr. Abbott has strikingly exemplified this in the case of some harsh critics. By nature unassuming and unpedantic, Dr. Abbott was a very thorough and God-fearing Christian, and higher praise than that I feel I cannot bestow.

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N. R. Golbole

INTRODUCTION

MAHIPATI : THE BIOGRAPHER OF THE POET SAINTS

Birth and Early Influences

Mahipati's father Dadopant is said to have been in the service of the Mughals, but where, when and in what capacity is not known. At the age of forty he retired from service, and came to live in Taharabad, his native place in the Ahmednagar District. He was a regular *warkari* pilgrim of Pandharpur and the hereditary village accountant of Taharabad. This state of things continued until he was sixty-four years old, but being without an issue he felt naturally anxious lest the regular visits to Pandharpur would be discontinued after his own death. He therefore prayed to God to grant him a son, and a son was born to him in 1715 A. D. (*Shaka* era 1637). This son he named Mahipati, who was destined to become the biographer of saints. Mahipati was handsome and of a sharp intellect. In his very boyhood he was devoted to God and he went as a pilgrim to Pandharpur at the age of sixteen. It seems Mahipati was well educated. His handwriting was good. That he had a good knowledge of Sanskrit is proved by his translations into Marathi. Besides Marathi, his mother tongue, he knew Hindi. At the age of sixteen Mahipati's father died and the burden of supporting the family fell on him at that early age. Aside from his household responsibilities, he had to work as village accountant, an office hereditary in the family. Taharabad was then a part of a *jaghir* of a Muhammadan to whose court Mahipati had to go in his official capacity. Well substantiated is the story to which Dr. Abbott has alluded in his Preface, that once after bathing Mahipati was performing the

worship of his household gods when a messenger from the Muhammadan came to summon him to court on business Mahipati sent word in return that he would be at his service after he was through his daily devotion. Nevertheless there was another and a very peremptory call to appear in court at once. Reluctantly he went, but on his return he took his pen from behind his ear and laying it before the god he vowed never to use it again in any official capacity. This vow was adhered to rigidly by his descendents and is to continue until the seventh generation.

Mahipati's Literary Sources and Methods

Mahipati had two sons, Vitthal and Narayan. Mahipati's *guru* was Tukaram from whom he received the mystic *mantra* in a dream. It is said Tukaram at the same time commanded Mahipati to write the lives of saints. Like most of the great writers, Mahipati is very modest, quotes some of his sources, and admits without reserve that he derived information from Nabhaji of North India and Uddhav Chidghan of Mandesh, both biographers of the saints. In Chapter 1.37-39 of the present work Mahipati says: 37. 'Perhaps you may say that I myself have composed this book, founding it on my own imagination and according to my own fancy, but sirs, that is truly not so. Have no doubts regarding this. 38. In the country to the North there was one by the name of Nabhaji, an *avatar* of Brahmadev. He wrote a great book containing the stories of saints. He wrote it in the Gwalior language. 39. And in Mandesh there was one Uddhavchidghan. He also wrote the stories of the saints. Uniting the stories of both, I have begun this book, the *Bhaktavijaya*.' Mahipati wrote the following biographical works: The *Santalilamrit* in 1757, the *Bhaktavijaya* in 1762, the *Kathasaramrita* in 1765, the *Bhaktatilamrit* in 1774, and finally the *Santavijaya*. Until recently the *Santavijaya* was supposed

to have been incomplete with 26 chapters only but it is now found in a complete form (27 chapters) and is in the possession of the *Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, Poona*. Besides his biographical works Mahipati also wrote several minor works. He died in 1790 at the age of seventy-five

Mahipati An Honest Author

Writing under this heading in his own *Life and Teaching of Tukaram* (pp. 70-72) in 1921, the editor of this present work (the Rev. J. F. Edwards) quoted the following statement which Dr. Abbott had drawn up at his request regarding Mahipati's trustworthiness. Dr. Abbott stated :— ' Is Mahipati's account true to facts ? Tukaram died in 1649 (traditional date) and Mahipati wrote his account in 1774, or 125 years after Tukaram's death. Not very long, but long enough for legends to grow. I regard Mahipati as an honest writer, that he used honestly the material at his disposal. He was not a " higher critic ", but used as truth whatever came to him in the form of MSS or oral traditions. I think I can produce convincing evidence of this honesty. He had evidently a good library of manuscripts. I have the names of some he possessed, or was more or less familiar with. I find this list in his own writings. But as a poet he avows the principle of expanding the facts at his disposal, " as a seed expands into a tree." This is indeed a habit of Indian poets. What MSS or what oral tradition did Mahipati use ? This is as yet an unsolved problem, with this exception, that a few sources are known. Among the MSS he uses are the *Abhangs* by Tukaram's brother Kanhoba (see *Bhaktalilamrita* ch. 40.198 and following) and *Abhangs* of Rameshwar (*Bhaktalilamrita* ch. 40.209). There is also now published Niloba's *Gatha*. Niloba was a (posthumous) disciple of Tukaram's. He

gives some account of Tukaram, and Mahipati knew of Niloba, so probably knew of his *Abhangs* (*Bhaktalilamrita*, ch. 40.238.) The last part of Mahipati's chapter 40, which describes Tukaram's "ascension," mentions many individuals who must have passed on to the next generation their knowledge of Tukaram. It still remains true that all modern accounts of Tukaram's life are to be traced to Mahipati as the practically sole source of information. Perhaps some time Mahipati's sources will be better known. This being so we cannot now know what are facts and what are fiction in Mahipati's account. It will not do merely to deduct the manifestly legendary, and call the balance facts, as seems to be the general practice. The only honest way for any modern writer is to give Mahipati credit for the account the writer gives, and give it as Mahipati gives it, legend and all, leaving it to the future, for possible discoveries to settle what are the real facts. Much of Mahipati's account may be facts, but I think events in Tukaram's life should not be recorded *as facts*, until they can be substantiated from other and clear sources.'

Mahipati's Historical Material

(b) 'As I have before remarked I regard Mahipati as an honest historian. He wrote from books before him, and from oral tradition. He anticipated the charge that he drew from his own imagination and says in *Santalilamrita* (1.67-69): "You will raise this doubt in your mind and say: You have drawn on your own imagination. This is not so. Listen. Great poet-saints have written books in many languages. It is on their authority that I write this *Santalilamrita*. If I wrote on my own authority my statements would not be respected. The Husband of Rukmini is witness to this, who knows all hearts." In *Bhaktavijaya* (1.37) he says: "You will say I have

compiled this book on my own authority. This indeed is not so. Hold no doubts in your minds." He then quotes Nabhaji and Uddhav Chidghan as authorities: "Joining these two together, *Bhaktavijaya* was begun" (1.39). For a list of saints with whose names and books Mahipati was familiar see *Bhaktavijaya* (1.19), *Bhaktavijaya* (57.169-201) and *Bhaktatilamrita*, chap. 51, where there are 127 saints mentioned by name. His story of Dnyaneshwar in *Bhaktavijaya* (chap. 8) he took from *Dnyandevachi Adi* (Dnyandev's Origin) by Namdev. His story of Mirabai in *Bhaktavijaya* (chap. 38) he took from *Mirabai's Charitra* (Life of Mirabai) by Namdev. His story of Gora Kumbhar in *Bhaktavijaya* (chap. 17) he took from *Goroba Kumbharache Charitra* (Life of Goroba Kumbhar) by Namdev. So far as evidence goes he conscientiously used his sources, as an honest recorder of what he believed to be true. If he expanded meagre statements into fuller detail it was not to add facts but to give a fuller understanding of them. To use his own words he "expanded facts just as a tree is the expansion of a seed." By this I understand that he embellished but did not add imaginary accounts, that what he wrote he felt he had good authority for. The faithfulness of Mahipati in recording the traditions received by him, either through books or oral sources, does not ensure the truth of these traditions, which must be established on other grounds, but it is satisfaction that one can depend with good assurance on his honesty as a writer, and that he did not draw on his imagination more than he felt necessary for poetic reasons.'

Mahipati's Trustworthiness

(c) Following on the above, Mr. Edwards concludes as follows in page 72 of *The Life and Teaching of Tukaram*:—
'In addition to the above from Dr. Abbott on the honesty and trustworthiness of our chief authority, Mahipati, we

shall do well to note a striking illustration of Mahipati's candour as provided by his faithful account of the attitude adopted towards caste by one of his Brahman saints. Dr. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar has pointed out that Mahipati makes "one of his Brahman saints declare that there is no caste among devotees of God and represents him to have drunk the holy water given to him by a *chambhar* or leather-worker." That Mahipati, a "Rigvedi Vasistha Gotri Deshasth Brahman," should have faithfully recorded that another Brahman winked at caste in relation to religious matters and should have portrayed him as receiving water at the hands of one of the lowest of India's out-castes is a remarkable illustration of Mahipati's honesty as an author. He sometimes even revises an earlier account of his own.' An interesting example of this is found in Mahipati's story in his earlier *Bhaktavijaya* that a poor old Brahman woman came to Tukaram and begged of him some clothes, whereas in telling the same story in his later *Bhaktalilamrit* Mahipati corrects himself by saying it was Rukhumai the goddess who came in the guise of a Maharani.

MAHIPATI—A GENERAL SURVEY

By Dr. G. V. Tagare

Here is Mahipati's *magnum opus*, *The Bhakta-Vijaya* (Victory of the devotees of the Lord), so excellently rendered into English as *Stories of Indian Saints* by Abbot and Godbole. Since its last edition in 1933, a great deal of research has been done both about the Bhakti-movement and the works and biographies of the saints described by Mahipati. Although Mahipati had a second-hand knowledge of Nābhāji's *Bhaktamāl*, (a work in dialectal Braj) in depicting the legends about saints in northern India, he had painstakingly studied the works of the saints of Maharashtra, visited their places, contacted their descendants and culled together the legendary stories from different sources before presenting them poetically in his work. Mahipati is not a historian in the strict sense of the term, as his motivation was spiritual. He believed in the *Advaita* (non-difference) between God and His devotees and thought that glorification of the saints or devotees of God is equally meritorious like singing the glories of the Lord. His passion for describing the spiritual exploits of saints was so strong that even at the fag-end of his life he undertook another work *Santa-Lilāmṛta*.

It is now generally accepted that the Bhakti movement in mediaeval India was a powerful integrating force which brought together Hindus (including Harijans) and Muslims as brothers on the same spiritual platform, engendered *esprit de corps* among the masses irrespective of castes and communities and inspired hope and confidence in the hearts of the downtrodden and the sufferers from foreign invasions as well as from intolerant orthodoxism. A reference to this work will show how Mahipati treats with equal veneration Muslim saints like Kabir, Kamal, Shaikh Mohammad, Harijan saints like Chokhā Melā, Bankā, Rohidās and Senā, non-Brahmin

saints like Nāmadeva, Tukārāma and Brahmin saints like Jñānadeva, Ekanātha and Rāmadāsa. Mahipati was aware that under the physical, mental and temperamental differences of these saints, there is absolutely no distinction among the saints in the quality of their mystical or intuitive realization of God. And this awareness of the internal oneness of all saints is the *sine qua non* of the Viṭṭhala cult. "Though saints appear different (outwardly), they are one (internally) due to their oneness with God," remarks Rāmadāsa. And Rāmadāsa does not belong to the Viṭṭhala cult technically. In chapter 47 of this work, Mahipati records the legend that when Rāmadāsa, the staunch devotee of Rāma, visited Pandharpur, god Viṭṭhal manifested himself as Rāma to him. There had been no conflicts between Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavites in Maharashtra as in the South and there were no distinct currents (*Dhāras*) of the devotees of Rāma and of Kṛṣṇa as in the North India. Nāmadeva, Eknātha, Tukārāma—in fact all saints who followed the Viṭṭhala cult—glorified the importance of the name of Rāma along with that of Kṛṣṇa or Viṭṭhala.

This synthesis of Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism is symbolised in the idol of Viṭṭhala. Though regarded as Viṣṇu, the icon is not a four-handed deity but pastoral Kṛṣṇa with his two arms placed on his waist and a *Śivaliṅga* on its head as its crest. Iconographically this icon is still a puzzle. Though saints in Maharashtra regard Viṭṭhal as the Buddha, the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu, the image is positively not that of the Buddha or of Avalokiteśvara as is believed by some. Curiously enough its erect pose with both of its hands on the waist resembles *Birkuḍr*, the god-let of Ahīrs (Ābhīras) of western Bihar. The Ahīrs regard *Birkuḍr* as a form of Kṛṣṇa as we do in the case of Viṭṭhala. *Birkuḍr*-type idols are found in some parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka. Ahīrs or Ābhīras settled in ancient Maharashtra and their speech Ahirāṇī, a dialect of Marathi, is still current in northern Maharashtra. "Ābhīra", according to Sanskrit lexicons, means a cow-herd. It means that the majority of Ābhīras followed that pastoral profession

in ancient times. According to the X Skandha of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Kṛṣṇa, in his boyhood, was brought up in a cow-herd community and all saints of the Viṭṭhala cult sing of this part of Kṛṣṇa's life prominently. This Kṛṣṇa opposed the tradition of offering a sacrifice to the Brahmanical god Indra then in vogue in his cow-herd community. He advocated instead the worship of cows and Govardhana hill that offered fodder to the cows (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa* X.34. 13-30).

Pandharpur, the centre of the Viṭṭhala cult, devoutly revered as *Bhū-Vaikuṅṭha* (the residence of god Viṣṇu on the earth), is in the Sholapur district of Maharashtra. It is, however, mentioned as "Paṇḍarige" in the famous "Cauryaim-śicā Śilālekha"—a stone-inscription dated Śaka 1195 (A.D. 1223) in the Viṭṭhala Temple at Pandharpur and as "Pāṇḍuraṅga-palli" (a small village called Pāṇḍuraṅga) in the Copperplate of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Avidheya of A.D. 516. Both the names show Dravidian influence in the area. The names however, do not shed any light on this cult. The fact that the most important *Yātrā* of this cult is on the eleventh day of the bright half of Āṣāḍha (July-August)—a period of rainy season in this part of the country when farmers should be busy with their farming operations suggests that this traditional *Melā* should be dated to the era of food-gathering economy. It has survived down to the period of food-growing economy just as pagan festivals survived in Christian Europe. But this information merely shows that Pandharpur was a place where the mass-*melā* of Indo-Aryan and Dravidian speakers traditionally met on that occasion since times immemorial.

The traditional founder of the deity is Puṇḍalika who is said to be a *Koṣṭi*, a descendent of pre-Aryan Kolla settlers of Maharashtra. This traditional founder is reported to have been visited by god Viṭṭhala not due to his merits of Brahmanical rituals but due to his devotional service to his parents. Puṇḍalika is credited to have thrown a brick to the God to stand upon as he was then busy serving his parents. And the God stood waiting, with both of his hands on his waist.

Such is the popular etymology of the name Viṭṭhala which is traced to *viṭa* "a brick" in Marathi. As a matter of fact, Viṭṭhala, Viṭhu, Viṭṭhu—Viṣṇu is due to the tendency of pronouncing Sk.—*ṣṇ*—as—*ṭṭh*—current in Karnataka and Maharashtra at least since the 8th Century A.D. The other name of the deity, next in popularity to Viṭhu or Viṭṭhala is Pāṇḍuraṅga (white-complexioned one). The name is most inappropriate to the idol of Viṭṭhala, which is made of black stone. But as Hemacandra (12th Cent. A.D.) records in the *Deśināma-mālā* (6.23) Pāṇḍuraṅga is the epithet of Śiva. The application of the names of Viṣṇu and Śiva to one and the same deity is not surprising as iconographically the image represents both the deities as seen above. The prevalence of the Hari-Hara cult and images representing both the gods (though in a different way than in the Viṭṭhala idol) were found in other parts of India also.

Though the period of Puṇḍalika is not certain, the saint who gave a philosophical basis to this cult and is regarded as the founder* was Jñānadeva, (A.D. 1275 ?—1296) the victim of the intolerant centrifugal Hindu society which excommunicates its followers on the flimsiest pretext. Jñānadeva was, however, salvaged by a Śavite sect which retained the catholicity and *Karuṇā* of its Buddhistic predecessor. It is, however, noteworthy that Jñānadeva does not mention the name of Viṭṭhala or Pāṇḍuraṅga in his philosophical treatises—the *Bhāvārtha-Dīpikā*, a commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā* now popularly known as *Jñānaśvari* and his mystic poem *Anubhavāmyta*. It is only in *Abhaṅgas* attributed to him that we find him teaching the Viṭṭhala cult. The real credit of popularising the devotion to Viṭṭhala should rather be given to saints from the masses contemporaneous with Jñānadeva like Nāmadeva and others. These saints from practically all castes and communities preached a simple religion—faith

*ज्ञान देवें चातला पाया । रचियेलें देवालयया ॥

and devotion unto God, *Japa* of His Name, and fast on the eleventh day of each fortnight and an annual pilgrimage to Viṭṭhala at Pandharpur

The personalities who are draped in miraculous and fascinating legends by Mahipati in this work, were historically outstanding philosophers, social and religious reformers and eminent *litterateurs* of their age. All of them were 'mystics' (as R. D. Ranade designates them) who unanimously advocated the Bhakti cult and carried on a sustained struggle against discrimination between man and man and mal-practices in the name of religion.

Jayadeva (circa 1150-1250 A.D.) is the author of that supremely musical poem *Gita Govinda* which became the source of inspiration to Fine Arts in medieval India. On the spiritual side, he was the exponent of *Madhurā Bhakti* long before the birth of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Jñānadeva (A.D. 1271 or 1275—1296) was a revolutionary genius in more than one ways. When sacred works like the *Bhagavad-gītā* (B.G.) were scrupulously protected from the "pollution" of the language of the masses, Jñānadeva wrote his *Bhāṣya*, *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, in Marathi. His interpretation of the B.G. supplied a sound philosophic base to the Viṭṭhala cult.

Though he propagated his Yogic tradition separately and also entertained disciples of all caste to the *Bhakti sampradāya*, his selection of Nāmadeva to lead the *Sampradāya* and requisitioning his association in his (Jñānadeva's) pilgrimage to sacred places in North India, showed his farsightedness. Yogic back-ground, scholarship, *Karuṇā* for the dumb, and the down-trodden masses so deeply impressed his contemporaries that they and the later followers of the Viṭṭhala cult regard Jñānadeva as an incarnation of Viṣṇu.

Mahipati devoted the highest number of chapters to Nāmadeva (A.D. 1279-1350). Though elder to Jñānadeva, he was the disciple of Jñānadeva's disciple Visobā Khechar and is called the "servant" (*Kimkara*) of Jñānadeva by Bahinābāi. But long before he met Jñānadeva, he was an ardent

devotee of Viṭṭhala. As recorded by non-Maharashtrian saints like Narsi Mehta (Gujarat) and Kabir (U.P.), it was reported that god Viṭṭhala drank the milk from the hands of child Nāmadeva, repaired the roof of his house and made the temple of god (Āvaḍhyā Nāganātha) turn round to enable the deity to have Nāmadeva in front of him. (Narsi Mehta—*Hāramālā* vv. 53, 82; also in Nāmadeva's *Mukhabāni* in *Ādi-Grantha* what is not known to Mahipati and to a large number of people in Maharashtra is Nāmadeva's work in the Punjab. We owe it to Sikh Guru Arjan Singh (A.D. 1561-1606) who, while compiling the *Ādi grantha* (Granth Sāhib) of Sikhs, included 61 poetic compositions of Nāmadeva in a mixed Braj-like dialect, as his *mukhabāni*. Hindi scholars like Vinay Mohan Sharma¹, Bhagirath Mishra and others call it "Hindi". After a prolonged dispute, it has now been established that Nāmadeva, the contemporary of Jñānadeva in Maharashtra is the same person who went to the Punjab probably in Circa A.D. 1325 and stayed there for 20 years. He had his headquarters at Ghoman in Gurudaspur Dist., though he spent most of his time in touring from place to place, preaching the efficacy of the name of the Lord.

Textual similarity between Nāmadeva's *Mukhabāni* in the *Ādi-grantha* and his Marathi *Abhaṅgas* (poems), identity in their teachings and glorification of god's name, sometimes of Rāma and at other places of Bī(vi)ṭṭhalu—(the latter is a loan-word from Marathi, the Panjabi form would have been Biṣan), to lives or spiritual exploits of both Nāmadeva's are the same viz.: Viṭṭhala idol drinking milk from Nāmadeva's hand, repairing of the roof of his house by Viṭṭhala, bringing

1. i) Vinay Mohan Sharma—हिंदी को मराठी संतों की देन
- ii) S. P. Joshi—पंजाबातील नामदेव
- iii) Bhagirath Mishra and Rajnarayan Maurya—संत नामदेव की हिंदी पदावली (Poona University 1964).
- iv) नामदेव दर्शन Pub. Namadeva Samajonnati parishad, Kolhapur 1976.

back to life a dead cow in the Durbar of a Sultan. These and other factors have led to establish the identity of these two Nāmadevas’.

This identity makes Nāmadeva the first exponent of *Santa-mata* as Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak seem to have got inspiration from his work. He is probably the second Nirgunia after Jñānadeva who synthesized both the *Saguna* and *Nirguna* types of Bhakti. His associates and disciples included Brahmins, as well as men from goldsmith, potter, barber, Harijans communities.

Bahinābāi rightly gives the credit of extending the temple of Bhakti to this “servant” of Jñānadeva.¹

Though Mahipati did not observe a chronological sequence in the arrangement of chapters, the next important saint is Ekanātha (A.D. 1533 ?—1599). He was the greatest scholar-philosopher-saint-poet *cum* social reformer of the 16th Century Maharashtra. But as we have already written in details about him², we may pass on to the towering personalities of the 17th Century (Maharashtra) viz. Tukārāma and Rāmadāsa.

Next to Nāmadeva, Tukārāma is respected by *Vārakarīs* (followers of the Viṭṭhala cult). As stated above, Mahipati studied his literature, visited this native place Dehu and based his chapters on Tukārāma on the legends he got from Gopāla Bābā, the great-grandson of Tukārāma. Being a product of a credulous age (as many of us are even today), Gopāla Bābā thought that it is not his literature and piety but attribution of miracles that would enhance the greatness of Tukārāma, and Mahipati believing in them as historical facts depicted them in a highly poetic way. Modern researchers, however, have established that Tukārāma was not a destitute nor a simpleton. Though he discontinued his hereditary *Mahājana-ship* and money-lending profession, he owned a big house,

1. नामा त्याचा किकर । त्याने केला हो विस्तार —Bahinā Bāi .

2. Introduction to J. E. Abbot's *The Life of Ekanath* (Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1980)

had his private Viṭṭhala temple with a land-grant of 15 *Bighas*, had sufficient landed property other than this land-grant. Hence he could condemn begging in the strongest terms.¹

Bahinābāi, his spiritually advanced disciple who stayed at Dehu to the end of Tukārāma's life, does not record him to be a *Vārakart* but notes that he spent most his time in *Sādhanā* in his private Viṭṭhala Temple. She does not record the formation of *Tālkartis* at the time of his *Kīrtana* and hints that Tukārāma wrote his *Abhaṅgas* himself, the manuscript of which due to the absence of Tukārāma's wife and children from Dehu for 25 years after his death, is now irrecoverably lost. As a miracle, she records that God preserved the *Abhaṅga*-books of Tukārāma dry in water, for 13 days. People still believe that Tukārāma went to *Vaikuṅṭha* physically (in his mortal body). Bahinābāi states that Tukārāma suddenly passed away in the presence of all.²

The epithet *Caitanya* in the names of the two spiritual predecessors of Tukārāma misled many to link up Tukārāma to the *Caitanya Sampradāya* of Bengal.³ It is true that Nimāi or Gaurāṅga Prabhu came to Pandharpur where he was initiated in Kṛṣṇa cult by Īśvara Purī and he spent some six years in the Deccan before he went to Orissa. But philosophically, (if we are to believe Baladeva, the Commentator of the *Brahma Sūtras* as per *Caitanya's* Cult), *Caitanya* was a *Dvaiti*, a follower of Madhva. In his *Prameya Ratnāvalī* which Baladeva regards as the summary of the nine *Prameyas* (proved propositions) of *Caitanya*, the world is regarded as real and

1. भिक्षापात्र अवलंबणे । जको जिणें लाजिरबाणे ॥

2. तुकारामा तंव देखतां देखत । आले अकस्मात मृत्युरूप

(*Abhaṅg* No. 74)

V. S. Bendra—तुकाराम महाराज यांचे सांगाती pp. 83-108. The whole book is worth perusal (Mauj Pub. Bombay 1958)

3. For example M. T. Kennedy—*The Chaitanya Movement*, p. 42

Pub. Y. M. C. A., Calcutta

that difference (of souls etc.) is real. This is against the teachings of Tukārāma—in fact against the teachings of all saints of the Viṭṭhala cult (and of Rāmadāsa as well). A reference to any standard catalogue of Sk. MSS. will show a number of authors bearing the epithet Caitanya but having absolutely no relation with Gaurāṅga Prabhu.

Mahipati bases Viṭṭhala's manifestation as Rāma to Rāmadāsa on the basis of his own Abhaṅga at the sight of Viṭṭhala. It shows his realization of oneness of Rāma and Viṭṭhala, if not an attempt to mobilise the followers of Viṭṭhala to the cause of Shivaji.

A lot of research has been carried out on Hindi and Gujrati saints like Kabir, Tulasīdās, Sūrdās, Narsī Mehtā. But Mahipati had only a second-hand knowledge about them through the works of Nābhājī and Uddhava Cidghana. In fact our knowledge about many Maharashtrian saints described by him is still very limited. We owe gratitude to him for preserving for us their names and legends for further research.

This is not a critique of Mahipati, but an attempt to present succinctly the research on these saints since 1933. Mahipati deserves our gratitude for presenting these legends in a fascinating, poetic style. The very fact that he devoutly describes the legends of all saints irrespective of caste, language, state or community shows that he had imbibed the fundamental tenet of philosophy of Bhakti:

ekam sad, viprā bahudhā vadanti |

BHAKTAVIJAYA

BY

MAHIPATI

CHAPTER I

INVOCATION

OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH

1. Obeisance to Shri Sarasvati (goddess of speech). Obeisance to my *guru*. Obeisance to Rukmini and Pandurang. Victory, Victory, to Thee whose place of enjoyment is the bank of the Bhima river, Lover of Thy *bhaktas*. Ocean of mercy, Who, although pervading all the animate and inanimate, art different from them, and dost extend far beyond all existing things. 2. Yet assuming the form of Ganesh and Sarasvati, Thou hast appeared as if existing in many forms. Therefore, at the beginning of this book I have bowed to Sarasvati and Ganesh. 3. Let us bow to the *sadguru* Tukaram, who discarded the illusions of this worldly existence, showed me love for his name; and removed me from this earthly existence. 4. Now let us bow to the great poets, Vyasa, the *Muni* Vālmiki, Bhargav, Shuka, Narada, and the poets Ushana, and Jaimini, who are the first to be bowed to. 5. Now let us bow to saints and good men, whom Hari (God) loves with all his heart, and who in this *Kali Yuga* came to save the dull, the fools and the ignorant. 6. I have begun this book, the *Bhaktavijaya*, but in order that it may be carried to completion, all of you must help. Just as when in a poor man's house some function is planned, his rich neighbours assist him. 7. Just as a man, full of kindness and endowed with sight, enables a blind man to visit sacred places, so do

you by your gift of kindness make these verses acceptable to the hearers. 8. I am mentally dull and ignorant. I have never studied the art of poetry. I have never read the books known as *Puranas*. I do not know the divine (Sanskrit) language. 9. But here there is one special thing that Hari (God) is fond of, the stories of His *bhaktas*, so the God Shiva has said in the *Bhavishyottar Purana*. 10. And therefore a desire has arisen in my mind out of intense love for the stories of the *bhaktas*, but the attempt is like that of the water bird, the *titavi*, saying to itself, 'I will drink the ocean dry.' 11. Who am I to attempt to describe the attributes of Hari (God)? For when the *Vedas* attempted to describe Him even they had to be absolutely silent. The attempt made the serpent Shesha's tongue to be cloven, and it made itself into a couch for Hari. 12. Since Brahmadev, Indra and Shiva do not know His limits, how can I describe His attributes, I a poor miserable sinner? 13. When an infant obstinately insists on anything, the mother supplies it at once; so He, the Merciful to the Lowly, will grant me my obstinate longing. 14. The child Dhruva desired to sit on his father's lap, and Hari gave him an everlasting seat. 15. When Upamanyu asked for a cup of milk, He gave him the whole ocean of milk. So, I know that He, the Merciful to the Lowly, will supply my intense desire. 16. The *bhaktas* who descended to the earth during the *Krita*, *Treta*, and *Dvapara Yugas*, they are the very ones who in this *Kali Yuga* have become manifest as saviours of mankind. 17. I have felt intense joy in relating the stories connected with them, so now, my hearers, be careful to give close attention to me. 18. I am neither a clever nor a wise man. I have read but little of Vedantic books. I know nothing of the Sanskrit language. This the glorious husband of Rukmini knows. 19. Long ago Eknath wrote his version of *Ramayana* at the inspiration of the saints, but I have

neither those words of blessing, nor any inspiration. 20. Namdev and Mukteshwar described Vishnu in the *Bharata*, but I have no inspiration like them. 21. In the commentary by Vaman on the glorious *Bhagavata* and in the *Harivijaya* composed by Shridhar their words carry blessing, but in my attempt to speak such words of blessing I have not been able to use them. 22. In the *Bodharaja* composed by Ramdas, he pleads in his verses with the Giver of salvation, but in my attempt to speak words of blessing I have failed. 23. Ganeshnath, Keshavaswami, Salaya, are all well known in the world for their sweet compositions (in Marathi) while Kabir wrote in Hindustani, the language of his own country. 24. Such were the good saints whose books make the ignorant wise : this is a most remarkable fact. 25. In Pratishtan (Paithan), Dnyaneshwar made a male buffalo repeat the *Vedas*. To such saints, merciful in character I bow at the beginning of this book. 26. Just as when a little stream of water acquires holiness when it flows into the river Ganges and becomes the very same in nature ; or just as iron becomes a golden ornament for the rich man the moment it comes in contact with the touchstone (the *paris*) ; 27. or as when any one sings the praise of kings the sons of the minister regard that praise as rightly given : so as I relate the stories of the saints good men are delighted. 28. As in the case of a river that is not distinguished by being mentioned, it receives the reverence of men when it joins the sea ; or as when a man sits in the shadow of a wish-tree, neither poverty nor disaster harms him ; 29. so, although I am so dull-minded, yet when I relate the character and deeds of God's *bhak'tas* the Merciful One will have pity on me. 30. I bow to the ground before Vasishtha in whose family line I was born. May He in his mercy cause this book to reach completion. 31. And now let me bow to my mother and father, to whom I give honour higher than to

all the sacred places, through whom by my good fortune I gained this human body.

32. As I bow to the Husband of Rukmini who is the family deity of both my maternal and paternal family lines, surely all the gods feel satisfaction. 33. Just as when one worships the sea, the hearts of all rivers are made happy; or as when one looks at the moon, all stars become visible; 34. or as when one travels round the world rapidly, that journey must include all sacred places; or as the worship of the Son of Vinata (Eagle, the vehicle of Vishnu) is the same as the worship of all birds; 35. so when I worship the deity Pandurang (Krishna) all the gods are made happy. The function of supporting all things rests on Him, Pandharinath, the God Supreme. 36. He, Vishnu, is the giver of all intellect. In whatever manner he may cause me to compose my verses, saints and other good men must with reverence and love listen to them.

SOURCES AND ENCOURAGEMENT

37. Perhaps you may say that I myself have composed this book, founding it on my own imagination and according to my own fancy, but sirs, that is truly not so. Have no doubts regarding this.

38. In the country to the North there was one by the name of Nābhāji, an *avatar* of Brahmadev. He wrote a great book containing the stories of the saints. He wrote it in the Gwalior language. 39. And in Māndesh there was one Uddhvachidghan. He also wrote the stories of the saints. Uniting the stories of both, I have begun this book, the *Bhaktavijaya*. 40. The Husband of Rukmini who abides on the bank of the glorious river Bhīma, has given me the needed encouragement, and he has caused me to write this profound book. So good people, listen with love. 41. A child speaks in broken words, but its mother

expresses her delight. So my very uncouth language I think you will accept. 42. Or as a streamlet flows into the river Ganges, the river makes it like itself; so by making you friendly to me my verses will be acceptable. 43. If clay should become one with the fragrant musk, it will arrive at value; so you will accept my commonplace language. 44. Or as when a tiny drop of water falls into milk, it makes the drop like itself; so through your kindness my words will become acceptable to you. 45. That you are saints, the very image of God, is the firm conviction of my mind. Therefore, I, Mahipati, bow to you in reverence.

EVILS OF THE KALI YUGA

46. And now listen with attention. At the end of the *avataraship* of Shri Krishna during the *Kali Yuga*, when the offering of sacrifices and giving of benevolent gifts had ceased, 47. Brahmans had neglected their religious obligations, and the Kshatriyas had given up rational thinking. *Sannyasis* had abandoned their duties and Brahmans (earth-gods) had ceased to observe the duties of the fourth stage of life. 48. Sons would not listen to the commands of their parents. Disciples would not serve their religious teachers. Husbands listening to the wishes of their wives, went to live in the homes of their fathers-in-law. 49. No one cared to go to sacred places. No one listened with reverence to the reading of the *Puranas*. And giving up the Hari-praise-services, they delighted in watching indecent dramatizations. 50. Brahmans cast aside the Shaligram and installed in their homes the idols of inferior deities. They threw away the rosary made of the *tulsi* and *rudrāksha* and wore around their necks garlands made of glass beads. 51. Rich persons disliked to make gifts. Those in health had no desire for religious acts. Kings had no love for their subjects, and justice and morality were put aside. 52. Women of noble birth

became slaves of others. Parents sold their daughters just as they sold horses. Muhammadans slaughtered cows as the king Kali became powerful. 53. Many spoke falsehood and insulted *Sadhus* (godly *Sannyasis*). They declared as true, things that were false; they gave a false witness. 54. The repeating of *Gayatri* (a prayer to the Sun) ceased. Magical formulas took their place. Evil men, pretending to be trustworthy to the pious, murdered them. 55. The images of deities would be mere stones, and then Muhammadans would smash them to pieces. The visiting of sacred places would be taxed. Thus the *Kali Yuga* (the evil age) brought trouble to men. 56. There is no sin equal to that of falsehood. There is no virtue equal to truth, but *Kali Yuga* caused all truth to disappear and evil deeds multiplied without limit. 57. When Rahu (the monster that swallows the sun, creating an eclipse) arises, darkness fills the sky; or when death approaches, a multitude of diseases attack the body; 58. or when night falls, ghosts leave the cemeteries; or when an unfortunate person sees himself without good fortune, pains and poverty come upon him; 59. or as when a teacher becomes angry the result is ignorance, or when the period of youth arrives, pride fills the heart; 60. or when men of crooked life come into an assembly, they naturally indulge in insults; thus during the existence of *Kali Yuga* unlimited sins appeared. 61. *Rishis* went away to *Badrikashram*, while Brahmins neglected their religious duties. When this was once happening, an earthquake took place. 62. Then *Shri Hari* (God) in heaven thought over the sad conditions of His *bhaktas*. He saw terrible sins committed on earth among mortals. 63. All sacrifices and offerings had ceased. Brahmins had cast aside the doing of good deeds. Ignorant men sank in the sea of sorrow. 64. As the Husband of the Daughter of the Ocean (God) thought of what was to be done, all His *bhaktas* joined their hands palm to palm and stood before Him. 65. Then they

said to Him, ' Vishnu, give us some command.' Then He who enjoys dwelling on the ocean of milk (Vishnu) spoke thus to His *bhaktas*: 66. ' Long ago I became an *avatara* and killed evil demons, setting free the whole world from enemies. I am now carrying on the Buddha *Avatara*. 67. Now I wish you all to become *avatars* in the world of mortals, in as many places as I have an abode, and in the ancient sacred places. 68. For example, in the forest called Dindir there is a place named Pandhari. Uddhav should become an *avatar* and turn the inhabitants of the southern country (Deccan) to worship me. 69. Akrur should become an *avatar* at Mathura and Gokulvrindavan, and by his preaching turn all their inhabitants to my worship. 70. The *bhakta* Daruk should become the *avatar* Ramdas in the Western country, and cause the whole country to worship me. 71. In the East at Jagannath, Vyas should become an *avatar*. He should cause men to listen to my extraordinary deeds. 72. In Hastinapur (ancient Delhi) the well known sacred place, Vālmiki should become an *avatar* and turn everyone to worship me with extreme reverence. 73. I became the Ram *avatar*, and at that time you became monkeys. I killed Ravan, and delivered Indra together with all the other gods. 74. They were the very ones who in the time of Krishna's *avatar* became cowherds, and others became loving Yadavas. He slaughtered Kans and other demons and protected cows and Brahmans. 75. And now becoming Buddha I am remaining quiet. Who dares to sing my praises to men, except you? 76. For your sake I took human form with visible qualities. Otherwise who would have paid attention to me? Aside from my *bhaktas* I see no one dear to me.' 77. While thus the Husband of Kamala (Vishnu) spoke, the *bhaktas* shouted ' Victory, Victory ', adding ' Thou art God, Merciful to the Lowly. This we have now fully understood. 78. As the rays proceed from the sun, as gold comes out of clay, so we Thy *bhaktas* are

purified by Thee, Shri Hari. 79. Or as trees develop from water, or as clusters of stars arise in the heaven, so we Thy *bhaktas* are (dependent on) Thee, Shri Hari. 80. As cloth comes from threads, as light comes from lamps, so we Thy *bhaktas* are purified by Thee, Shri Hari. 81. As fishes develop from water, as honey comes from flowers, so we Thy *bhaktas* seem important because of Thee. 82. As the bracelet is made of gold, as the wind comes out of the sky, so we Thy *bhaktas* have become *avatars* on earth with human qualities. 83. As the dolls of the juggler are made to dance by pulling a string, so Thou noble Ram, didst cause us to capture Ceylon. 84. A fife gives out a sweet sound, but it must be played by one who knows how to play it; so during the *avatarship* of Krishna, Thou didst perform great deeds through us. 85. According to Thy will, everything, Brahmadev and the other gods included, come into existence and then disappear. At Thy will, Thou hast created an infinite number of universes, and then Thou dost destroy them. 86. So according to Thy command, O Vishnu, we will hasten and turn mankind to Thy worship.'

VISHNU ALLOTS AVATARSHIPS

87. Having heard their reply, the Husband of Kamala (Vishnu) replied to Uddhava, 'I wish you to become an *avatar* by name of Namdev in the family line of a tailor. 88. And in becoming that *avatar* on earth in the sacred city of Pandhari, cause men to hear the infinite number of my names. 89. The deeds which I showed you in my *avatars* as Ram and Krishna, I wish you to make known to the ears of mankind. 90. In the *Kali Yuga* my name is the Only Saviour.' Thus spoke the Husband of Rama to Uddhava. 91. Vishnu then said to Shuka, 'I wish you to become an *avatar* in the family of a Muhammadan, and I will give you birth in an unusual way. 92. Become my *bhakta* Kabir. Go there as my representative and proclaim widely

the extraordinary power of my name.' 93. Then Vishnu said to Vālmiki, 'I wish you to become the Brahman Tulsidas and cause men to realize in this *Kali Yuga* an intense love for worship. 94. You composed the *Ramayana*, a thousand million verses in which you spoke of the future. You should describe the same glory in the vernacular (Hindi) language, and turn men to worship me.' 95. 'Daruka, I wish you to become at once at Dakur the Brahman Ramdas, and in return for your devotion for me I will rush to your aid from Dvaraka.' 96. The Creator of the universe said to Shiva, 'I wish you to become Narsi Mehta and cause the inhabitants of Junagad to hear the stories connected with the path of devotion. 97. I wish you to hasten before me. I also will soon follow you in the form of Dnyaneshwar. I shall explain the meaning of the *Bhagavadgita*. 98. Brahmadev will become Sopan; Sadashiv will become Nivriddhi; Adimaya will become Muktabai; and descend to the earth as *avatars*.' 99. So spoke Vishnu and all clapped their hands with cries of 'Victory, Victory,' and the gods showered flowers upon them. The immortals rejoiced. 100. They said, 'Blessed is this day; the Life of the World has been pleased with us. We will now descend to the world of mortals and carry on our work of salvation. 101. The world of mortals seems to us to be superior to the heavens, Vaikuntha and Kailas. Here both sin and righteousness are harvested, as also sacrifices and offerings. 102. As the fruit of good deeds done in the world of action comes to an end in heaven, souls are pushed back to the world of action. 103. In this world of mortals it is possible to be united to the feet of Hari. In this world of mortals, one can attain to Hari's heaven. Through birth here, the praise of Hari falls on the ears of every one. 104. Therefore, we gods will become *avatars*.' Thus speaking the gods returned to the heaven of Indra. 105. The noble *Vaishnavas* will now

become *avatars* as we shall see, in order to save the world. Let your ears now listen to the stories of saints.

106. Perhaps you will say in your mind, that these stories are not in the *Puranas* composed by Vyas. By bringing this into your mind, you will fall into the forest of doubts. 107. Still, in the latter part of the *Bhavishya Purana*, Vyas himself declared that in the *Kali Yuga* the *bhaktas* in heaven will become *avatars* voluntarily among a race of inferior beings. 108. They will perform in men's sight the most remarkable deeds and cause Vishnu Himself to be subject to them. They will proclaim the glory of God's name and be filled with the knowledge of the Vedanta. 109. I have already related what *avatarships* the Vaishnavas, *bhaktas* of God, were to assume. This I have already related in detail. Do you, good people, listen to it with pleasure. 110. In the next chapter there will be a relating of the story of Shri Jayadev, a man absolutely pure. Mahipati herewith states, 'Let all saints and good men give close attention to me.' 111. *Svasti*. This book is the *Bhaktavijaya*. The Lord of the earth will be pleased as he listens to it. Let the pious, God-loving *bhaktas* listen. This is the first delightful chapter

CHAPTER II

JAYADEV

Obeisance

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Krishna who appeared among the cowherds.

1. After this Vishnu said, 'Vyas, what you have said in the *Purana* is not understood in the *Kali Yuga* by ignorant men, because of its difficulties. 2. I wish you to become an *avatar* in the form of Jayadeva, and bring about the salvation of mankind.' Having thus heard the wish of Vishnu, Vyas prostrated himself on the ground before Him. 3. In accordance with Vishnu's wish, Vyas became a full *avatar* in a Brahman family, in a town by the name of Tundubilva, near the sacred city devoted to Jagannath, Lord of the universe. 4. The Brahman belongs to the highest caste. He is chief among the four castes. Here Vyas descended voluntarily as an *avatar*. 5. Day by day he grew in stature. His mother and father invested him with the sacred thread. Without the effort of study he became skilled in all the sciences. 6. As the moon cannot be hidden among a multitude of stars, or as the eagle among birds, or as the god Indra among other gods; 7. or as God Shiva (Shankar) among ascetics, or as the Husband of Rukmini (Krishna) among the Yadavas, or as a jewel in the midst of gold; 8. or as a hero in an army, or as the sun in the sky, or as an ocean above all ponds; 9. or as a clever listener among the ignorant, or as a speaker in a Hari Kirtan, or as a royal swan among birds—these the wise can recognize from afar; 10. or as a prince among paupers, or as pure devotion among all the other means of worship; so Jayadeva appeared amongst the Brahmans as a great orator.

11. He studied the Vedas and the Shastras. He went through all the *Puranas*. He discovered that in the *Kali Yuga* the praising of God was the chief means of salvation.

JAYADEV'S GITA-GOVINDA AND KING SATVIK

12. The Husband of Rukmini (Krishna) said to Uddhav, 'In the *Kali Yuga* I wish you to worship me by singing my praise.' Therefore, the poet Jayadev composed the poetic work called *Gita-Govinda*. 13. The theme of this poem is from the *Padma Purana*, about the love-actions of the Lord of the Universe with Radha, and also His voluntary plays in Gokul in his Krishna *avatar*. 14. The actions of Shri Hari are already enchanting; and moreover Jayadev has sung them in a beautiful manner in the form of a poem. This is like setting a diamond in a golden bracelet. 15. He composed a book called *Gita-Govinda* which everyone copied and took away with him. They joyfully committed it to memory and sang it in every house. 16. Flowers may be in one place, but their fragrance spreads everywhere. So this book, the *Gita-Govinda* became known throughout the world. 17. There was a King in Jagannath whose name was Satvik. He also composed a book similar to that of Jayadev. 18. He had copies made of his book, sent them to people and ordered it to be read by all. 19. When the *pandits* heard this news, they were very angry. These wise ones assembled at Jagannath and said to the King, 20. 'You have composed a book which is pleasing to yourself. You have even put it on an equality with that of Jayadev, and are therefore talking nonsense. 21. But those who are really wise never praise their own works with their own lips. But you are telling all men to commit your book to memory. 22. If you shout out, "Take this knowledge, take this divine service, this mantra of a particular *guru*, and this knowledge of *Brahma*, this garland, and this great diamond," it loses its

value. 23. With your own lips to praise your own cleverness and the beauty of your own poetry, is as foolish as it is to praise the musk, the sandalwood of Mount Maila, or saffron, or the odorous testicle of a wild cat. 24. If you also try to fix the value of a daughter or a pearl, of a book or a rich cloth, of black *ambergris* or the wind on the Mount of Malaya, it is really lowering their true value.' 25. The Brahmans continued, 'O King, you have composed this book in vain. You are holding pride in your heart. This is not pleasing to God.' 26. The king replied, 'Bring both books here at once, and we will place them for the night before the idol of Jagannath. 27. Jayadev sang the praises of God's goodness, and I also did the same. The book that is not acceptable to God, He will throw out of the temple.' 28. Both books were immediately brought and placed before the idol. The doors were locked, and the priests came out of the temple. 29. On the next morning early all the Brahmans assembled together, and at the time of wickwaving all the priests also came into the temple. 30. There they saw the superior book of Jayadeva. This book was placed near Him, by the Supreme Being. The king's book was treated with contempt and tossed outside the temple. 31. Hands were clapped with shouts of 'Victory, Victory.' The assembled Brahmans rejoiced and the king had to hang his head in shame. 32. The *pandits* said to the king, 'Milk and water have now been separated. How can a book on the Vedanta philosophy and an immoral book be placed on an equality? 33. How can a royal swan and a crow, or a learned *pandit* and an out-caste Mang, or tinsplate and pure gold be considered as of equal value? 34. How can the babbul tree and the sandlewood tree, the sandalwood on Mount Maila and the fruit *hingan*, a good man and a bad man, be considered equal?' 35. How can a saint and a reviler, a

deceiver and a pious man, the god Indra and a pauper, be evenly matched? 36. So your poem and the *Gita-Govinda* of Jayadev, could not be brought to any equality, and yours was therefore thrown out by Jagannath.' 37. When the king heard them say this he was greatly ashamed. He went and stood before the image of Jagannath. 38. Joining his hands palm to palm, he said to God, 'O Jagannath, I now understand the meaning of the names you bear. 39. Your name is Purifier of the Sinful. I think this is not true in that you discard one, and call another your own. 40. You are alike to every being, pervading everything, O God. One who is a *bhakta* and one who is not a *bhakta* both live by Thy power. 41. The sun shines in every vessel. Just as water is to a cow and a tiger, so Thou, O Lord of the Yadavas, art alike to every being. 42. Just as to a locust and an eagle all space is the same, so art Thou, O Lord of the universe, alike to every living being. 43. A child is the same to its mother, whether ignorant or wise; so Thou, O Purifier of the Fallen, art alike to all. 44. The moon is the same to both king and despised pauper; so Thou, O Husband of Rukmini, art alike in every one. 45. O Jagannath, Thou didst cause Jayadev to utter his poem in the world. Then, O Infinite One, tell me who is the mover of *my* heart. 46. This being so, O Jagannath, you threw my book outside. I therefore shall now commit suicide.' Thus spoke the king. 47. As God heard his pleading words, He was pleased and He took from the king's book twenty-four verses. 48. The Life of the World then wrote them down in Jayadeva's book. By doing so the King was comforted.

JAYADEV'S MARRIAGE

49. There was a Brahman in the sacred city of Jagannath with sacrificial duties. He had a jewel of a daughter born to him by name of Padmavati. 50. Her beautiful

form seemed like that of Lakshmi's. Therefore the noble Brahman gave her the name of Padmavati. 51. The Brahman thought to himself, 'My daughter is a mountain of beauty and goodness, so I must with reverence offer her to Jagannath.' 52. When Brahmans came to ask her in marriage, seeing her beauty, he would tell them that she had been offered to Krishna. 53. Every one understood this, and she grew up day by day. The Pervader of the World came to the Brahman in a dream. 54. Jagannath said to the Brahman, 'You offered your daughter to me, but I live in the *Kali Yuga* in the form of Buddha. 55. Now the poet Jayadev is a portion of me, an *avatar* of mine. You should give her to Jayadev with all her ornaments' 56. Waking from this dream, the Brahman was exceedingly happy. And after inviting Jayadev *Swami* to his house, an agreement for marriage was made. 57. The Brahmans examined their horoscopes. They showed a value of thirtysix points. All preparations were made, including ornaments. 58. The deity presiding over marriage was installed; the Brahmans were feasted; and the god Ganpati (Destroyer of obstacles) was worshipped. The Brahmans held the marriage curtain. The words of blessing were pronounced by the priest. 59. 'O Keshav, O Narayan, O Madhav, O Govinda, O Gopal, O God Supreme, O Slayer of Madhu, O Madhav, protect this bride and bridegroom. 60. O Krishna, Vishnu, Vaman, Ram, O Advocate of Thy *bhaktas*, O Home of all goodness, O Prisoner of Bali, O Trivikram, protect this bride and bridegroom. 61. O Protector of the cowherds, Dweller in Dwarka, O Lord of Pandhari, O Krishna. Protector of the World, O Thou mountain of goodness, protect this bride and bridegroom. 62. O Thou who dwellest in the heaven Vaikunth, O Husband of Rukmini, Dweller in the ocean of milk, Recliner upon the serpent Shesha, O Protector of the *bhaktas*, O Mine of goodness, protect this bride and

bridegroom. 63. O Ram, who dwellest in Ayodhya, and who protects his *bhaktas* in time of distress.' These were the verses the Brahmins uttered as they performed the wedding ceremony. 64. Suddenly there was one great shout of 'Victory, Victory.' Innumerable musical instruments were sounded. For four days the festival lasted and the wedding parties were honoured. 65. Jayadev *Swami* continued to live in Jagannath. He continued praising God daily with great love. He performed the services of praise.

THE PIOUS MERCHANT

66. There was a merchant there, who was a God-loving pious man and exceedingly generous. Jayadev seeing that he was worthy of being initiated made him his disciple. 67. One should not be accepted as a disciple who is unfaithful and miserly, who is always looking for faults in others, one who is desirous of the property of others. 68. One should not be accepted as a disciple who is an evil-doer and a great rascal, who hates his father and mother, whose ways are filthy, who lives an immoral life. 69. One should not be accepted as a disciple who is very loquacious and extremely garrulous, who does not enjoy singing the praises of God, who preaches the doctrine of Brahma without any experience of it himself. 70. One should not be accepted as a disciple who does not believe in the *Vedas* and *Shastras*, who will not listen to the words of the saints, who has no compassion on living beings.

71. Such a one this merchant was not. He was supremely pious, exceedingly generous, always alert to serve his *guru* with body, speech and mind. 72. One day he invited Jayadev *Swami* to come to his home. He seated the *Swami* in a carriage and brought him into the city. 73. It is impossible to attain to the praise of the goodness of God or to thoughts of the doctrine of Brahma without fellowship with the good. 74. Pardon,

peace, mercy, unselfishness, sacrifices, benevolences, cannot be attained without association with the good. 75. Generosity, courage, faith, knowledge, postures for breathings, can never be attained without association with the good. 76. It was for this purpose that the merchant took Jayadev to his home, and there served him day and night with great zeal. 77. Jayadev *Swami* performed the services of praise day and night in that city. He helped the dull-minded, the ignorant and the doers of evil to a life of devotion to God. 78. He remained there a month. He then said to the merchant, 'Give me permission now to return to Jagannath.' 79. The merchant said to Jayadev, 'Place thy hands upon my head. Let thy favour be on me as thy servant for ever.' 80. The merchant then seated him on a golden chair and worshipped him with great love. Meanwhile he was thinking in his mind what he should give to his *Guru* as his religious gift? 81. 'Jewels, silver and gold are like earth to the *Swami*, so I will send some money to the *Guru's* wife.' 82. So without the knowledge of the *Swami* he placed in a carriage many kinds of brilliant diamonds, garlands of pearls and golden ornaments. 83. After that, having properly arranged a seat, he placed Jayadev in the carriage with reverence, sent a clever man along with him, and thus saw him off for some distance. 84. He said to his man at that time, 'Go to his home and tell Padmavati that I bow at her feet. 85. Without the knowledge of the *Swami*, I have given raiments and ornaments. Offer them to the *Guru's* wife and quickly return.' 86. After accompanying Jayadev for some distance the merchant returned to his own city. Now that day there were two thieves who came walking behind Jayadev. 87. These thieves learned the news that Jayadev had gone from the city and that the merchant had made a secret gift. Therefore the two thieves walked behind Jayadev. 88. The

merchant had given a man to accompany Jayadev. He said to Jayadev, 'It is very necessary that I return to my home, I have some urgent business there.' 89. Hearing this remark Jayadev said to him, 'Return to your home and carry your business to completion. 90. A female slave, a male slave, a wife, a beast, a tree, an insect, an ant, as they wander about in this life, have to endure the life of subordination.' 91. Therefore Jayadev felt compassion in his heart. Having given this man permission to leave he sent him back to his home. 92. And so he went through the forest quite alone, driving the cart himself. Suddenly the two thieves appeared walking behind him. 93. They waited for an opportunity and coming near him the thieves made him a *namaskar* (obeissance), just as a crane on the banks of the Ganges sits waiting for the prey. 94. Then suddenly the two thieves walked along on both sides of the cart. Jayadev now understood the purpose of these thieves. 95. The wise man recognises from afar the crooked, the deceivers, the evil doers, the crafty, the thief, an immoral man, an impious man, a reviler, and a bad man. 96. Jayadev understood their movements, so he said to them, 'O what is it you wish? I will give it to you now. 97. You are aware that on this cart are many kinds of brilliant diamonds, rich clothes and ornaments. I offer them to you. 98. Great evils are associated with money. For money, men will kill others.' So Jayadev left the cart and quickly walked forward. 99. The thieves thought to themselves, 'Jayadev has left his cart. He will inform the merchant and cause us to be punished. 100. So let us kill him and take his cart.' Thus saying, they rushed towards him. 101. But a moment later the two men thought to themselves that they ought not to kill him. So they cut off both his feet and hands and threw him into a pit. 102. They then took the cart and at once returned to the city. In the

meantime Jayadev was thinking of God, remembering Him with feelings of love. 103. Thinking of this subject with true perception, he said to himself, 'It is only the body that can be killed. The soul is not touched thereby. It is quite separate from happiness and pain. 104. The body is the home of all diseases. The body is the root of lust and anger. The unhappy changes of the three *gunas* arise out of the body.' 105. Therefore Jayadev quickly becoming unconscious of his body thought of God, who finds His pleasure on the Ocean of milk.

THE DEVOUT KING OF KRAUNCH

106. On a certain day the King of Kraunch came into the forest to hunt, and night fell while he was wandering there. 107. Seeing a light in the pit, the king walked rapidly towards it to see what it was. 108. There he saw this worshipper of Vishnu in a posture of contemplation, supremely bright and refulgent, and repeating the names of God: 'Rāṁ, Krishna, Govinda!' 109. The king seeing him in this position, he bowed prostrate before him. Looking at him closely he saw that his hands and feet had been cut off. 110. The king was frightened and said to Jayadev, 'How is it that you are in this condition?' 111. Jayadev replied to the king, 'I was born this way without hands and feet. I am quite separate from all my bodily organs.' 112. The king thought to himself that this *bhakta* of Vishnu seemed a very learned man. So he seated the *Swami* in a palanquin and took him back to the city. 113. Seating him on a golden throne he worshipped him lovingly. Coming humbly before Jayadev, he received the *mantra* making him his disciple. 114. Having seated Jayadev on his throne he said to his attendants, 'You must carry out my command and serve the *Swami* every day.' 115. The attendants said, 'O King, our star of fortune has arisen. We have seen a saint. We shall now listen

to the praise-services of God, and to the stories of His deeds.' 116. One day the king thought to himself, 'Let me ask today of the *Suami* the means which I must adopt for my salvation.' 117. So when Jayadev was seated on the throne, the king with hands joined palm to palm said, 'Please ask of me some act of service.' 118. Jayadev said, 'O king, you should worship saints. There is no better means (for attaining *Paramartha*).' 119. When saints or other good men come to your home, you must feast them with such food as they enjoy. You should give to them the raiments, money, gold ornaments which they ask of you. 120. If you worship the saints in that way, God will be pleased. God is fond of those who serve His saints. They are more to Him than Lakshmi herself.' 121. The king said to the *Swami*, 'How shall I recognise saints? I do not at all know how, because I live in a condition of ignorance.' 122. The Husband of Padmavati (Jayadev) said to him, 'Listen to the marks of a saint. On his forehead are the three upright marks, and twelve other marks on his body. On his neck he wears the ornament of a *tulsi* garland. 123. Such are the outer marks of a follower of Vishnu. You must go to him alone as a suppliant.' The king hearing this replied, 'I certainly will do so.' 124. Honouring his *Guru's* command, the king served the saints. *Vaishnavas* heard of this, and came to his home. 125. Just as travellers come to sit in the shade when they see a tree, or as when birds see some food and joyfully come there; 126. or just as beggars come rushing when they hear the news of some generous giver; or as an ant seeing sugar, runs towards it with great joy; 127. or as when a cow comes back from feeding in the forest, the calf rushes to meet her; or as a cloud sends down rain joyously, when it sees a high mountain; 128. or as a peacock dances in ecstasy when it hears the thunder in the cloud; or as the warrior seeing

a battle rushes towards it with eagerness and courage; 129. so good people came to see the marks of the king's *bhakti*. They first met Jayadev and then went to see the king. 130. When the king saw these saints he prostrated before them on the ground. He was accustomed to take them into his home for four months of the year and to feast them after their own hearts. 131. Whatever these *Vaishnavas* asked for, the king was accustomed to give them. He gave them limitless garments, ornaments and money when they asked for them.

THIEVES WHO FEIGNED AS SAINTS

132. The thieves who cut off the hands of Jayadev learned that this was the case. 133. They said, 'Let us pretend to be saints and go and see the king, and so plan that we shall obtain an abundance of money.' 134. They did not know that Jayadev was there. These deceivers then dressed themselves as saints. 135. Taking *gopichandan* (a sort of clay) they decorated their persons with the twelve marks of a *Vaishnava*. They wore a garland of *tulsi* around their necks. They appeared very brilliant. 136. As the meditation of a crane (sitting with eyes closed while intending to seize fish) looks more beautiful than that of a great *nuni*; or as a *sher* tree looks brighter than a banana tree from a distance; 137. or as tin appears brighter than gold from a distance, or as the colour of *patang* wood looks better than saffron; 138. or as the singing of indecent songs is liked more than the songs of a *Haridas* (who sings God's praises); or as a shell in the sun shines brighter than silver from afar; 139. so these thieves from a distance seemed perfect saints, but no one knew that in their hearts there was deception. 140. The two thieves came into the city and hastened to meet the king. They had a rosary in their hands and pretended to be indifferent to earthly things. 141. As they went into the king's palace and

looked in front of them they suddenly saw Jayadev sitting on the throne. 142. The fire of alarm burned within them. The two made signs with their eyes, implying that by their own act they had fallen into this furnace of fire. 143. 'Jayadev, the poet whose hands and feet we cut off, is here. Our deception has at once come to its fruitage. 144. A hunter once went to shoot a dove and its mate when a great serpent bit his heel. Such seems to be our case now.' 145. As the two came forward Jayadev recognized them from afar. As soon as their eyes met they understood one another. 146. Jayadev naturally lived without enmity towards every creature, as forgiveness and peace were personified in him. 147. Enemies to him were like friends. He ignored the faults or merits of others. All mankind was to him in the form of Brahma. Such is the characteristic of saints. 148. Hearing that thieves had robbed him of his property and wealth, it brought comfort to his heart. Such is the characteristic of saints. 149. Pity either for one's own crying child or for the crying child of another is the characteristic of saints. 150. Whether a king gives him ornaments, or a common man brings him vegetables and greens, both please him alike. Such is the characteristic of saints. 151. Jayadev *Swami* leaped down from his throne when he saw these enemies near him. 152. They hastened to grasp the feet of Jayadev. Seeing this, the Husband of Padmavati embraced them. 153. Jayadev said to his servants, 'Some saints have come to the city. Go and say to the king that they should receive special honour.' 154. Hearing this remark the servants went and told the king, who came at once and bowed to them. 155. The king worshipped them. Using the many kinds of materials used for worship he gave them to each and then made the following request. 156. He said, 'As long as you may desire, spend your time in this my home.' Hearing this they said, 'We

shall surely remember to do so.' 157. When it was night the two thought as follows: 'What will be the end of all this? We feel uneasy at the hospitality shown to us'. Then they said to one another, 158. 'In a town of cruel Muhammadans men are deceived and then fed. Then finally they murder them. Such will be the case with us, we think. 159. Just as a parrot comes and sits on a trap, and then falls into the cage, this is going to happen to us it would seem. 160. Seeing the bait a fish is deceived. It swallows it and the hook pierces its throat. Such will happen to us today, so it seems.' 161. By continually worrying, the bodies of these so-called saints began to waste away as if they were seized with tuberculosis.

162. One day the king said to Jayadev, 'O my *Swami*, I have a request to make at your feet. 163. Other saints come to my house and the *Swami* worships them at a distance. Why did you bow prostrate before these? 164. Although I am constantly using many kinds of worshipping materials on them, yet their bodies are becoming thin day by day.' 165. Jayadev replied, 'O king, the saints are not fond of enjoying the objects of the senses. To those who are indifferent to worldly things, the illusions of the world and selfish enjoyment seem like poison. 166. Other *Vaishnavas* come, but these are more indifferent to worldly things than the others. Your fortune is good, therefore they have remained here. 167. If they should say to you, 'Give us permission to go,' give them as much money as they may of their own choice request.' 168. The king replied, 'I will certainly do that.' And with this he bowed to his *Swami*. One day these thieves who pretended to be saints asked permission to go. 169. 'We live at a sacred city. We wish to go back to our home.' The king said to them, 'Ask me for whatever you wish.' 170. To this reply of the king's the pretending saints said, 'Fill two carts with money for us.

171. The king replied, 'Your request is my authority. I will give you whatever you ask.' So he gave to these pretending saints garments and ornaments. 172. He filled two carts with these costly things and gave two soldiers to go with them. He joined his hands palm to palm, in a very humble manner. 173. After taking leave of Jayadev these pretending saints started on their way. When they were in the forest some distance away, soldiers asked them a question. 174. 'Many *sadhus* and saints come to our palace, but it seems the *Swami's* special favour has been bestowed on you rather than on others. 175. We have this doubt, therefore we ask the *Swami* for an answer to our question.' The pretending saints replied to the soldiers, 176. 'Some time ago, while in the former stage of life, we and your *Swami* (Jayadev) lived with a king who was a very bad man. 177. He had a minister Jayadev by name. We were his servants. Because of some fault he committed, the king was very angry with him. 178. In anger the king gave us a command to take him far away into the forest and there behead him. 179. Having received this command we immediately carried him to the forest and instead of killing him, we cut off his hands and feet. 180. We threw him into a pit and returned to the city. From that day we became indifferent to worldly things. 181. We gave up serving the king, and have become worshippers of Vishnu. Wandering from sacred city to sacred city, we arrived at your city. 182. As soon as we entered the palace we recognised one another. We saved the life of Jayadev and for that reason he was full of thankfulness. 183. Because we had saved his life he prostrated himself before us. He told the king our story and caused him to serve us.' 184. As they said these things the earth began to tremble. There is no sin in this world equal to that of untruth. 185. The earth quickly opened her mouth and the pretending saints disappeared into it.

This caused great wonderment to the soldiers. 186. They said, 'This is a great catastrophe. What ought we to do? The king will punish us.' It caused them great alarm. 187. One said, 'Let us be courageous and truthfully relate what has occurred.' Saying this the servants returned to their city. 188. Coming to Jayadev *Swami* they told him all the news. Tears then flowed from the lotus eyes of Jayadeva. 189. He said, 'O Krishna, Purifier of the sinner, Dear to the *bhaktas*, Husband of Rukmini, why have you taken my enemies to hell, O Life of the World? 190. Ravan who was the enemy of the *bhaktas* was given a home in the highest spiritual state. Why didst Thou, O Enchanter of the heart, take my enemies to hell? 191. Shishupal committed hundreds of faults, yet Thou wast favourable to him, but my enemies Thou didst take to hell. Why was this, O Merciful One? 192. Kans, Chanur, and Putana, to these Thou gavest the highest spiritual state, but my enemies, O Slayer of Madhu, Thou hast taken to hell.' 193. Listening to this moving plea, the Life of the World was delighted. At once Vishnu came and met Jayadev. 194. God Narayan became pleased with him and appeared before Jayadev in His *sagun* form with four arms. Immediately afterwards, Jayadeva's hands and feet sprouted from him like the branches of a tree. 195. A chariot of light, Pushpaka by name, was sent. And the pretending saints were taken to Vaikuntha (the heaven of Vishnu). Such is the power of a *bhakta* which even Bramhadev and the other gods cannot understand. 196. The husband of Rukmini said to Jayadev, 'Blessed is your devotion. Forgiveness, mercy and peace dwell in you. 197. To whom an enemy and a friend are alike, even I *Hrishikeshi* (Lord of the heart) to him am subordinate. Thus saying, the Dweller in Vaikuntha became invisible. 198. The king, seeing that the hands and feet had sprouted from Jaysadeva, then thought it a wonderful miracle, and joining his hands together palm to palm

he spoke with him. 199. Jayadev then related to the King the story mentioned above. The *Vaishnavas* shouted aloud the names of God.

PADMAVATI, THE WIFE OF JAYADEV

200. At that time the king sent a palanquin and had Padmavati brought. This dutiful wife was a mine of beauty, the *avatar* of Indira (Lakshmi, wife of Vishnu). 201. The king gave to her (the wife of his *Guru*) ornaments, jewellery and garlands of pearls. The king with reverence bowed before this honoured mother. 202. The king going into his private apartment said to his wife, 'The queen of Jayadev, Padmavati, is our honoured mother. 203. I desire that you should personally serve her day and night with all your heart.' Hearing her husband's remark, his lovely wife replied, 'I shall certainly do so.' 204. The king thus thinking to himself, he sent his servants away, and personally began to serve Jayadev.

205. Now it happened on a certain day that the king's wives were seated together. Padmavati, a mine of virtues, shone from her *dais* (the chief seat). 206. Like the noble Bhagirathi among the rivers, or like Savitri among faithful wives, or as the *Gayatri mantra* among all other *mantras*, she shone as the chief ornament. 207. Like the musk among all other fragrant perfumes, like a necklace of glass beads among ornaments, so Padmavati seemed when sitting on the chief seat. 208. Suddenly a message arrived announcing that the queen's brother Sujan had passed away. 209. Thinking of her husband in her heart, his (Sujan's) wife started to burn herself on his funeral pyre. The young women hearing this were overcome and wondered about it. 210. Padmavati sat quietly. Seeing her so, all thought it strange, and all the queens with folded hands requested her as follows: 211. 'Thinking of her husband at heart, the dutiful wife

started to immolate herself. How is it that hearing this news you feel no surprise? 212. Abandoning all ties of affection, a dutiful wife who starts to burn herself alive with her dead husband has the same husband during her seven births'. 213. Hearing this Padmavati said, 'Why should a wife burn herself alive? When her husband goes before her, I do not know when they will meet one another again. 214. When one hears of the death of one's husband, one should immediately commit suicide; just as when the sun sets, the rays disappear.' 215. As Padmavati said these things the queens were astonished. They said, 'She speaks without experience.' They therefore took it as false. 216. (But she continued):— 'Just as the knowledge of Brahma without experience of it, just as a body without life in it, so to speak without the favour of God seems a vain thing.' 217. As a house without a master, as a face without a nose, as the doing of anything without authority seems a vain; 218. as the beauty of a barren woman and the friendship of a money loving person are in vain, and as a town without trees looks frightful; 219. as God without His *bhaktas*, or a king without his army, so a pure purpose without the means of fulfilling it is good for nothing.' 220. While Padmavati was saying this, her thoughts seemed false to the queen. She called the minister and communicated to him her plan. 221. She said, 'Listen to one thing. Speak an untruth for my sake, that Jayadev *Swami* is dead and send this news to the city'.

222. On a certain day the king went into the forest to hunt. He seated Jayadev in a palanquin, and took him with him to the forest. 223. The minister now sent a messenger into the city to say that a tiger had killed Jayadev. 224. Some garments were dipped in the blood and sent later by the minister. Hearing this news the queen wept. 225. Making a pretence, the queen came weeping and

running to the place where the beautiful Padmavati was. 226. Said she, 'A catastrophe has happened. Jayadev *Swami* has been killed by a tiger.' Padmavati questioned her, 'Is this really true?' 227. The other replied, 'It is absolutely true. Jayadev has been really killed.' On hearing this news Padmavati gave up her life. 228. Just as when the sun sets, its rays set with it; or as when a lamp is put out its light disappears; 229. just as the moon's phases wane in succession after the full moon, or as flowers lose their fragrance when crushed between the hands; 230. so as soon as she heard of the death of Jayadev she gave up her life. When the king returned to the city, he saw what a catastrophe had fallen. 231. He asked of the minister what had happened, and he listened to all the story. Said he, 'I would like to kill my wife, but that would be murdering a woman. 232. So by being burnt to death on burning wood, I will give up my own life.' Therefore outside the city he immediately made a great bonfire, 233. and came there to make a *namaskar* to Jayadev *Swami*, saying, 'O *Swami*, a great disaster has occurred through me.' 234. By his inner sight Jayadev understood all the news. He comforted the king and told him not to give up his life. 235. Jayadev came near to the corpse of Padmavati, bringing cymbals and the *vina* (the lute) in his lotus hands. He began to sing the *Radhavilas*. 236. Jayadev sang twenty-four of the eight-foot verses well known to the world. Then singing God's loving names, he danced in the place of the *kirtana*. 237. 'O Keshava, Narayana, Mukunda, Lover of the *Bhaktas*, O Source of joy, Protector of the Cowherds, praised by the world, come quickly to my help. 238. Hearing the pleading cry of Gajendra, Thou, Life of the World, didst hasten to his help. O Protector of Pralhad, O Thou Enchanter of the heart, hasten to my help. 239. Thou who didst protect Draupadi from shame, Protector of the Pandavas, Slayer of

Madhu, Delight of the mind of the cowherdesses, hasten to my help. 240. Helper of the helpless, Husband of Rukmini, Dweller on the bank of the Bhima, Thou whose garment is all space, Purifier of the sinners, Saviour of the world, hasten to my help.' 241. Hearing this plea, God came at once to his help. He embraced Jayadev and gave him this boon. 242. 'Whoever sings your verses, or listens to them with fondness, the Husband of Lakshmi (Vishnu) stands at his side with hands joined palm to palm.' 243. Having given him this blessing, the Life of the world embraced Padmavati and brought her to life. 244. As soon as the corpse came to life there was a united cry of ' Victory, Victory,' and the gods sitting in their chariots of light showered flowers upon her. 245. Everyone was greatly delighted. The noble Vaishnavas shouted in their love, and the king with reverence made a *namaskar* to Jayadev *Swami*. 246. Pious men both sing and listen to this exceedingly interesting story of Jayadev. If they are in trouble and remember the Husband of Rukmini, He will come to their aid immediately. 247. I have related to the best of my ability this sin-purifying story of the perfect *avatar* of Vyas, to whom an enemy and a friend were alike.

NABHAJI OF GWALIOR

248. In the province of Gwalior there lived a well-known Nagar Brahman by name of Nabhaji, a chief jewel amongst the *Vaishnavas* and the perfect *avatar* of Brahmadev. 249. He wrote the very extraordinary history of the *bhaktas*. After reading his verses I wrote this book in Marathi. 250. Just as the dolls of the jugglers dance when pulled by the strings; in the same way my lips have uttered the story of Jayadev. 251. The Husband of Rukmini, who dwells on the banks of the Bhima, gave Pundalik this promise. The Advocate of His *Bhaktas*, the Life of the World is the real composer of this book.

252. In the next chapter the very special story of Tulsi das the *bhakta* of Vishnu will be told. But the composer and the relater will be God. Listen with attention, you pious folk. 253. Krishna is standing with both hands on His hips. I, Mahipati, am singing of His goodness in the praise services.

254. *Svasti*. This book is the *Bhaktavijaya*. God will be pleased as He hears it. Listen therefore, you God-loving pious *bhaktas*. This is the second delightful chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE LIFE OF TULSIDAS

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Krishna.

*God's Care of His **Bhaktas**.*

1. Victory, Victory, to the lover of His *bhaktas*, root of all joy, the Supreme Being, Sachchidananda, Saviour of the world, worthy of the worship of the world, beautiful in His dark features, Govinda. 2. Victory to Him Who lives near the banks of the Bhima, Giver of the promise to Pundalik, King of the Yadavas, Who stands with his hands upon His hips, waiting for His *bhaktas*. 3. Many sinners, thieves, adulterers, haters of Brahmans, killers of cows have been saved by mere sight of Him. 4. Gajendra the elephant, wholly ignorant, remembered Thee when in distress. Thou didst listen to his pitiable cry and send Thy disk to save him. 5. Thou didst punish the crocodile and didst come to meet Gajendra. Thou didst seat him in a chariot of light. The crocodile laughed at Thee. 6. The crocodile said to Thee, 'Thy name is the Purifier of the sinners, and yet Thou didst cast me aside and didst depart taking Gajendra. 7. So drop Thy reputation of being the Purifier of the sinners, O Krishna.' Hearing this remark of the crocodile, Thou didst take him also in Thy chariot of light. 8. Thou gavest both *bhakta* and non-*bhakta* a home in the Final Deliverance. In thus attempting to describe Thy goodness and good deeds the serpent Shesha became wearied. 9. Indra and other gods have never acquired the nectar of the stories of Thy goodness and good deeds. But Thou gavest the nectar of Thy stories to those God-loving *bhaktas* who came to Thee with entire reverence. 10. Just as a loving mother, seating her child by her side puts the morsel of food into its mouth, feeling a sense of great love

for it, 11. so Thou didst rain down the nectar of Thy stories, and didst place morsels of it in the mouths of Thy *bhaktas*, O Life of the world, Thou who dost attract the heart, O Govinda. 12. So seating Thy *bhaktas* by Thy side Thou feedest them with the nectar of Thy stories. And at this time therefore I also, a beggar, have arrived in order to receive food. 13. As Thy *bhaktas* were fed with the nectar of Thy stories, they ate to their satisfaction, and now, O Lord of the world, whatever they left in their plates, send to me, a helpless one. 14. O Merciful to the lowly, O Husband of Rukmini, hearing an account of Thy extraordinary deeds, I Mahipati have been waiting eagerly. Show me Thy love.

15. In the *Kali Yuga* there were very many God-loving *bhaktas*. O Cloud-dark Govinda, I will describe their exceedingly delightful stories, as Thou mayest make me relate them.

TULSIDAS

16. Now listen, O hearers. While Narayan was reclining on the serpent Shesh in the sea of milk, some of His *bhaktas* arrived. 17. Uddhav, Akrur, Vālmiki, Dhruva, Pralhada and Shuka coming near Him paid their reverence to the Lord of the Yadavas. 18. The Saviour of the world said to Vālmiki, 'In the *Kali Yuga* sins have become intolerable. I wish you to become an *avatar* among mortals and bring about the salvation of men. 19. The *Ramayana* which you composed, in which you sang my name, goodness and good deeds, was in the Sanskrit language which the ignorant people of the *Kali Yuga* did not understand. 20. So becoming an *avatar* among mortals, set them to worshipping me.' Vālmiki hearing Him say this made obeisance to Him. 21. In the northern country, in the city of Hastanapur (Delhi) in the house of a Kanoja Brahman, the *Rishi* Vālmiki became a voluntary

avatar. 22. The Brahman bore the name of Atmaram. He became a man devoted to religion and of perfect good deeds. Akbar was king at that time, and he was in the service of Akbar. 23. Atmaram was a wise Brahman and he enjoyed the King's favour. It was in his family that Vālmiki became an *avatar*. 24. The good Brahman, Atmaram, performed rituals of birth and naming of his son. He was named Tulsidas. The father lovingly played with him. 25. Day by day he grew in stature. His parents invested him with the sacred thread. And he was kept as a *Brahmachari* (a celibate) for twelve years. 26. He daily performed his baths and devotions. They made him study the *Vedas* according to the prescribed rules. After searching out a bride for him his marriage took place. 27. As his childhood passed away, and he became a young man, the two were united in love. They never could endure separation. 28. Both gave themselves up to enjoying many kinds of rich clothes and ornaments, garlands of pearls and brilliant jewels, saffron, musk, sandal and flowers, yellow betelnut leaves, 29. cardamons, cloves and nutmeg; but Tulsidas could not endure being without his wife. 30. The name of Tulsidas' wife was Devi Mamata. As a dutiful wife she served him with full reverence.

31. It happened one day, that King Akbar was going on a tour. Tulsidas immediately joined him and went with him. 32. Just then a messenger arrived from her mother's home asking her to come there. He said, 'Your mother is seriously ill. 33. Let her have a sight of you and then you can return.' On hearing this she wept aloud. 34. Hearing that her mother was seriously ill, she became hysterical. The messenger therefore said to her, 'We have told you what is false. 35. It is many days since you have visited your mother. Tulsidas refuses to send you, therefore we told you a falsehood.' 36. Mamata replied to them, 'My husband has gone on the royal

tour. In the meantime I shall go to my mother's. Having visited her I will immediately return.' 37. Obtaining leave from mother and father-in-law Mamata went to visit her own mother. That very day, by evening Tulsidas returned. 38. He questioned his mother and learned all the news. Said he, 'My dear one, why have you left me and gone away?' 39. At night on his bed he was unable to sleep. So he started at once, and by walking ten miles that night he arrived at the house of his father-in-law. 40. Two watches of the night had already passed away. All the doors were closed. Tulsidas looked all about him. 41. Just then he saw a great poisonous serpent hanging down from above. He seized it with his hand and ascended to the upper storey. 42. As he entered the house the servants were awakened, and as they looked about they saw Tulsidas. 43. Mamata, that mine of beauty, awoke just at that moment. Seeing her husband there, she arose astonished. 44. The husband said, 'You mine of beauty, why did you leave me and come here? I have had to walk ten miles, in order to come for you.' 45. The wife replied, 'The Yamuna river is full of flood. I cannot understand how you were able to enter the house.' 46. Tulsidas replied, 'Your love for me is so great that you threw a rope from above and I crossed holding on to it.' 47. The dutiful wife hearing this replied, 'Why do you speak an untruth? I never threw a rope from the upper storey.' 48. As she did not know what was true or false, she said, 'Show me the rope.' Taking her servant with her and lighting a lamp they looked for it. 49. Just then they saw this great enormous serpent hanging down from above. All were frightened. It seemed so strange a thing. 50. Holding her husband by the hand the wife entered into the house and said to her husband, 'O Lord of my life, listen to me. 51. You call yourself wise and

clever, but you have no common sense. You are always intoxicated with your ignorance. 52. Why did you leave your mother, father, brother, and friends, your wealth, and property, and come for me at such a time of night? 53. If this great serpent had bitten you, you would have lost your life. O Lord of my life, you know nothing about the transitory concerns of this life. 54. With desire to see me you came rushing by night. Many have lost their lives in running after women. 55. When Indra saw the beautiful Ahalya he was overcome by her charms. Many have lost their lives by running after women. 56. Ravan lost life by running after Sita. Many have lost their lives by running after us women. 57. Seeing the brightness of the light, the moth loses its life. So many have lost their lives by running after women. 58. Not recognizing God in their hearts, they seek to satisfy sensual desire. These evil ones do not recognize Shri Ram, the place of rest for every one. 59. Men love their sons, wives, wealth, and properties, more than their own lives. If men remembered the feet of Shri Hari (God) their lives would have value.' 60. Through these words of Mamata, Tulsidas experienced a change of heart. 'What you say, Oh mother, is true,' and as he (Tulsidas) said this, he bowed to his wife. 61. 'When a child puts out its hand to grasp a live ember of the *khadir* wood, the mother at once protects it. So to-day you have done me a great favour.' 62. Speaking thus to her, he immediately left. He remembered all he had done in his former births. 63. Said he, 'I am the *Vaishnava* Vālmiki. I have become an *avatar* in this world of mortals, that I may sing with my lips the story of Ram, and that I may turn men to devotion to Him. 64. I was entangled in the enjoyment of temporary sensual joys.' With this change of heart he came to Anandvan (Benzres). 65. After bathing in the Bhagirathi, he adopted severe austerities. He rejected cooked food and

fruits and he lived on the fallen leaves. 66. After bathing in the early morning he was accustomed to pray to Shri Ram. He used to say, 'O Dweller in Ayodhya, O Husband of Janaki, show me manifestation of Thyself.' 67. In order to wash himself he was accustomed to go into the forest. If any water was left in his vessel he poured it on the roots of the trees. 68. Twelve years he continued with these austerities. He was always repeating God's names. He never ceased for a single moment.

69. It happened one day that Tulsidas went into the forest to wash himself. The water that remained in his vessel he poured upon the roots of the tree. 70. Suddenly he saw a most terrifying demon. His two hands were joined together as he stood before Tulsidas. 71. He said to Tulsidas, 'I am pleased with you. Whatever blessing you may ask, I will give it to you.' 72. Tulsidas said to him, 'Tell me who you are, and why you have become pleased with me? I do not understand why?' 73. The other replied, 'I am a demon. I have been here for a long time. I drink the water which you pour on the roots. 74. We have no permission to drink water from wells, tanks, rivers, or the sea, so I am very thirsty. 75. You have supplied me with water for these twelve years. I will give whatever you ask for.' 76. Tulsidas with an astonished mind, said to himself, 'I was wishing for a visible manifestation of Shri Ram. The result of that desire has been the favour of this ghost. 77. I planted a mango tree, and bore the fruit of the Vrindavan tree. So the performance of these austerities have brought me the favour of this ghost. 78. I was wishing for a wish-cow. Instead of her a pig appeared. So failing a manifestation of Shri Ram it is this ghost who is showing this favour to me. 79. Having made a ring of sugar around a tree, there sprung out of it a bitter squash. So although my austerities have been good, it is this ghost who is pleased with me. 80. I was looking

at a beautiful royal swan coming towards me, when suddenly I saw a crow instead. So instead of meeting Shri Ram it is this ghost that is pleased with me. 81. It is like looking for association with the good, and then seeing a reviler coming forward. So instead of meeting the Husband of Janaki, this has become pleased with me. 82. While seeking philosophic knowledge, sensual stories may fall on one's ears. So instead of meeting with Ram, it is this ghost that is pleased with me. 83. It is like one, desiring the shade of the wish-tree, should immediately see a forest of Sindi trees. So, instead of meeting with Ram, it is this ghost who is pleased with me. 84. So one has the desire for scientific knowledge and suddenly one listens to some heretical story. So instead of meeting with Ram this ghost is pleased with me. 85. While one desiring a garland of pearls, a pile of crystals fell before him, so instead of seeing the Husband of Janaki this ghost has been pleased with me. 86. While desiring to see the ocean of milk, one suddenly sees instead a pool of water, so instead of meeting the slayer of Ravana it is this ghost that is pleased with me.' 87. After listening to him the demon said, 'You seem to be a wonderfully clever man. So ask of me a gift worthy of me to give. Do not hesitate. 88. One should never call that great or little by which our purposes are carried out. If one refuses to use borax, gold will not melt in the melting pot. 89. If one refuses to use fine thread, he will not be able to string a garland of flowers. And without an iron needle one will not be able to sew a coat. 90. One should not refuse to use the broom because it is made of *sindi*. A wise man is willing to use common things to carry out his purpose.' 91. So Tulsidas said to him 'You have become pleased with me, you say. I have no further desire in my heart than that you should help me to meet Shri Ram.' 92. As the name of Ram was heard by the demon he stepped back and said; 'If I should repeat His name by my lips it will mean my destruction. 93. If

you really wish to meet Him, Maruti is His servant. I can cause him to manifest himself to you.' 94. Tulsidas replied, 'Where is Maruti? Show him to me at once. He will fulfil my desire.' 95. The demon answered, 'You are constantly listening to the *puranas*. An aged Brahman is accustomed to come there. It is he who is Maruti. 96. If you ask who he is I will tell you how he may be recognised. He comes and sits before anyone else. He leaves after every one has gone. 97. He has a staff in his hand and a cap on his head. He wears an old garment and a loin cloth. If you see a form like that, you will know that he is the head of the monkeys.' 98. Thus speaking the demon became invisible, and Tulsidas returned to his hermitage. 99. The next day after taking his bath, and repeating God's name as usual, he hastened to go where the *purana* was being read. 100. When suddenly an aged Brahman appeared and seated himself there. Tulsidas saw that his appearance was just as described by the demon. 101. After the reading of the *purana* was finished, and all the listeners had gone, the aged Brahman in silence started to go. 102. Tulsidas followed along with him. When he got outside the city, Hanuman (Maruti) was going very rapidly. 103. Seeing himself all alone with him, he held the Brahman by his feet and said to him, 'Swami, have compassion on me, Thou Mighty One.' 104. The Brahman said to him, 'Hallo, who are you? Why have you held my feet? I am a poor helpless lowly one.' 105. Tulsidas replied to him, 'You are Maruti, the *bhakta* of Ram. Thus speaking he again fell at his feet. 106. Maruti thought to himself, 'He is the *muni* Vālmiki who has descended as an *avatar*.' He at once gave him an embrace, thus expressing his love. 107. Maruti said to Tulsidas, 'I am pleased with you.' The other replied, 'My mind desires a gift by your favour. 108. I want you so to act that I may have a manifestation of Shri Ram.' Saying, 'I

will do so, ' he (Hanuman) became invisible. 109. Maruti said to Shri Ram, ' Listen to this my request. The *bhakta* Tulsidas is a full *avatar* of Vālmiki. 110. I want you to give him a visible manifestation of yourself. This is my desire, so complete the wish of my heart, O *Swami*.' 111. Hearing Maruti's words Ram replied, ' I will do so.' So he called together all the monkeys and took the army with him. 112. The Holder of the bow (Ram) passed in front of the hermitage of Tulsidas, but he did not recognise Him. He said to himself, ' Some Muhammadans are passing by.' 113. The monkeys seemed heroic and Shri Ram seemed to be the king of the Muhammadans. Seeing them thus, Tulsidas made them a *namaskar*. 114. After that Maruti came to the hermitage of Tulsidas and said to him, ' Ram has fulfilled your desire.' 115. The other replied, ' O Maruti, I have not met Shri Ram.' Maruti replied ' Why ? He has just passed by your hermitage.' 116. Tulsidas said, ' The one who passed by my hermitage was truly a Muhammadan. I did not see Ram. My desire still remains unfulfilled.' 117. Maruti remarked, ' A wish-cow came to your house, and you wise fellow drove it away, thinking it was a goat. 118. As you were once walking along the road you suddenly saw a touchstone, how is it that you, a wise man, should throw it away, thinking it was a mere pebble ? 119. A very wise clever parrot happened to come to your hermitage. It seemed to you to be a dove, therefore you did not care for it. 120. You meet the forest of wish-trees, but they seem to you like *sindi* trees. So when Shri Ram was passing by, you did not recognize him. 121. On a day of great festival a Brahman came to your house. You thought him a herder of goats, and so you turned him away. 122. You saw a garland of pearls and you thought them made of glass. So Ram passed by you and you did not recognize Him. 123. A flock of royal swan passed by you and they seemed to you like crows, so Shri Ram passed

by and you made no obeisance to Him. 124. As if Lakshmi should come without an effort into a pauper's kitchen and he should discard her as a slave, in the same way you have acted. 125. An unfortunate man, while digging the foundation of a house, found a golden coin. He thought it was a pebble and discarded it. 126. The pure sandalwood of Mount Maila, has seemed to you like *hingan*-wood. So when Ram passed by you, you did not recognize Him. 127. The Holder of the Pinak bow, the Husband of Parvati (Shiva), came in the form of a beggar, you gave him no gift. So you have done now.' 128. Tulsidas replied, 'O *Swami*, you accuse me unjustly, but Ram who fills all space and pervades the universe, is invisible. 129. A bracelet is made of gold, but the ignorant man does not call it gold. Milk comes from water, but one should not call water milk. 130. All water is the same, but the *chatak* bird will not drink the water that is on the earth. So the worshipper of Ram does not consider Him as appearing in many forms. 131. The Dweller in Ayodhya, the Life of Janaki, was holding His bow and arrow in the same way as *Vālmiki* described Him. Show me that appearance.' 132. When Maruti heard him say this, he smiled and said, 'Shri Ram will fulfil the desire of your heart.' 133. Saying this, Maruti became invisible, and bringing the image of Shri Ram into his imagination he began his loving praise: 134. 'Victory, Victory, O Dweller in Ayodhya, Husband of Sita, Slayer of Ravan, Holder of the bow, Purifier of the sinner, Saviour of the humble, Slayer of demons, O Shri Ram.' 135. Shri Ram replied, 'Maruti, why this special praise today? What is the special desire of your heart, that you have begun this loving praise?' 136. Maruti replied, 'Shri Ram, Wish tree of the desires of the *bhaktas*, Thou a visible form, dark as thick cloud, I desire Thee to visit Tulsidas.' 137. Hearing Maruti's request Ram said, 'How can he

have a direct manifestation in this *Kali Yuga* ? ' 138. Maruti replied, ' O Lord of the heart, he is an *avatar* of the *rishi* Vālmiki. It was Thou who gavest the command that he should turn men to Thy worship.' 139. Hearing this remark of Maruti's Ram said, ' I will listen to your request. I never break my word. ' 140. So Shri Ram with Sita and Lakshman, taking the form of visible *avatars*, walked along with Maruti. 141. The *bhakta* Maruti went forward and informed Tulsidas. Said he, ' Shri Ram will today fulfil your heart's desire. ' 142. Hearing Maruti's remark, Tulsidas was full of joy. Just then he saw before him the Lord of Ayodhya. His joy now was without limit. 143. A brilliant crown adorned his head. He wore a yellow garment. His complexion was that of a dark cloud. In His hand was a bow and arrow. In this form he saw Shri Ram. 144. With deep reverence Tulsidas bowed prostrate on the ground. And the merciful Shri Ram embraced his *bhakta* Tulsidas. 145. Maruti said to him, ' You are a very fortunate man. With your eyes you have seen the form of Ram. You must now proclaim to all men God's deeds which you formerly described. 146. In this *Kali Yuga* the means of salvation are not *yoga* practices, nor sacrifices, nor the study of the *Vedas*. So proclaim the might of God's names and turn men to the worship of God. ' 147. Maruti said to Ram, ' Place your hand on his head. ' Ram listened to his request and gave Tulsidas the blessing of his assurance. 148. After giving him this blessing the Husband of Sita (Ram) became invisible, and Tulsidas continued with love his description of Shri Ram's good deeds. 149. All the inhabitants of Benares listened to his services in the praise of God, and they built a hermitage for Tulsidas.

150. There were wealthy and pious men to whom Tulsidas gave the *mantra* and made them his disciples. They used to bring a variety of things and place them in the hermitage. 151. A thousand Brahmans daily dined along

with Tulsidas. Any poor person, any beggar, anyone without food, if he came there, went away satisfied. 152. His reputation became great among the people. They brought him unlimited amounts of money, great, great, golden plates and an unlimited and innumerable amount of silver. 153. Some gave and some took away. Some reviled him and some praised him. But Tulsidas was untouched by them. He had neither joy nor sorrow. 154. Just as in the heavens the three seasons have their beginning, yet the sky is free from the fault of association with them. 155. After the feast of the Brahmans, there followed the enthusiasm of the praise-service. Pious people came in large numbers in order to repeat God's names. 156. People left their doors open while all went to sleep. Thus they thought of the feet of Shri Ram, when dreaming and in dreamless sleep, and when awake. 157. Two thieves therefore considered the situation carefully. 'We see no one in the hermitage of Tulsidas who would refuse us admission. 158. We can go there without fear, and take away a load of golden plates. We can take away as much as our hands are able to carry.' 159. After the praise-service of God was over, all the audience went to sleep. Just then the two thieves came and began to steal. 160. They gathered up the golden plates with their hands and tied them up in a bundle. They placed the load on their heads and started to leave hurriedly. 161. As they came near the gate they found two men seated there with bows and arrows, very stout-looking men. 162. The astonished mind of the thieves said to them, 'A while ago there was no sentinel here to protect the place.' So they turned back quickly and arrived at the northern gate. 163. They suddenly saw a person with shining countenance with a crown and ornaments. In His hand were a bow and arrow. The thieves saw him from afar and became ashamed. 164. Then

they went to the south door, but there also sat the door-keepers. The thieves thought this very strange and came back and sat down. 165. The two thieves thought to themselves, 'These men holding the bow will soon get up and go away. Then we will quickly take away these golden plates.' 166. Thus remarking to one another, the thieves sat quietly for four *ghatikas* and then they went to the gate and looked. 167. And there they saw the two men seated with bow and arrows in their hands, with the string drawn to their ears, and standing in a position to shoot. 168. The thieves became frightened, threw down the gold plates and went to the gate, but they were not allowed to pass. 169. The night passed in great anxiety of mind. The sun now arose, and all the *bhaktas* arose when the wicks were lighted for waving. 170. After the early morning repetition of God's names, Tulsidas came out of his hermitage. Just then the two thieves came and fell at his feet. 171. The thieves filled with emotion said to him, 'Forgive us our fault.' Tulsidas said to them, in reply, 'Tell me who you are.' 172. They replied, 'We are thieves, who had come to rob you. But there were soldiers of the bow seated at the gate and they would not let us pass. 173. We had made a bundle of your golden plates, and were waiting in your hermitage. It was a great fault on our part, forgive us, you merciful one. 174. You are, a *bhakta* of Ram, supremely generous. At night you leave your door open. Therefore we thieves came in without fear.' 175. Tulsidas had many disciples. He therefore asked them, 'Who is at the gate protecting us? Why have you placed them there without my knowledge? 176. I have already told you that it was alike to me whether anyone gave to me or took away. Worship Shri Ram with love.' 177. The disciples replied with an oath, 'We swear by your feet that we do not know who is guarding the door.' 178. The thieves replied, 'His face was

brilliant. He wore a crown and ornaments. He was dressed in a yellow robe. His complexion was dark. He is seated there even now.' 179. All were astonished, and coming near to the gate they looked, but they saw nothing and thought this very strange. 180. Tears now came to the lotus eyes of Tulsidas. He said to himself, 'Ram and Lakshman have now become my doorkeepers at this time: 181. what I could not obtain by adopting the severest postures in *yoga* practices, what visits to sacred places would not give me; for I have as my doorkeeper Ram the Dweller in Ayodhya; 182. Husband of one wife, who does not require a second to accomplish his purpose, whose determination was as he promised; He the Slayer of Ravan, Shri Ram, has become my doorkeeper. 183. When His feet touched the stone-slab, it brought about the salvation of Ahalya. He who with supreme generosity is the Giver of eternal life. He has become my doorkeeper.' 184. He then exclaimed, 'Victory, Victory to the noble Ram, the Supreme Being, the Supreme Generous one, Friend of the blue-necked Shiva, the Saviour of the world, Ram Krishna. 185. Thou art the Husband of Lakshmi, supremely generous. When Upamanyu asked Thee for a little milk, Thou didst listen to his request and gavest him the ocean of milk. 186. When his father would not permit him to sit on his lap, the infant Dhruva went away in a sulk. Then Thou, the Husband of Sita, gavest him an eternal place in a wonderful way. 187. Bibhishan was loved by Thee, so Thou gavest him a golden city. So when the thieves began to take away the golden vessels Thou didst become a great miser.' 188. Tulsidas then said to the thieves, 'Whatever your heart may desire, take it away to your homes. Do not feel any hesitation.' 189. When they heard him say this, the thieves fell at his feet. They cried out, 'Have mercy on us, and place your assuring hand upon us. 190. We are sinful, evil men. We were encircled by ignorance, but

by the power of association with you, we have seen a manifestation of Ram. 191. The natural virtue of the touchstone turns iron into gold; so through giving you trouble we have had a sight of Shri Ram. 192. The moment we beheld you, our evil heart left us; just as when the day dawns, the darkness can no more be seen.' 193. Tulsidas said to them, 'Your good fortune is very great. Without any efforts on your part, Shri Ram gave you a manifestation of Himself. 194. You are like one who, collecting herbs in the forest, finds the vine that gives immortality, or as a man while gathering pebbles near the town, happens to find a touchstone. 195. Or as one begging for gruel from house to house, finds in his possession the nectar juice. Or as when one is labouring over a lamp, the sun itself shines into the house. 196. Or as when examining *Kokashastra*, a book on the *Vedanta* comes to hand. Or when stringing beads of glass, a necklace of pearls comes to one's hand. 197. Or as when searching for *babhul*-wood in a forest, one should see the sandal-wood tree of Mount Maila. Or as when one should go in search of the city of Yama, one should see the city of Heaven.' 198. Hearing him say this, the thieves made him a *namaskar* and putting aside their evil minds, constantly remained in Tulsidas' hermitage. 199. In the *Shri Bhagavat Purana* the Lord Krishna told Uddhava the meaning of His deep thoughts. 'He who desires to attain Me he must associate himself with the good. 200. By association with the good the praises of God fall on one's ears.' So these thieves, who had been evil men and adulterers became good men. 201. They began to listen to the praises of God constantly, and to repeat His names. These things continued for many days, and then a very strange thing happened.

202. Some Brahmans were seated eating in the hermitage of Tulsidas. A great variety of food cooked

with butter and sugar was spread before them. 203. As Tulsidas was about to make the offering to the gods, and as the Brahmans were repeating the words, 'This is an offering to the Supreme *Brahma*,' suddenly a Brahman appeared at the gate. Listen to what he said; 204. First repeating the names of Sita and Ram, he said, 'I am a great killer of Brahmans, Give me some of the food you give to those who ask for it.' This was what he said. 205. When the Brahmans who were present heard him, they were all filled with wonder. Tulsidas came outside and embraced him. 206. He took the Brahman by the hand and seated him by his side. He then said to him. 'O *Swami*, personification of mercy, listen to my request. 207. The moment you utter the words Sita and Ram, sins like that of killing Brahmans and similar sins are burnt up as if they were straw.' 208. So saying to him, he then said to the Brahmans, 'Begin now to eat.' Hearing him give this invitation, the Brahmans replied to him. 209. These Brahmans, skilled in the six *shastras*, said to Tulsidas, 'On what authority have you seated this Brahman-killer in our line?' 210. Tulsidas replied to them, 'There is one authority for it. How can the sin of killing a Brahman remain, when uttering the name of Ram? 211. In the *Shri Bhagavat Purana* the Lord Krishna revealed his ideas to Uddhava, that in the *Kali Yuga* the power of God's name would be manifested to an extraordinary degree. 212. When performing one's bath and devotion one has first to repeat the names Keshav and Narayan. If he is faulty in any of his religious deeds, it would be remedied by repeating the names of Vishnu. 213. In order to carry out properly the worship of ancestors, the whole rite is finally offered to Janardana (feeder of the universe). No rite is properly performed, unless the name of Hari is pronounced. 214. When determining upon a marriage, the horoscopes of the bride and the bridegroom agreeably resulting in thirty-six

points, the marriage will not take place without repeating the names of the Husband of Lakshmi. 215. When about to die and taking the penance, the name of God is repeated at that final moment. The Husband of Parvati (Shiva) the Lord of Kailas, lovingly repeats the name of Ram. 216. That great sinner, Pingala Ganika (prostitute) spoke to her parrot, calling him Raghu (parrot). In doing so the straw of her great faults was burnt up by the flames of the names of God. 217. The Brahman Ajamil became exceedingly depraved, when he was at the point of death, and when he called to his infant son Narayan, immediately all his sins were burnt up. 218. The Brahmans wanting explanation said, 'This does not seem to our minds to be true. Show us some evidence, and our doubts will disappear.' 219. Tulsidas said to the Brahmans, 'What kind of evidence do you ask for?' The Earth-gods (Brahmans) said: 'Make an offering to the stone bull. 220. The Lord of the Universe, the Lord of Kailas (Shiva's heaven), Nandikeshvar, stands in front of it. Fill a plate with food and offer it to the stone bull. 221. If the stone image of the bull eats the offering from your hands in sight of us, then we shall allow this killer of Brahmans to sit amongst us at this time. 222. Using many instances you tell us much of the power of God's names. If you will give us this evidence to our sight, our minds will accept it. 223. Not merely by telling us of the sweetness of sugar will our tongue's love of the sweet be satisfied. You tell us of the great power of the names of God, but our doubts do not leave us. 224. The experts pierce coins by their instrument in order to test their genuineness. So show us good evidence and remove our doubts. 225. Just as the jewels in the serpent's head are wound around with a string, and then thrown into the fire and examined, so show us the certainty of experience of the names of God. 226. A diamond is placed on an anvil, and tested by striking it with a hammer. So you,

wise man, show us the power of God's name at this time.' 227. Hearing the Brahmans' remarks, Tulsidas was very pleased. He at once took a plate of food and went into the temple of Vishveshvar, the Lord of the Universe. 228. All the Brahmans now arose and followed him. They stood in the assembly hall and all looked with curiosity 229. With a plate of food in his hand Tulsidas came to the great door of the temple. He joined his hands palm to palm, and bowed prostrate on the ground. 230. Said he, 'Victory, Victory, to Thee Who wearest the moon on Thy head, blue-throated one, Holder of the Khatvanga bow, Husband of Parvati, Enemy of the demon Tripur, listen to the request of the lowly one. 231. Just as Thou didst drink the virulent poison, and Thy whole body became inflamed, then Thou didst repeat the names of Ram. 232. By merely repeating the two-lettered name of Ram, Thou didst become cool, O Lord of the Universe. If that be true, then let this stone bull eat this offering.' 233. As soon as the prayer was heard a very strange thing happened. The stone bull arose and began to breathe violently. 234. After eating all the offering he ate up the whole leaf-plate. All saw this miracle. Blessed was that time and happy day. 235. Having shown this miracle, the stone bull sat quietly. Neither the *Vedas* nor the *Shastras* understand the most extraordinary power of a *bhakta*. 236. The noble *Vaishnavas* all shouted out, 'Victory, Victory.' While repeating the names of God all the twice-born made a *namaskar* to Tulsidas. 237. They said, 'Blessed are you noble *Vaishnava*. You are very wise in the spheres of the knowledge of eternal truths. Now we know that you are truly a full *avatar* of Vālmiki. 238. Just as the moon stands supreme among the clusters of stars, just as the eagle is supreme among birds, just as Vishnu is supreme among the gods; so you are supreme among the *Vaishnavas*. 239. Just as Shiva is supreme among ascetics, just as *muni*

Vyas is supreme among the *rishis*, just as Mother Rukmini was supreme among the cow-herdresses, so you are supreme among the *Vaishnavas*. 240. As the Husband of Janaki is supreme among the Holder of Bows, as the ocean of milk is supreme among all oceans, as the Son of Anusaya is supreme among those who had attained Godhead, so you are supreme among the *Vaishnavas*. 241. As the fourth stage of deliverance among the four stages, as the father of Brahmadev among the Yadavas, as the expounder of the *Vedas* among *Pandits*, are each supreme, so you are supreme among *bhaktas*. 242. As the sun among the nine planets, as Ushana among the great poets, and as mount Meru among mountains, are each supreme, so you are the noblest *Vaishnava* among the *Vaishnavas*. 243. Thus having praised Tulsidas, all the Brahmans came back to the hermitage. They allowed the Brahman-killer to sit at their side and all dined together. 244. Thus all the people of Benares began to repeat the names of God. They gave up their pride and came to listen to the deeds of Hsri.

TULSIDAS RESTORES JAITPAL TO LIFE

245. Some time after these things had happened a very wonderful event took place. There was a merchant by name of Jaitpal. He suddenly passed into a state of peace (i. e., he died). 246. His dutiful wife, abandoning everything that was dear to her with the Lord of her Life in her heart, started to burn herself with him. 247. In a cleared forest by the bank of the Ganges, they lighted a great funeral pyre. She arranged herself for the occasion in the spirit of one already possessing a husband, and walked gaily along. 248. Just then she walked by the cave of Tulsidas. She came alone in order to make him a *namsakar*. 249. Tulsidas was repeating the names of God. She bowed prostrate on the ground. He gave her this blessing, 'May you have eight sons.' 250. The good

woman said to the *bhakta* of Vishnu, 'My husband has reached the state of eternal sleep. And I am on the way to accompany him, abandoning all that is dear and my own. 251. You have given me this blessing that I should become the fortunate mother of eight sons, and be endowed with a husband. That word of yours will prove true, and yet I have my doubts.' 252. He said, 'I spoke without knowing your condition, but Ram will make it true.' When the good woman heard him say this, she bowed before him. 253. When she went near the corpse she found her husband sitting up. This gave great joy to all, and all cried out, 'Victory, Victory.' 254. She took her husband by the hand, and leading him to the hermitage, there she again made to Tulsidas loving obeisance. 255. All the inhabitants of Benares sang the praise of Tulsidas. They exclaimed, 'Blessed is this *Vaishnava*. He is a complete Saviour for us dull-minded men. 256. He caused the stone bull to eat food, and by his word of blessing brought a corpse to life.' Then someone went and carried the news to the king.

AKABAR SENDS FOR TULSIDAS TO TEST HIM

257. King Akbar was at Delhi where somebody informed him. He then made an attempt to see the miracle. 258. He called his wise ministers and informed them of his thoughts. He said, 'I want you to bring about a meeting with the *Vaishnava* Tulsidas. 259. I wish you to send a messenger, who is exceedingly learned in the knowledge of *Brahma* who is a remarkably clever speaker, and who will incline Tulsidas' mind to come here. 260. Take a palanquin and carriage and bring him here quickly. I wish to see for myself what I have heard by the ear.' 261. The minister said to him, 'Your command is my authority.' He took some wise and clever speakers along with some of his army, and arrived at Benares. 262. Coming to the

hermitage of Tulsidas they remained there that day. The news was conveyed to him that the king had called him. 263. They said, 'The king has heard of you, as a most extraordinary God-loving *Vaishnava bhakta*. The king has sent us because of his desire to see you.' 264. Hearing this request, Tulsidas thought to himself, 'I must turn all the inhabitants of that country to repeating God's name. 265. If the noble *Vaishnavas* are free from selfish desire, why should they wander from country to country? Because it is truly Hari's command that they should save mankind. 266. Evil and ignorant men are surrounded by dark ignorance. In order to save them, good men wander about. 267. The king as we have seen has sent a messenger and every one has heard the news.' Tulsidas the God-loving *bhakta* at once started. 268. Enthusiastically repeating the names of Hari, he quickly arrived at Delhi. The king came forward and fell at his feet. 269. The king then seated Tulsidas on his throne and whispered a command to his servants, not to allow him to return. 270. He worshipped him with the sixteen materials for worship. The King said to Tulsidas, 'I have heard of your wonderful power and that you have got yourself made into a God. 271. You made the stone-bull eat food. In the giving of a blessing, you brought a corpse to life. Your deeds seem impossible to me. I do not understand your power.' 272. Tulsidas said to him, 'It is all the doing of Shri Ram. I am but a helpless person who has placed his heart at the feet of Ram.' 273. Hearing this the king said to him, 'Cause me to meet Ram. If you do not do so, I shall surely not allow you to go from here.' 274. Thus speaking, the king went into his palace. He said, 'If he will show me a manifestation of Ram, then only will I regard Tulsidas as a noble *Vaishnava*.' 275. While

Tulsidas sat on the throne the servants said to him, ' You are not to be allowed to go from here. 276. Without losing a moment give the king a sight of Shri Ram. If you do not grant this, he certainly will not allow you to leave here.'

MARUTI'S VENGEANCE

277. Hearing them say this, he began to praise Maruti, and Maruti at once came and met Tulsidas. 278. Tulsidas said, ' I am in extreme distress and, therefore, I have thought of you. And now remove this distress and increase the glory of the names of God.' 279. Maruti then performed a wonderful miracle. He called together his army of monkeys and many mighty heroes started from Heaven. 280. Just as during the rainy season clouds appear in the sky; or as when the rain falls on the earth the grass begins to sprout; 281. or as during the time of famine a cloud of locusts appears in the sky; so suddenly this army of monkeys ten thousand in number appeared. 282. The monkeys bowed to Maruti, and said to him, ' Please tell us what your command is.' 283. Maruti replied to them, ' I have called you together in order that you may show to the king some of your natural characteristics.' 284. As soon as they received this command, the monkeys became full of action. They climbed upon the roofs and began to destroy the tiles. 285. They pulled up great trees by the roots, and threw them at men. There was a great alarm felt in Delhi, and a great outcry. 286. They broke the noses of some and cut off their ears, they twisted off the necks of some. They grabbed some by the legs and started upwards. 287. As women were going to the river Jamna, with water-jars on their heads, they snatched their clothes from them, and threw them into the river. 288. As fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law were passing out of the alleys, the monkeys seized them, and fastening their beards and braids of hair together, they ran away.

289. Those who did not worship Shri Ram, or persecuted the *bhaktas* of Vishnu, the monkeys lifted them up and threw into the stinking drains. 290. The evil-minded merchants never gave food to anyone; the monkeys broke open their store-rooms and carried away their contents. 291. There was a great outcry in the city. Then they entered into the palace of the king and cut off noses and ears. This also made a great outcry. 292. The five hundred wives of the king were all seated in the company of his concubines. The monkeys came and threw dirty water on them. 293. They suddenly seized all evil men who were thieves, adulterers, and crooked in their lives. They lifted them up and took them from the palace, and threw them down from above. 294. They seized the garments and ornaments, and flew with them into the sky and then with great pleasure gave them to the poor or those who lacked food. 295. They made the poor rich. They robbed the merchants. They beat those who spoke untruth. 296. The servants of the king hastened to inform him what was taking place. They said, 'An army of monkeys has arrived, and they are destroying everything. 297. Just as when a cloud pours down a heavy rain, the sky is dense with clouds, so Delhi seems crowded with this army of monkeys. 298. The monkeys show great anger, and there is a great outcry in the city.' The king remarked, 'The time for destruction of all things seems to have arrived.' 299. There were some wise men present who said to the king, 'Tulsidas is a *Vaishnava*. You should not persecute him. 300. If the monkeys increase in their anger, they will turn the whole city of Delhi upside down.' The king thought all this very remarkable, and confessed that he had committed a great fault: 301. 'When Durvas persecuted Ambarisha, he had to be humiliated. So it has happened to me. I am reminded of my injustice.' 302. So he came to Tulsidas and there joining his hands

palm to palm, he stood before him. 303. Akbar said to him, 'O *bhakta* of Vishnu, restrain this army of monkeys. I persecuted you, because in my ignorance I did not know what I was doing. 304. Duryodhan suffered humiliation when he attempted to persecute the good Draupadi. So it has happened to me by my persecuting you.' 305. Hearing this pity-arousing request, Tulsidas said to him, 'You were wishing to see Shri Ram. It is His army that has arrived. 306. Just as when the sun arises at dawn, and its light spreads all over the world, so this great hero has come with an advance guard, O king. 307. Hearing produces desire. Meditation produces devotion to listening, and a direct manifestation of God produces in one a desire to know more of Him. 308. So the monkeys are arriving first, and Ram is following them. An army of eighteen billions are following these monkeys. 309. These eighteen billion monkey warriors will be followed by Ram. Your good fortune has no limit. Shri Ram is coming to see you.' 310. Hearing this, the king said, 'I have already seen enough of Ram.' So saying, he grasped him by his feet and said, 'I did not understand His power. 311. If an army of ten thousand monkeys has wrought such destruction, then if the army of eighteen billion should come it would mean the end of the world.' 312. Hearing the king's pity-arousing request, the monkey army became invisible and all men worshipped the feet of Tulsidas.

313. Tulsidas remained here for a year, and in great love he daily sang the praises of the extraordinary deeds in Shri Ram's life. 314. All the inhabitants in Delhi began now to repeat constantly the names of God. And the ignorant and dull-minded became wise through association with him.

TULSIDAS GOES TO MATHURA

315. Tulsidas now took leave of Akbar and went

went to see and worship Shri Krishna at Mathura. 316. At first he came to Gokul and bathed by the bank of Jumna river. Having seen and worshipped Shri Krishna he departed from there. 317. From there he came to Vrindavan. There he made an obeisance to Krishna. He remained there a month, and danced in the praise-services devoted to Hari. 318. From there he came to Mathura. He bathed by the banks of the Jumna. He saw and worshipped Shri Krishna, and met there many *Vaishnavas*. 319. In Mathura, Gokul, and Vrindavan, live many *Vaishnavas* (those who worship only Vishnu as the One God). They are constantly engaged in singing the praises of Hari, and are always repeating His names day and night.

320. There was a Brahman citizen by name of Priyadas of supreme piety, and a *Vaishnava*. *Bhakti*, knowledge and indifference to worldly things, were his characteristics.

RAM HIMSELF WRITES TULSIDAS' LIFE

321. This Priyadas wrote a book in Sanskrit, describing the extraordinary deeds of *bhaktas* of Vishnu in this *Kali Yuga*. 322. Tulsidas heard that he had written this book containing the stories of saints. So on a certain occasion he came to visit Priyadas. 323. He said, ' O *Swami*, you have written the stories of saints. I have not listened to them. Bring me the book and show it to me.' 324. Priyadas replied, ' I have described the *bhaktas* belonging to the four *yugas*. But I have not written in this book the noble story of Tulsidas.' 325. Even the *Vaishnava bhaktas* of *Kali Yuga* were described in that book. Therefore he (Priyadas) felt very much troubled. Just then a very wonderful thing happened. 326. Unknown to Priyadas, Shri Ram came there and with His own hands wrote the story of Tulsidas. 327. In order to listen to the book, all the *Vaishnavas* assembled and sat in the assembly hall by the great door of the temple. 328. Clever and wise *pandits* also sat down

to listen. Priyadas the God-loving *bhakta* read aloud from the book. 329. All the *Vaishnavas* admired the book that was written by Priyadas. It was Tulsidas who said to him that it was Shri Hari who spoke through his lips. 330. Hearing this remark made by the saint (Tulsidas), Priyadas said to them, ' Ram came and wrote the whole history of Tulsidas. ' 331. All the noble *Vaishnavas* now examined the handwriting of Ram. The power of *bhaktas* is great. Neither *Vedas* nor *Shashtras* are able to describe it. 332. In attempting to describe the characteristics of Shri Hari the eighteen *Puranas* had to remain silent. And the six *Shastras* had to acknowledge that they did not understand His power. 333. If one constantly listens to this explanation of the book with pleasure he will certainly have a sight of Shri Ram. 334. Thus the beloved of Shri Ram, the full *avatar* of Vālmiki, had his story recorded by Ram's own hand. 335. Priyadas' first book was in the Sanskrit language. After that, Nabhaji wrote in the Gwalior language. 336. After listening to its verses I have written this book in the Marathi tongue, just as the milkman adds a little water to his milk. 337. As in setting a diamond in a gold ornament, lacquer is used in the act of placing it, so, you saints and good people, have listened to my uncouth language. 338. It is God Himself who is describing the life of Tulsidas; listen to it, therefore, with reverence. Those who do so, assume the form of Shri Ram. 339. The Husband of Rukmini, Dweller by the banks of the Bhima, is the real Author of this book. Mahipati's name appears in these verses, but the real writer is Ram.

340. *Svasti*. This book is the *Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it, the Lord of the world is pleased. Listen therefore you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the third delightful chapter.

CHAPTER IV

LIFE OF NAMDEV

*Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to the Beloved
of the Gopis.*

1. Victory, Victory, to Thee, Pervader of the Universe, the Saviour of the world, Father of Cupid, beautiful with His dark complexion, loved by the mind of the blue-throated One (God Shiva), Lord of all, Govinda, 2. Victory to Thee who lived at Gokul, Protector of the cows, the Child of Yashoda, Father of Brahmadev, Slayer of Kanas, Preserver of the universe, Lord of the senses. 3. Victory to Thee who dwellest at Dwaraka, who has in His hand the Sharang bow, generous in the extreme in the giving of Final Deliverance, beloved by the daughter of the sea (Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth), Lord of the Universe and Ruler of the world. 4. Victory to Thee who delightest the heart of Radhika, the one who findest Vaikunth the place of Thy pleasure, the Life of the world, the Slayer of Putana, the Killer of Kaliya, Destroyer of this worldly existence, O Shri Hari, 5. Victory to Thee, Giver of the promise to Pundalik, Husband of Rukmini, Deliverer of Draupadi from humiliation, Lover of Thy *bhaktas*, Cloud of mercy, Victorious King Shri Ram. 6. Victory to Thee Lover of Thy *bhaktas*, Lord of Pandhari, Pervader of the universe, Husband of Lakshmi, Thou, the Infinite One, be my Helper, and enable me to compose this book.

NAMDEV AND KABIR AS AVATARS OF UDDHAV AND SHUKA

7. Now listen to Nama's story, you good hearers. Narayan invited Uddhav and Shuka to see Him on the ocean of milk. Said he to them, 'I wish you to become *avatars* in the world of mortals.' 8. They replied to Him who

dwells on the Ocean of Milk, 'We do not wish to be born in the natural way, O Vishnu, give us birth in an unnatural way.' 9. Listening to them, the Life of the world turned them into infants, put them in shells, and dropped them down from raining clouds. 10. One fell into the Bhagirathi river. One fell in the Bhimarathi river. As they flowed along with the stream they repeated the names of God. Listen to what they said. 11. The one in the shell that fell in the Bhagirathi river repeated the name 'Ram, Ram.' The other who fell in the Bhimarathi river cried in his delight, 'Vitthal, Vitthal.' 12. So Shuka became the worshipper of Ram, and Uddhava became the worshipper of Pandurang (Vitthal). Listen to the wonderful things that happened as they flowed along. 13. There was one Damaji a tailor, a *Vaishnava*, supremely pious, pure through good deeds, and perfect in his devotion to God, his knowledge, and his indifference to worldly things. 14. After bathing in the Chandrabhaga, he went to worship Pandurang. After completing this, it was his regular custom to take his morning meal. 15. His wife Gonai was supremely pious and a dutiful wife. They both lived at Pandhari and were constant in repeating the names of the Lord of the World. 16. Gonai had no child of her own, so she said to her husband, 'Go to Pandurang and ask for a son.' 17. Damaji said to her, 'You are an ignorant woman. We are both now aged. Why should we expect God to give us a child?' 18. If insects have eaten the seeds, there is no use of expecting a crop when sown. So are you not ashamed to ask for a son? 19. What is the good of wishing that clouds would pour down rain, after the rainy season? So you ought to be ashamed to wish for a son. 20. The mango tree does not bear fruit in the month of Shravan. So are you not ashamed to ask for a son? 21. After the oil and wick in the lamp have been consumed, only darkness will prevail. It is like that

when you wish for a son of which you are not ashamed.' 22. The wife replied, 'Lord of my life, you blame me for being unreasonable, but God's power is supreme. Now I know that you are ignorant. 23. When Rām was an *avatar*, He made stones float on the sea. What difficulty has He in giving us a child although we are aged? 24. When Brahmadev carried away the calves, He himself became cows and cowherds. What difficulty can He have, therefore, in giving us a son?' 25. Damaji said to his wife, 'I will go now to the temple and tell God the wish you hold in your mind.' 26. He therefore went to the great door of the temple and there prostrated himself before God. He said, 'My wife desires a son. Be pleased to give one, Shri Hari.' 27. After saying this, he immediately fell asleep. The Life of the world came to him in a dream and said, 'I have given you the gift of a son.' 28. When at sunrise you go to bathe on the bank of the Bhima, a son will come floating down the stream. Take the babe up, and hasten back to your home with it. 29. The *avatar* of Uddhav will fill the three worlds with the glory of his deeds. He will be a saviour of the world, and a supreme *Vaishnava*.' He carries my name. 30. Hearing this in his dream, he hurried back to his home. There he told his wife just what had happened. 31. The next day Damaji came early to the bank of the Bhima. He quickly bathed and performed his daily devotions. 32. Just then he suddenly noticed a shell floating down the Bhima. He waded into the river, and took up the shell. 33. When he opened the shell his eyes fell on a beautiful babe, just as if at that very moment it had come from the womb of its mother. 34. As he saw it his mind was troubled, for he said, 'Who will nurse it?' He wrapped up the infant in his garment, and brought it to his home. 35. He said to his wife, 'God has given us a son.' Gonai took the child, and immediately her breast filled with milk.

36. Both of them thought it very strange, that in her old age she should be able to nurse the child. She bathed the infant, and with great love fed it at her breast. 37. Because they had made God pleased with them, and had asked for a son from the dark-complexioned One, they therefore called him Nama, and they had intense love for the child.

THE IMAGE OF GOD EATS NAMDEV'S OFFERING OF FOOD

38. Day by day the child grew in stature. Now listen to what happened. Damaji went to the market, and he sent Nama to the temple. 39. Gonai gave him an offering to take to the temple. The mother said to Nama, 'Show this offering to the god and come back.' 40. Taking with him all necessary things for worship, Nama came into the temple. He bowed prostrate before the god, and worshipped with all the materials he had brought. 41. He bathed the image. He clothed it in a yellow robe. He offered sandal-wood paste and flowers, and presented incense and lamps. 42. He then placed the plate of food for offering before the image. He joined his hands together palm to palm, and said, 'Be pleased now to eat.' 43. Nama had always conceived the idea that God always ate these offerings. He had no doubt about it in his mind. It was his firm conviction. 44. He said, 'Victory, Victory to Thee, Merciful One. Thou, Lord of Pundalik, must be angry because of my delay in bringing the offering. 45. But Damaji Thy *bhakta* has gone early to the market, and has sent me here to present this offering of food. 46. If Thou dost not eat this offering of food, my mother will be angry with me. What wrong have I done, O Lord of the world, that Thou dost not eat this offering of food?' 47. Nama had no question in his mind, as to how a stone image could eat, therefore he began to sob aloud, and said, 'O God, eat this offering.' 48. Seeing Nama's pure thoughts, God Supreme became pleased. He caressed Nama, and embraced him. 49. God manifested

his love by eating the offering which Nama had brought. Hari said to Nama, 'By no means tell anyone about this event.' 50. After making obeisance to God, Nama returned to his home. His mother said to him, 'Whom did you give that offering to?' 51. Nama said, 'O mother, the god ate the offering.' Now next day Damaji returned from the market. 52. After inquiring of his wife what had happened he heard the whole story about the offering. Damaji became much perplexed; it seemed to him a very extraordinary thing. 53. He said to Nama, 'How was it that the god ate? Let us both go to the temple, and show me what took place.' 54. They took with them the materials for worship, and both came to the great door of the temple. There they bowed to the Saviour of the world, and began at once to worship. 55. They worshipped the god, with the sixteen forms of worship, and fittingly offered incense and lights. Nama said to the eagle-bannered One, 'Be pleased to eat.' 56. The god said to Nama, 'Damaji has come with you; I shall never appear to his sight. I will meet with you.' 57. Nama said to God, 'Thou art a deceiver, Thou sayest Thou wilt not meet with my father. Thou seemest to me, O God, to use deception.' 58. Hearing Nama's remark, the Life of the world began to laugh. He gave Damaji a sight of Him and ate the offering. 59. The father said to Nama, 'You have been born in my family line, therefore God in His love has given me this vision.' 60. Thus satisfying his doubts, the father bowed prostrate before the god. He took Nama by the hand, and returned to their home. 61. He told the whole story to his wife. 'The Lord of Heaven truly ate the offering. We must no longer call Nama a relative, because he is God's *bhakta*.' 62. Gonai then said, 'God had mercy upon you, and gave you a son, though born in an unnatural way.'

NAMDEV'S MARRIAGE

63. Thus with their doubts settled, they bestowed great love on Nama. After searching for one who would be a helpmate, he was married.

64. When Nama was growing up he had a son. For the naming of the child on the twelfth day, the Life of the world Himself brought the gifts. 65. Gonai said to God, 'Nama has now a son. What name shall I give him, O God, tell me.' 66. Listening to what she said, the Life of the world replied, 'Call him Narayan, and play with him in love and joy.' 67. The Brahmans were then invited, both men and women, and the *Punyāharāchan* then began. It was the Life of the world who in His love gave gifts to Nama. 68. He gave *sari* and jackets to Gonai and gave the child a garment and a cap. God Himself gave them and then went back to His home in Heaven. 69. Gonai said to Nama, 'Both of us are now aged. You are engaged in the contemplation of God. Day and night you meditate. 70. Your thoughts are always occupied with His name and form. Not for a moment do you think of yourself. You are holding the Lord of Pandhari in your heart. He has persecuted you extremely. 71. In your domestic life we require every sort of thing. But you, my son, have become one indifferent to worldly things. What can I now do?' Such was Gonai's exclamation. 72. 'There are many *Vaishnavas* who carry on at the same time their domestic affairs and their religious life. It seems to me that your condition is quite different from theirs. 73. In your domestic life you have children, but you have very little food and few garments. The evil-minded laugh at you, what are we to do?' 74. At these words of his mother's he felt grieved about himself. He went to the temple and bowed prostrate before God. 75. Said he, 'O Shri Hari, who dwellest at Pandhari, why didst Thou put

me in this domestic life? Why hast Thou deserted me in the sad sea of this worldly existence?' 76. Hearing Nama's piteous plea, God said to him, 'Who is it that is troubling you?' He lovingly embraced him, and wiped his eyes. 77. Nama replied, 'Oh God, it is my mother, Gonai, who is troubling me, but I am continually remembering Thy feet. Cause the shadow of Thy mercy to cover me.' 78. God said to Nama, 'You should always remain with me, then the illusion and seductions of the world will never touch you. 79. You are a portion of Myself. And I am in your form. Just as salt gathered from the sea is not different from the salt water to the eyes of knowledge; 80. and as the sun and its rays are not different from one another; so your life and My life are united, O Nama. 81. A lamp and its light, although they are one, yet they seem different. So your love and Mine are the same. 82. You cannot separate sweetness from sugar. So your thoughts and Mine are not different, O Nama. 83. A diamond and its brilliancy, although not different, are spoken of as different. So let your heart regard your love and Mine, O Nama. 84. Or only as the most precious pearl is spoken of as different from its lustre, so you, God-loving *bhakta*, are not different from Me, O Nama. 85. Ordinary water and the water of the Ganges are never different, so I, of dark complexion, am not different from you, O Nama. 86. Gold and the ornaments made from it are surely not different, so your thoughts and Mine are not different, O Nama. 87. When sound proceeds from a bell, it becomes really one with the bell itself. So, considering our oneness, you must destroy the thought of duality.'

NAMDEV AND GOD CONVERSE

88. Nama said to God, 'What is this knowledge that Thou art teaching me? If Thy name is on the tip of one's tongue, who would pay any attention

to the sorrow of this worldly existence? 89. If Thy form is reflected in my heart, where would there be any room for the sorrows of this worldly existence? If Thou art mother and father in this worldly existence, no sorrow can come upon me. 90. Thou art God. I am Thy *bhakta*. I will sing Thy praises with my lips. I ask this blessing of love in every future birth of mine. Give it to me. 91. Thou speakest of the supremacy of the joy that comes from the deliverance from rebirths. But I do not agree with that.' Hearing this remark of Nama's, God smiled. 92. The Life of the world said to Rukmini, 'Nama is desirous of seeing Me in visible form. If he is taught philosophic knowledge it does not satisfy him.' 93. Thus saying, God drew Nama to His heart. He embraced him, and held him close to Him. 94. The Dweller in Heaven (Vaikunth) said to Nama, 'What is your manner of life at home? Tell Me. Do not be ashamed to do so.' 95. Hearing this, Nama replied, 'If one has Thy blessing what could there be lacking? Thy home is the Heaven of Vaikunth. We live in a broken down hut. 96. The eight *Siddhis* (accomplishments personified) are Thy slaves. In our home rats live. Thou art clothed with the divine garments, my children have no clothes to wear. 97. Thou reclinest on the serpent Shesha in the ocean of milk, but we cannot obtain even a seat made of straw. Thou hast platters of gold; we have leaves to eat on. 98. Thou hast gold and silver in Thy home, but our comfort is Thy name.' Hearing this remark, Krishna laughed.

GOD DISGUISED AS KESHAVSHET

99. Turn now to Nama's wife. She experienced much trouble in her home, and said to her mother-in-law, 'For me you have given birth to a pure crystal. 100. But now my garments are torn and exceedingly old. I have not enough to eat. I have, therefore, come to your house to

live my poverty-stricken life. 101. He whom I serve with devotion has been persecuting me. I see no way of bettering our domestic state.' 102. As Nama's wife was in great trouble in her own home, the Lord of Pandhari, Helper of the helpless, had mercy on her. 103. Without Nama knowing it, God became a merchant by name Keshava. This was because of his great love for His *bhakta*. In their distresses He at once came to their relief. 104. He filled a bag with gold coins, and he said to His Eagle, 'Take the form of an ox, and come to the house of Nama.' 105. He took the bag of money along with him, and on His way he said to the people, 'Will some one tell me the way to Nama's house?' 106. Hearing this question the townspeople laughed. They said, 'There is no food to eat at Nama's house. Who can this guest be that has arrived?' They added, 107. 'Do you see yonder *tulsi* altar with many *tulsi* plants around it? Many bright banners adorn the altar. That is Nama's house.' 108. Krishna said to Rajai, 'Some guests have come to your home. Come outside at once and give them a place to sit down.'

109. Hearing these words, Rajai was perplexed. 'Where could a guest come from? I do not know who this is whose coming will humiliate me.' 110. She therefore attempted to send him away, and said to him, 'The master of the house is not here, therefore I wish you to go back.' 111. To the neighbours who assembled she said, 'These guests have nearly taken my life; what am I to do?' 112. Just listen to the strange things that are happening. Innumerable *sadhus* have come into my house. They carry cymbals and *vinas* and dance in their love. 113. They put aside all thought of shame and public praise. They put aside all thoughts of caste difference. They hold the Chief of Yadavas in their heart and dance in their delight 114. The master of my house has told me that I must feed

every saint that comes to the house. Now I have not the least bit of food in the house, but he does not know this.' 115. S Bri Hari was standing at the door listening to that conversation. He said to Rajai, 'Come outside quickly.' 116. She asked from behind the door, 'Where are you from, and who are you? And tell me your name.' 117. Hearing her question the Lord of the world replied, 'My name is Keshav Shet; I love Nama dearly, and I have come to visit him. 118. I have heard the news that you have no food in your house. Nama is a friend of mine, and therefore I have brought him some gold coins.' 119. Hearing this answer of His, Rajai came outside in order to bring and give him a seat. 120. Seeing that she spoke harshly to Him, and then spoke with reverence, amused the Lord of the world, and smiling He remarked, 121. 'You saw the money I have brought, and now you speak very friendly, therefore one should not ever go anywhere empty-handed. 122. One should never go to a marriage, without carrying a wedding gift. One should never go to see the king without money in his hand. 123. One should never go to visit one's daughter or sister empty-handed. So during the time of distress one should not go to visit at the house of a relative or an evil-minded person. 124. One should never visit sacred places at festivals empty-handed. One should not go empty-handed when going to a temple to worship God. 125. When going to see and pay worship to a *sadhu* or *guru* you should at least take a *tulsi* leaf as Sudama, with great reverence, gave me a handful of parched rice. 126. Everybody is selfish, and I pay them as they deserve. Nama alone worships me without a selfish desire.' 127. So God said to Rajai, 'Do not do anything now to trouble Nama. 128. I have brought a bag full of money. Store it in your house, and when it is all spent, call on me for more. 129. Give Nama my kind regards and tell him that his

friend had called.' Nama's wife having heard this said to Vithoba (Krishna), 130. 'Do not be angry with me, because I spoke harshly to you. I did not know that you were a friend of the master of the house. 131. Eat therefore and then go on your way.' The Lord of Heaven replied, 'I will not eat without the presence of Nama.' 132. So saying Vithoba hastened to go away. He came to Rukmini and told her all the news.

GONAI'S COMPLAINT TO GOD

133. Now Rajai felt very much comforted at heart and said, 'My husband served God and He has been pleased.' 134. She tore open the bag and took out a lapful of gold coins. She went at once to the market and gave it to the grocer. She said to him, 135. 'You know what materials are needed for one's domestic life. Send them to my house.' 136. After saying this to him, she hastened back to her home. The merchant was perplexed, but said to himself, 'God must be helping him.' 137. He sent to Nama's house various garments and ornaments, melted butter, rice, sugar, and other materials. She (Rajai) could not contain herself for joy. 138. Gonai had gone out, and she knew nothing of what had occurred. She had gathered some grain and was returning to her house. 139. She thought to herself, 'Nama has sulked and gone off. I will go to the temple, console him, and bring him back.' 140. Thus saying, she hastened to the great door of the temple. She bowed to God on the eagle-platform, and then came into the assembly hall. 141. As she looked she saw God standing before her sight. He put Nama behind Him when he saw Gonai. 142. Gonai said, 'O God, turn Thy face this way towards me. Thou hast made Nama love Thee greatly, and so we are lacking in our worldly affairs. 143. By association with Thee, O Govinda, he has neglected his home and business. In his worldly affairs he is suffering distresses,

because he has no taste for things that please the senses. 144. Giving up all ties of affection, he has firmly grasped Thy feet. By our lack of things in our domestic life, we are laughed at by the evil-minded. 145. Putting aside all thoughts of himself, he enjoys perfect satisfaction. It is Thou who hast turned his mind to non-duality, and he has no longer thoughts of worldly things. 146. Those who become associated with Thee, Thou makest like Thyself, I have never seen, nor heard anyone associated with Thee coming back to his domestic life. 147. Thou hast purposely brought about ill feeling between us, and put Nama behind Thee. His wife is in great distress at home, but O God, Thou hast no pity. 148. Thou art destroying my life by taking pity on Nama. I will no longer hold Thee in reverence, O Husband of Rukmini. 149. With great love I bore him for nine months, but Thou, O God, hast made me hopeless. Thou hast divided us in our worldly affairs. 150. Thou callest Thyself generous, but tell me what and whom Thou hast given anything? O Life of the world, I do not believe in the praise that is given Thee. 151. Thou didst take Sudama's handful of parched rice, and for it Thou didst give him a city of gold. Thou never comest to the aid of one, unless he gives Thee something. 152. Seeing Ravan's power Thou didst turn Bibhishana against him and taking advantage of this domestic division, Thou gavest him the gift of Ceylon. 153. When Draupadi was in great distress, Thou didst first take from her a vegetable leaf (to satisfy Thy own hunger), and then feasted the *rishis*, and thus Thou didst proclaim Thy generosity. 154. In describing Thy bad qualities, the serpent Shesha grew weary in his writing. I have had some reverence for Thee, therefore Thy divinity has remained.' 155. Hearing Gonai's reply, God laughed and said, ' You are needlessly angry with me. 156. Your crazy Nama who cares not for himself, insisted on clinging to My feet. If you have a false

coin, why quarrel with another about it ? 157. With love in your heart you look to Nama from the point of view of his being a son. You try to divide us and seek to reproach us with your lips. 158. If you have any love, take away your son from here. Do not needlessly place upon Me the wrong you charge. 159. A fruit has ripened on a stem, the wind blew against it and it fell down. And so in the case of Nama, you have brought a false charge against Me. 160. I am the Unborn, the Imperishable, the Unconquerable, and have no relation with the three *gunas* (*salva, raja, and tama*). Out of love for Nama I assumed a form and visible attributes. 161. I was formless when there existed no space, no air, no water, no earth, no light, no fire, when even Brahmadev, Vishnu and Shiva did not exist, and everything was without form. 162. Then Nama has been my associate, and my love has been intense. And why you want to quarrel with me, I do not understand. 163. Just as when a tree bears fruits, the gardener plucks and takes them away. The tree could not enjoy them itself. This separation has been caused by its own bad deeds (in its former birth). 164. So consider Me as a tree in the form of the universe, and the loving Nama was the nectar fruit on it. You have plucked off that fruit, and I feel troubled thereby !' 165. Gonai replied, ' O God, Thou art talking very proudly. Thou dost compel me to swallow pebbles (for lack of grain), and makest a separation between us. 166. The farmers with various efforts raise crop from the earth. The king comes along and exacts a penalty, and becomes lord of the division. 167. Suffering much I have raised Nama from childhood to adult age, and now Thou dost claim to be his owner in a very wrong way.' 168. Hearing Gonai's reply the Life of the world laughed and said to Himself, ' I must

explain it all to her plainly. 169. If I do not do so, she will ruin my reputation.' Therefore the Husband of Rukmini replied to her. 170. The dark-complexioned One said to Gonai, 'Your good deeds are entirely pure in motive, therefore this God-loving *bhakta* came to your womb. 171. As the great *Vaishnava* Narad was born to Bramhadev and Savitri, so is it with you and the fortunate *bhakta* Damasheet, through whom Nama has descended as an *avatar*. 172. Just as in the line of demons, the *bhakta* Pralhad became an *avatar* by being born to Kayadhu, so Nama the servant of Vishnu has been born from you for the salvation of the world. 173. Among the sixty-five million Yadavas, Udhhava was the most distinguished *Vaishnava*. So in the line of tailors Nama has become an *avatar*. 174. Just as among saints, *sadhus* and *yogis*, the son of Anusaya was the most distinguished, so you seem the most fortunate of women, that you have had such a jewel of a son in Nama. 175. Or just as the king Uttanacharan had as his distinguished wife Suniti, and she gave birth to their son Dhruva and he made me subservient to him. 176. Or as Maruti was born in the race of monkeys from his mother Anjanī (a female eagle) so Nama, the embodiment of virtue, has been born to you. 177. O Gonai, blessed is your devotion, for this *Vaishnava* has come to your womb. Who can describe your fortune, in that you should become the nurse of Nama? 178. Taking Nama to your bosom, you rested with him on your bed. I cannot sufficiently describe your great good fortune. 179. While eating with Nama you ate taking him to your side. You only are cognizant of the great number of your good deeds, dear friend. 180. I who am above every other being, and unconquered, am the one who is describing your good character. You alone have the fortunate blessing of having Nama as your son.'

181. Gonai replied, 'O Life of the world, O Pervader of the universe, the Delight of the heart, give me my son Nama, and let his love of worship still remain.' 182. After hearing her say this, God looked up and saw that she would influence Nama to engage in worldly affairs. Therefore He was very much troubled. 183. As the Life of the world remained silent, Gonai understood its meaning. The power of reason is the highest kind of knowledge. So say the wise men. 184. While studying about the fourteen spheres of knowledge and every form of wisdom coming to one's hand, if the mind has no reasoning power these fourteen spheres are entirely useless to him. 185. One may show learning in the king's assembly; justice and morality may be discussed, and the replies may depend on the assembly which appears before him; still there must be the power of reason. 186. In arranging a matrimonial connection, or in one's business relations with others, or in the reading of books, there must be the knowledge of reasoning. 187. In forming friendship with someone whom to trust when revealing a secret, or when writing a book, there is necessary the knowledge of reasoning. 188. To be able to give a gift to a worthy person, or to give the right medicine to the sick, to perform the praise service suitable to the assembly present, the power of reasoning is necessary.

GONAI'S APPEAL TO SATYABHAMA AND KALINDI

189. In the story already related, it was stated that the Life of the world remained silent. So Gonai called Rahi and Rukmini and told them her story. 190. She lovingly called the good Satyabhama and Kalindi. Gonai said to them, 'Listen to what I have to say. 191. Your Husband is merciful to the lowly, of whom the *Vedas* and *Shastras* speak in praise. So why has He been pleased to cause my child to possess the condition of one unconscious of

his own body ? 192. My child is my only-begotten, yet God has turned him to worshipping Him all the time. Such is this false actor as you all know. 193. Shuka, Sanaka, and other distinguished *sadhus*, saints, and other leading *yogis* are familiar with the fact that He has ruined my home. 194. We are weak, helpless and lowly. We have no garments or food at our home. He has turned Nama to the contemplation of Himself. Please understand this. 195. I have seen and heard of many gods. A fastidious person is known at dinner, but I have never seen anyone quite so reserved as this man is. 196. He calls Himself a family deity at whose feet I should always fall, but He needlessly employs deception and needlessly troubles us. 197. Until to-day I have paid him reverence, and so His high reputation remains. But if he carries matters to the extreme, I shall lose regard for him before the public. 198. At His sight, one's own life is destroyed. He has turned my only-begotten son to His contemplation. Friends, what am I to do ? 199. You have all heard my story. Beseech the dark-complexioned One and tell Him to free me from my trouble. 200. All you wives, coming together, should bring Krishna to my house, and there ask Him what He has in His mind to do, friends.'

GONAI REBUKES GOD

201. She then turned to Nama and said to him. ' Why are you sitting here ? I will take you away by force in the very presence of the god. 202. Nama, you are a thief as regards our domestic life. This Enchanter of the world is our enemy. He stands on the brick and destroys the domestic life of others. 203. O this false Saviour of the world, Pundlik gave Him a place to stay, therefore you do not come home, and have brought our domestic affairs to ruin. 204. So I will never leave this place without taking you with me. I am determined to swallow the whole of Pandhari. 205. O You of

beautiful form, and wise one, reply to me. You Lord of the Yadavas are sitting silent, O Vitthal, You Destroyer of the house.' 206. Gonai said to him, 'O Life of the world Pervader of the universe, Ornament of *bhaktas*, why does my plea not come to your mind? O Cloud of mercy, 207. give back Nama to me, and thus may Thy fame increase in the world.' Hearing her say this, the Husband of Lakshmi spoke as follows:— 208. 'Listen to me, Gonai, take your son and go away. You are making a vain attempt to found a charge against me.' 209. Vitthal said to Gonai, 'Take your son Nama by the hand, and lead him away. Take your son to your house even now. 210. He has put aside all ties of affection, but the charge of wrongdoing has needlessly been cast on me. Take your son and go back to your home. Why do you continue such useless charges?' 211. Thus speaking, the Husband of Lakshmi brought Nama and placed him in her hand, and Gonai then at once started for her home. 212. As they walked along the road his mother said to Nama, 'You have deserted your business and have gone to the Lord of Pandhari as a suppliant.' 213. Hearing this charge of Gonai, Nama hung his head and tears of love flowed from his eyes. 214. So the mother taking Nama by the hand returned to their home. Just then Rajabai started to do her cooking in her part of the house.

NAMDEV SICKENS AT FORTUNE'S SIGHT

215. She prepared many kinds of delicious food including nine kinds of cooked food saying to herself, 'The Life of the world has done a very remarkable thing,' and she was full of joy. 216. But Nama saw with great displeasure the various pots and vessels, and the garments and ornaments which had been given to his wife, 217. Just as when a deer that has been ensnared in a net becomes distressed, so Nama by holding these rich vessels experienced the same distress; 218. or

as when a strong wind blows upon a light, it at once loses its brightness; so Nama's sad mind lost its happiness in seeing these riches; 219. or just as a beautiful person, when he finds himself a victim to leprosy, feels disgusted in his mind, so *Vaishnava bhaktas* feel disgusted at the sight of wealth; 220. or as when the sun is in eclipse it seems to be without any brightness, so, when he saw this illusory wealth, his face turned sad; 221. or as when a south wind strikes a cloud, it melts away in every direction; so in Nama's heart there was dejection. 222. As when a king hears of a defeat he finds his mind full of perplexity, so this *bhakta* of Vishnu became full of concern. 223. Or as Shuka sat performing his austerities, he was troubled at the sight of Rambha, so Nama seeing this wealth became sad at heart. 224. He asked his mother lovingly, 'Where has all this wealth come from?' Gonai replied, 'I surely do not know.' 225. Nama's wife said to him, 'You are very late in eating, so perform your bath at once, and sit down and enjoy the food which God has bestowed as a favour.' 226. Nama wondered to himself, 'Why is she speaking so humbly to-day? It must be because my wife feels great comfort in seeing all this wealth and grain in the house.' 227. When there is no money in one's possession, even a brother calls one an enemy, and the evil-minded and wrongdoers laugh, and this is what is called affection. 228. Seeing her son unable to acquire money, even his father is disgusted with him and says, 'In being born to us, you have brought us a bad reputation.' 229. The neighbours are displeased with him and say, 'He seems to us to idle away his time, so when he goes to visit his daughter or sister they feel ashamed to see him. 230. A wife will not embrace a husband who is so weak.' His sons say, 'He has put us all into debt.' 231. Thus all enjoy association with one in happy circumstances, but in

time of his distress they turn away from him. Nama had love for the Brother of the helpless, the Husband of Rukmini. 232. Nama said to his wife, 'Where did you bring this bagful of wealth from?' But she maintaining silence uttered not a word. 233. She thought to herself, 'If I inform him of it just now, he will distribute it off-hand.' Therefore knowing he would do so she said nothing in reply. 234. Just then Jani, Nama's maidservant, hastened near to Nama, bowed at his feet, and told him what had occurred. 235. She said, 'Rajabai was greatly troubled. God quickly came to her help. He became a merchant by name of Keshavshet and forced this bag of wealth upon her. 236. The Lord of Heaven became a Kanarese Lingayat, and standing in front of her house informed her that He had come as her guest.' 237. Rajabai said to Him, 'Tell me your name.' Hearing her, the Cloud of mercy replied. 238. The lotus-eyed One, in kindly words said, 'Nama is my greatest friend. You ask Me My special name. I am spoken of as one whose complexion is that of a dark cloud. 239. Hearing that there was a lack here of food and raiments, I have come with a bag full of coins. 240. When this bag of money is spent I will bring some more. So that from to-day no one should trouble Nama. 241. The Husband of Rukmini let the bag down from the ox's back, and he has only just gone.' At this point tears flowed from Nama's eyes.

NAMDEV DISTRIBUTES HIS FORTUNE

242. He cried, 'O Krishna, Purifier of the sinner, Lover of the *bhaktas*, the Ornament of Thy saints, Ocean of mercy, Life of the world, the Delight of the heart, Shri Vitthal. 243. Thou who art the Unborn, the Unconquered, the Imperishable, Unaffected by *maya*, Void of any pain, Helper of the helpless, the Home of compassion, why hast Thou wearied Thyself on my behalf? 244. Thou

never comest to the sight of those who practise rigorous austerities. But to-day Thou becomest the merchant Keshavshet for my sake. 245. O Thou Merciful to the lowly, Mother Krishna, it was not I who gave Thee this trouble, and yet Thou didst rush to my help on foot. 246. *Bhaktas* with desire in their hearts worship Thee, but Thou dost not give them the wealth they seek. But without my asking Thee, O Husband of Rukmini, Thou didst rush to my aid out of love. 247. If a cloud pours down rain on the ocean, of what use is that? So, O God, the gold Thou gavest me I regard as of no value. 248. Casting aside the *Riddhis* and *Siddhis* (female deities, presiding over accomplishments), royal wealth, the four forms of final deliverance, including that of *Saloka*, I think, O God, of Thy feet alone day and night. 249. I know nothing about sacred places, religious rites, the practices of *yoga*, mystic formulas, or austerities. I sing only of Thy name day and night with love.' 250. Praising God in these words, he then called the Brahmans of the town and gave to these twice-born the money, the garments, and the ornaments. 251. And now Nama without any hindrance worshipped the Good Being with reverence. Even Brahmadev was ignorant of Nama's love.

252. This book containing the history of the saints may be thought of as the ancient sacred city of Pandhari. The pure-minded and the good *Vaishnavas* come to visit it. 253. Those who are suffering from fever cannot bear the taste of cooked food. So those desiring wealth and wives will not enjoy these stories. 254. But those who worship without the desire of worldly things and are indifferent to them, they will enjoy this book. Those who are inclined to evils and are not *bhaktas* will feel a distaste for these stories. 255. Crows want meat for their food, so why would they come to the ocean of milk? So be well assured that those

who are not *bhaktas* will not find this book at all to their taste. 256. The good-natured swans will like my saying as delicious. So those who have love in their hearts are without disturbing thoughts.

257. In the next chapter we shall have the wonderfully delightful tale of the *bhakta* Kabir, the *avatar* of Shuka. May *bhaktas* in love listen to these delightful stories. 258. I will write their lives somehow or other just as they happened. In fact, it is the doing of saints who caused me, Mahipati, to write my name in these verses.

259. *Swasti* (Peace!). This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. May the pious, God-loving *bhaktas* also listen. This is the fourth delightful chapter.

CHAPTER V

KABIR'S BIOGRAPHY

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh, Obeisance to Shri Krishna

1. Listen now, my hearers, to a story that is very interesting and very purifying. In thinking of its sweetness it is sweeter than nectar. This comparison even seems inadequate. 2. I undertake to describe its purity. It seems to be superior to the river Ganges. If I look at the great extent of its influence, I have nothing with which to compare it. 3. If I look to its depths of meaning, it looks deeper than the sea. It is more generous than the generous wish-tree to whom a prince and a pauper are alike. 4. If I think of how it brings coolness, a comparison of it with the moon is inadequate. Although the lustre of a diamond is most precious, still the light of this story would dim it. 5. If I look to the honour paid to it, it is sung by the five-faced god (Shiva). An equal would be impossible to find, so Indra and other gods search for it. 6. Such being the holy story of a saint, listen, you pious folks, with reverence.

KABIR AS AVATAR OF SHUKA

In a former chapter, I have related the story which all of you have heard, 7. namely, that a shell came floating down the river Bhima, and from it Gonai received the *bhakta* Nama. The shell fell into the Bhagirathi river, and was floating down exceedingly fast. 8. This very obstinate *avatar* of Shuka was not born in the natural way, and floating down the river Ganges landed at the Manikarnika *ghat* of Benares. 9. Becoming one with human attributes, through his unnatural form of birth, he continued repeating the names of God with his lips. From the shell a sound was continually coming out. It was of

‘ Ram, Ram. ’ 10. Just then Kamal the Muhammadan weaver came down to wash his thread. As he looked down he happened to see the shell. 11. He waded in the water, opened the shell and looked in. There his eyes beheld a babe, and his heart was full of joy. 12. It was as if a man without making any efforts finds a hidden store of wealth; or as if one hunting for a pool of water should suddenly see the ocean of milk; 13. or as if when stringing glass beads, one should find them to be pearls; or as when picking up shells, one should find there a jewel; 14. or as when hunting for the city of Yama (god of death), one should find the city of Vishnu; or as when hunting for a hut habitable to live in, one should find himself entering a golden palace; 15. or as when seeking to hear some obscene music, one should hear a service of praise of God; or as when one might go to watch a quarrel, it should turn out to be a song from the *Sama Veda*; 16. or as when spending one’s energy on the *shindi* palm (wine yielding) tree, he should come across a wish-tree in his compound; or as when beginning to associate with a thief or immoral person, suddenly one’s religious teacher should come to visit him; 17. so, while merely carrying on his daily business, Kamal found this babe in the Ganges river. This child was the *avatar* of Shri Shuka in this *Kali Yuga*, the universal Saviour, a world-Guru. 18. He wrapped the babe up in his garment, and hastened to his home. With heart overflowing with joy he said to his wife, 19. ‘ I have found a babe in the Ganges, of perfect beauty, endowed with thirty-two qualities. My dear wife, take care of it. ’ 20. Hearing this, his wife’s breasts swelled with milk. She nursed the child and her joy overflowed. 21. A great *Vaishnava* was born in a Muhammadan family, therefore the name of Kabir was given to him. His father and mother loved him intensely. 22. Even while a babe

it repeated God's name, and listening to it every one was astonished. They said, 'We wonder what good deeds this orthodox Muhammadan named Kamal performed in his former birth. 23. How is it that this Vishnu-*bhakta*, already distinguished by his religious characteristics, should be born to this Muhammadan?' One replied, 'It was because fate was favourable to him. 24. If fate is favourable to anyone, why does one need the power of knowledge? Madmen, born in a low caste, are often praised by all men, through the power of fate. 25. So this man's good fortune is extraordinary. A *bhakta* of Vishnu has come to birth through him.' Such was the talk amongst all the people of that sacred city.

KABIR'S INDIFFERENCE TO WORLDLY THINGS

26. Well, because he had done some good deeds in his former births, Kabir was born to him (this Muhammadan). Day by day he grew in stature and his parents had him married. 27. The mother and father taught Kabir how to carry on his avocation, but he would not take it to heart. He would give no attention to a business life. 28. He could not distinguish what belonged to him and what belonged to others. He did not know what was joy and what was sorrow. He paid the same respect to a Brahman, a prince, or a pauper. 29. If he saw a heap of money fall before him, he had no desire to pick it up. If a thief came to rob him of his money, he did nothing to protect himself. 30. Because Kabir worshipped in this way, his business declined. The evil-doers and evil-minded laughed as they saw Kabir's conduct. 31. If a banana tree and a *bor* tree are planted in the same place it will not be happy for either. How can fire and water dwell together in friendship? 32. How can a prostitute and a dutiful wife, a miser and a generous giver, a reviler and a man of intelligence, live together in peace? There will be enmity between the one and the other. 33. How can a fly and dainty food get on well together? A goat-herd and a

pandit cannot live together in friendship. 34. How can the demon Rahu and the moon, a moth and a flame, the sea and the *rishi* Agasti, dwell in love ? 35. While the story of Shri Krishna was being read, Shishupal was unwilling to listen. When Ravan heard of the might of Shri Ram he did not feel happy. 36. As there is perpetual enmity between poison and nectar, so there is always a mental, opposition between worldly riches and the supreme spiritual riches.

RAM WEAVES FOR KABIR

37. Well, enough of this long digression. Kabir continued his worship of God, while his business prosperity grew less. The evil-minded laughed at him. 38. 'You have taken God to your heart, and so has come about this condition of self-neglect. It does not appear how you will continue to carry on your domestic affairs.' 39. Having that day rubbed paste on the threads, Kabir was made to sit at the loom, but he was not able to think of himself. He was entirely lost in the worship of Ram. 40. Bringing the image of Ram to his imagination, he closed both his eyes. His full attention was given to the form and name of God. He no longer remembered his own bodily condition. 41. His mother came to him, and tried to awaken him. She said, 'Kabir, I do not know what has happened to you now.' 42. Believing that his mother would whip him, he came to self-consciousness and being now awake he wove a hand-breadth of cloth. 43. But just then he again became unconscious and the image of Shri Ram appeared in his heart. Seeing this to be the case, the Lord of Ayodhya (Ram) Himself sat down to weave. 44. Rama said to himself, ' He has lost himself in contemplating Me. His mother will give him a beating. ' So thinking, the Holder of the Bow (Ram), sat down to weave the *shela* (gold scarf). 45. He who finds his pleasure in the ocean of milk, Lord of

the universe, Dweller in the Heaven *Vaikuntha*, He sat down at Kabir's loom in order to weave. 46. *Yogis* sit on spiked beds and yet He does not quickly come into their imagination, but seeing Kabir's *bhakti* He sat down to weave the scarf. 47. He who cannot be attained by the study of the *Vedas* and *Shastras*, by wandering from sacred places to sacred places, He, Dweller at Dwaraka, Ornament of His *bhaktas*, sat down to weave the scarf. 48. He whom Sanak and other *munis* bring continually into their contemplation, even He, Hari, sat down to Kabir's loom and wove the scarf. 49. He whom the daughter of the ocean serves, holding His feet to her heart, He who is the dear ornament of Shiva, even He sat down to weave the scarf.

50. Now awaking, however, Kabir regained his consciousness and after a moment's thought he hastened to begin to weave. 51. But he was no more than awakened when the Husband of Janaki (Ram) came into his imagination. Kabir's mind attained its calmness, and beheld that it was Krishna who sat weaving. 52. Whenever Kabir lost self-consciousness then Krishna began to weave. When self-consciousness began to return Krishna would stand at a distance amused. 53. Thus Kabir and Krishna both together, wove the garment; just as when the water of the Saraswati joins the water of the Ganges, the two are no longer different; 54. so God and His *bhakta* together wove the garment. Kabir folded it up, came into the house and gave it to his mother. 55. The mother now said to Kabir, 'Go now into the market and quickly sell the scarf and come back bringing me the money.' 56. Saying 'I will do so,' Kabir started from his home, taking the scarf in his hand, and sat down in the *bazaar*. 57. He closed his eyes and brought to his mind the form of Shri Ram. He lost self-consciousness and continued singing the praise of Ram with his lips. 58. He forgot entirely

that he had come to sell the scarf. Holding God in his heart, he continued repeating the names of Ram in his love for Him. 59. Merchants came into the *bazaar* and Kabir sat down beside them, but no customers appeared for the purpose of buying the *shela*.

MIRACLE OF THE SHELA (SCARF)

60. Because the hand of God Supreme, Lord of the Heaven *Vaikunth*, had touched it, it seemed to would-be purchasers as they looked at it from a distance, as being too costly for them. 61. If buyers wished to purchase a garment within five rupees, it seemed to them that it was of twice that value. If they thought they would buy it for ten rupees, it appeared to them as if it were worth twenty rupees. 62. Those who would purchase it for twenty-five rupees, seemed to see it worth more than fifty. Those people who were in search of one worth fifty rupees, saw it as worth double that amount. 63. Purchasers who wished to spend five hundred or a thousand rupees seemed to see it as worth more than a thousand. Because it seemed of such high value, people merely glanced at it from a distance. 64. They said to themselves, 'Even if we ask him the price, we have no money with which to purchase it.' Some wealthy merchants passed by. It seemed to them to be worth more than a hundred thousand rupees. 65. Looking at one another, customers passed into the *bazaar* saying to one another, 'This *bhakta* Kabir weaves very costly garments. 66. As we have no money, our coming to the *bazaar* is useless.' Thus saying, men and women hastened back to their homes. 67. The value of the scarf seemed to exceed the financial ability of the customer. So no customer came to ask Kabir his price. 68. The garment that seemed to customers of the value at which they were willing to purchase it, that garment seemed to become double such value.

Just as in every living being the soul exists, just so it was in this case. 69. Having planted mustard, an onion, sugarcane, or any seed, and having given it water its sap gets the same characteristic as the plant. 70. When many musical instruments are being loudly played, space seems to take their very form; so Kabir's cloth seemed of a different nature to every one looking at it. 71. Or one might think of gold as being homogeneous, but ornaments made from it seem of various kinds; or just as a flame seems in size according as one piles on the wood; 72. or just as the beholder sees himself as he is in a looking glass held before him by a barber; so Kabir's scarf seemed to the customer. 73. Looking at it from a distance they said to themselves, 'We have not the ability to pay for it, and not having sufficient money with which to purchase it, why needlessly go and ask him the price?' 74. Thus saying to themselves, customers went forward aimlessly into the *bazaar*. In the meantime the *bhakta* Kabir full of love continued his worship of Shri Ram. 75. As the sun began to set, the *bazaar* people began to dwindle. Kabir now opened his eyes and looked about him. 76. Said he, 'All the people have gone to their homes, and the scarf has no customer. If I go back to my home, my mother will give me a whipping.' 77. So saying, this *bhakta* of Vishnu continued sitting calmly. Just then he suddenly noticed an empty house.

GOD AS A BRAHMAN TESTS KABIR

78. Kabir quickly arose and went and sat inside, and continued his worship of Ram with love and affection. 79. Just as a daughter-in-law hides herself saying, 'My mother-in-law will treat me roughly,' so Kabir out of fear of his mother sat alone in this deserted house. 80. Or just as when Dhruva was kicked by his mother, and sulking went into the forest,

so this *bhakta* Kabir became indifferent to worldly things, and went and sat down in this vacant house. 81. Just as *sannyasis* attain their highest order by abandoning every form of action, so Kabir became indifferent to his domestic affairs, and sat down in this vacant house. 82. The servant of Vishnu having entered this deserted house for that purpose, the Pervader of the universe, seeing his devotion, came to test the truth of it. 83. He took the form of a very aged Brahman, with old and torn clothes. The cold was intense, just as it is in the months of *Paush* (January) and *Magha* (February). 84. In order to test the generosity of Kabir, the Life of the world entered shivering. As he sat there worshipping, this Brahman arrived. 85. Just as the son of Gadhi arrived to give trouble to the King Harischandra, or as the Lord of Kailas, assuming the form of a guest, came to trouble Shriyal; 86. or as the *Muni* Durvas, having heard of the goodness of Ambarish, came to trouble him; or as when God assuming the form of Vaman came to test Bali with his own eyes. 87. In that way this Brahman spoke to Kabir in a distressed voice, 'I am old, helpless and poor. I have no clothes to wear. 88. You are the *bhakta* of Vishnu and exceedingly generous. It is intensely cold; if you have any garments, give me some.' 89. As the Dweller in the Heaven Vaikunth said thus, Kabir thought to himself, 'If I say No to this Brahman, it will be to the harm of my desire to be good.' 90. So he tore his scarf in half and gave one piece to the Brahman. Kabir then full of love continued his worship. 91. Krishna then put on this garment and came immediately outside. Then he thought to Himself, 'I will go in again, and see what is happening.' 92. Thus saying, Krishna became a *fakir* in the guise of a Muhammadan. His head was adorned with a mass of hair. On his feet was an ornament made of crystal. 93. Carrying in his hands a rosary and opening wide his

blood-shot eyes, the cloud-dark-One rushed violently into the house to test the truth about Kabir. 94. When gold is seen to be dimmed in lustre it is rubbed on a testing stone. Or when a coin is suspected of being false, it is forcibly punctured by an instrument. 95. Or when a valuable diamond is under consideration, the expert hammers it on an anvil. So, God became a Muhammadam *fakir* in order to test the mind of Kabir. 96. In a violent laughter He stood at the door and called Kabir. He said to Kabir, 'Give me at once a garment. 97. God is without form and without qualities. You have forgotten this. Why do you leave Him and worship Ram?' 98. Hearing this harsh voice, Kabir replied in soft tones. He said, 'To be without form and at the same time possess qualities, both can exist without any difference between them. 99. If butter is hardened or melted, it does not thereby lose its character of being butter. Or when an ornament is made of gold it does not thereby lose its lustre. 100. So, the Unmanifested, Eternal Being has taken form. The Pervader of the universe has assumed visible form for the purpose of His *bhaktas*.' 101. To these words of the noble *Vaishnava* the *fakir* said in reply, 'If you have got any garment, give it to me quickly.' 102. Kabir hastened to remove the half of the scarf which remained with him and gave it to the *fakir*. He then continued to sit there without any concern and the *fakir* hastened away. 103. Just as when the rainy season has passed away the sky looks clear; or as when the soldering is tested it turns out to be brilliant gold; 104. just as when the python has left the mount Maila, or as when Rahu has let go the moon, so Kabir sat down to his worship with quietness of mind. 105. Or as the water of the Ganges appears clear after the flood has ceased; or as when mount Mandara was drawn out of the ocean its roar ceased; 106. so, the concern which Kabir felt, when no customer appeared for the purchase of the scarf, disappeared from his mind. Kabir was

now in a state of joy. 107. So thus satisfied in his mind, he sat worshipping Shri Ram. The Life of the world hearing this did something which I ask you to listen to.

GOD DISGUISED AS A BRAHMAN REPORTS TO KABIR'S
MOTHER HIS INDIFFERENCE

108. In the guise of a Brshman, Krishna went to Kabir's house. He called to his mother and told her what had happened. 109. He said, 'Kabir sat in the *bazaar* and customers came and asked the price of the scarf, but he would not reply to them and kept silence. 110. A great number of customers came and he could give them no reply, but bringing the Husband of Sita to his mind he continued his worship. 111. When the whole *bazaar* was empty, he called to a Brahman, tore his scarf in half, and gave it to him, mother. 112. A *fakir* then called for the remainder of the garment, and Kabir at once gave him the other half of the scarf. 113. He saw there an empty house, and is seated there now performing his worship. I saw from a distance what was happening, and have hastened here to tell you. 114. It is the earnest wish of my heart that you may be prospered, but mother, Kabir will not put his mind to worldly affairs.' 115. As the Dweller in the Heaven Vaikunth said this, Kabir's mother grew very angry. She said to herself, 'When he comes home I will give him a sound beating.' 116. As the Delight of the mind (Ram) heard her say this, He exclaimed, 'He will not come home quickly. After a scorpion has completed its wrong doing by stinging, it hides itself in some other place. 117. Come along with me, I will show you where he is sitting.' Then taking the old woman by the hand, Krishna walked rapidly with her. 118. Both soon arrived where Kabir was seated, repeating the names of God. The Life of the world pointed him out to the old woman from a distance. 119. From the house in which Kabir was seated, there issued

the sound of Ram's name. Just as Narad seated the *Muni* Valmiki for the purpose of repeating the name of Ram; 120. or as Sita sat in Ashoka forest and with love worshipped Ram; or as Jatayu worshipped Ram when harassed by Rawan; 121. in that same manner Kabir sat, and bringing the form of Shri Ram into his imagination, with his lips he sang the praises of Ram, having lost his self-consciousness. 122. Losing all thought of whether he was honoured or dishonoured, losing all pride of public recognition, losing all thought of objects of sense, he continued singing the praises of Ram with his lips. 123. Just then his mother entered the house, and the Lord of the Heaven Vaikunth pointed Kabir out from a distance. He then stood outside, and saw the amusing scene of the *bhakta* Kabir.

KABIR'S MOTHER PUNISHES HIM

124. The mother said to Kabir, 'Bring the scarf and show it to me. If you do not bring it at once, I shall punish you.' 125. He would, however, give her no reply. Keeping his mind steady in the worship of Ram he did not recognize the fact that his mother and a noble Brahman had arrived. 126. His mind was entirely taken up with the form and name of God, and so he lost all self-consciousness. His mother became angry and said to her son, 127. 'In a stupid manner you are sitting here, lovingly worshipping Ram.' Hearing her say this, the Lord of the Heaven Vaikunth said to the old woman, 128, 'You have used harsh language with your lips, but you have love for him in your heart. Now take a cane in your hand and punish your son.' 129. Hearing Him say this, Kabir's mother said, 'I see nothing with which to whip him.' God then produced a cane, and put it in her hand. 130. Growing angry she struck Kabir on his back, but he had no bodily consciousness, being lost in the

worship of Ram. 131. Now you wise *bhaktas*, listen to the amusing event that took place. As she continued to strike Kabir on his back, Shri Hari stood outside trembling with the pain. 132. He said to her, 'You are beating your child, but the welt appears on My back. Now that beating is quite sufficient.' So said the dark complexioned One. 133. Just as when the edge of an axe strikes the root of a tree, the tree violently trembles, so as she continued punishing the *bhakta* Kabir, the Saviour of the world trembled. 134. Or as when a child is troubled by some bad person, its mother suffers the pain, so as she continued whipping Kabir with the cane, God trembled with the pain. 135 Or as when an army lessens in number a king becomes depressed; so when this God-loving *bhakta* was being troubled it was this One, the Merciful to the lowly, who trembled with pain. 136. Or as when a young deer is caught in a trap, the mother deer feels the pain; so in the whipping of His *bhakta*, God trembled with the pain. 137. Or as when the sea saw the *rishi* Agasti it trembled in its heart, so the Dweller in the Heaven Vaikunth trembled with pain as the mother continued to beat Kabir. 138. Finally the Husband of Rukmini exclaimed, 'That is sufficient now, O mother,' and then the Infinite One added, 139. 'I went to trouble Bali. I ended in being His door-keeper. So in the end my deception had its positive result. 140. I have had many noble and pious *bhaktas*, but no one has ever given me a beating. Now I recognize the fact that the *bhakta* Kabir is superior to Myself.' 141. Then said the Husband of Sita to Himself, 'I must show him My visible form, and because I troubled him in the guise of a Brahman, so he did not recognize Me.'

RAM (WITH SITA) MANIFESTS HIMSELF TO KABIR

142. So he cast aside His Brahman guise, and in His hand took His bow and arrow. A dazzling crown

adorned His head. His large eyes gave brightness to his face. 143. In his ears were the most brilliant ear-rings. His chest was broad, but His waist was slender. Around His neck was the purest of jewels, the Kaustubh, and the Vaijyanti garland adorned His neck. 144. Around His waist was an embroidered yellow garment. On His feet were the *Vanki* and the *Todar* ornaments. The Husband of Janaki thus presented Himself together with Sita. 145. Kabir opened his eyes and looked. It was as if a billion of suns had arisen. Seeing such a form as that, he embraced His feet. 146. The Dweller in Vaikunth then said, 'You have stood My test. I shall never forget you, just as a mother never forgets her child. 147. Just as experts pierce coins with their instruments, and then string them together; or as they test diamonds by hammering them on an anvil, and then store them in their treasury; 148. so I have put you to the test. Now I will put you in the depths of My heart, always looking on you with the eye of favour.' So spoke God. 149. The Life of the world then gave Kabir's mother a loving embrace, and said, 'Your good fortune, because of Me, can never be fully described.' 150. As God said this, the mother felt great joy. She drew Kabir to her heart, and gave him a caress of love. 151. Said she to him, 'It is because you have become my son that I have had a sight of Shri Ram.' The mother then took Kabir by the hand and led him back to their home. 152. And the Husband of Sita said to them, 'Keep thoughts of Me in your heart.' Thus speaking, the Life of the world became invisible.

153. This book relating the stories of the saints is the lake Manas. Listeners who are wise, and *bhaktas* of good fortune come to it. 154. The royal swans, who want pearls as their food, sit by this lake. Crows, who are not *bhaktas*, who are haters, and who have no faith in their

hearts, they revile these royal swans. 155. They gladly eat pebbles, because they dislike pearls. So there is no sense of worship aroused in those who are not *bhaktas*. They hold in their minds irrational thoughts. 156. But now good people, let that thought pass. Give me your attention. Just as when an infant uses prattling words, its mother rejoices to hear them. 157. The blind grope their way behind those who have sight, by listening to their footsteps. So through your favour I speak to you in my uncouth language. 158. It is you who are making my thoughts clear, and causing me by your love to write this book. As the author of the book my name, Mshipati, appears in the beginning. But the book is being written through your favour.

159. *Swasti* (Peace!). This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. The Lord of the universe is pleased as He listens to it. So let all God-loving pious *bhaktas* listen also. This is the fifth sweet chapter.

CHAPTER VI

KABIR AND HIS SON KAMAL

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh, Obeisance to Shri Krishna

1. To-day the festival of lights and the *Dasara* festival have arrived, bringing joy to every sense. Among these the ear of the listener possesses the highest good fortune. 2. The moon shines for all alike, but the *Chakor* bird first satisfies itself with it. So when reading the stories of the saints, it is the ear that seems more fortunate; 3. or as when at marriage a great number of guests assemble, it is the bridegroom's mother who has the highest honour paid her; or as when the sun has arisen in the sky, it is the lotus that is the first to open; 4. or as when a cloud brings moisture to the sky it is the *Chatak* bird that first satisfies itself with it; or as the bee is the first one to supply itself from the sweet honey of the flower; 5. or as when uttering sacred words there is first the worship of Ganpati; or as when Shiva distributed the fourteen jewels (churned out of the ocean), he gave the first honour to Vishnu; 6. so when offering to you, a fortunate assembly, this delightful composition, giving the story of the *bhaktas*, it is the ear that satisfies itself; so it seems to me. 7. As the result of hearing is thinking, and after thinking there comes study, then the experience of it comes and the seeker after truth becomes complete in his knowledge; 8. so in the acquisition of knowledge, it is the ear that is the most important among the organs of sense. Therefore if one wishes to place an ornament in the ear, it should be the precious jewel of the story of the saints, set in a golden setting. 9. I will therefore make an ear-ring of a beautiful form, and place it in my listeners' ears. It will shine with the light of knowledge of philosophic truth. 10. Then the Husband of

Rukmini will be pleased, and give them an everlasting blessing. In describing the good deeds of his saints I have held this purpose steadily in my mind.

THE HAPPY HOME OF KABIR

11. Now listen, you pious God-loving people. The story to be told is a very delightful one. After the dark-complexioned One had embraced Kabir, he went back to his home. 12. When Kabir's mother had whipped him it was done in ignorance. After that event had brought to her the sight of Shri Ram, she became comforted. 13. She was in the habit of persecuting him, but now she said nothing to him. When one has the favour of the Pervader of the universe, all troubles pass away. 14. Those who have the king's favour are honoured by the king's ministers. If a mother-in-law is fond of her daughter-in-law, no one ever reviles her. 15. Those who have the favour of their *guru* are never troubled by rebirths. If Sarasvati (goddess of speech) is favourable, heretics do not enter into discussion with them. 16. Those who have obtained nectar are not troubled by disease; or if Ganpati is favourable to anyone, hindrances do not come into his way; 17. so Kabir's mother having received the favour of the Lord of Ayodhya (Ram), no longer persecuted him. And having received divine knowledge, she gave herself to the worship of Hari. 18. Her mind became indifferent to worldly things. In order to conform to public custom she carried on her daily routine in her domestic concerns, but in her heart she was continually repeating the names of God, full of love. 19. Although she had not in her home any food or raiments, her mind felt no anxiety. Kabir's dutiful wife was like the good Anusaya. 20. A lamp and its light are without difference from one another; so also there is no difference between a word and its meaning; and in the same way Kabir and

his wife were one. 21. Lightning and a cloud both exist in unity, so the two, Kabir and his wife, lived in perfect harmony. 22. Just as sweetness and sugar never exist apart from one another, so their love* was strong like the phases of the moon. 23. Kabir in his domestic life considered joy and sorrow as both alike. In the same way his wife behaved resolutely in union with her husband.

KAMAL'S BIRTH AND PILGRIMAGE

24. Kabir's wife was great with a child who became a statue of devotion, knowledge, and indifference to worldly things, and in the ninth month a son was born to Kabir by her. 25. At the moment of his birth his nature was one indifferent to worldly things. In matters of cleanliness he was extremely pure. He was generous, wise, and one of fixed determination. His mind suffered no disturbance. 26. When he was twelve days old he was given the name of Kamal. As he heard his father sing the praises of God, so he imitated him in the same worship. 27. When seven years old he said to his father in a humble voice, 'Give me permission to go to Dwarka.' 28. Hearing his son's request, Kabir said to him, 'Go and fulfil the desire of your heart and then hasten back.' 29. While still young he had the desire to visit sacred places. Seeing this, Kabir's mind was full of joy. 30. Just as when a king's son wishes to conquer the whole world, the father feels joyous, so it was with Kabir; 31. or as the tide of the sea reaches its fulness when it sees the full moon, so when Kamal started to go to visit sacred places, the *bhakta* Kabir rejoiced; 32. or as when Ganpati danced, the five-headed

* The reading translated in the text for the latter half of verse 22 is that of the Indu-Prakash edition, 1888, edited by Lakshman Babu Gokhale. Another reading in the *Abhinava Bhaktavijaya*, 1930, edited by Dinadas is translated: 'Just as the phases of the moon wax and wane.'

One (Shiva) nodded His head in His joy; or as when Brahmadev rejoiced when listening to the singing of Sarasvati; 33. so seeing his son full of the spirit of indifference to worldly things, both were filled with joy. Kamal made an obeisance to his father and mother and then started. 34. As he walked along the easy path, he sang of the names and praiseworthy deeds of God. The shame of worldly life never came into his mind. 35. He had no liking for clothes or ornaments. His tongue had no liking for the best of food. He had no desire for the hypocritical meeting with the king. All he cared for was the worship of Ram. 36. Every one knew the *bhakta* Kamal as the son of Kabir. As he entered into cities, people heard of his coming and went out to meet him. 37. Just as the *rishi* Narad, the son of Brahmadev, continually devoted himself to the singing of God's praises, so Kamal day and night gave himself up to the worship of Ram. 38. The townspeople, seeing him, would take him into the town with marks of honour. He would remain there a night and perform a *Hari-kirtan*. 39. In this way, with full experience of knowledge, he hastened to Dwarka. Suddenly there appeared before him the sacred pond of Gomati. His mind at the time was full of repentance.

PILGRIMAGE FUTILE WITHOUT REPENTANCE

40. If a man wanders from one sacred city to another without repentance in his heart, his going and coming will be in vain. Why should anyone who has no son seek to lay up a fortune? 41. If you have no money, why uselessly go to the market? If you have no love of God in your heart, why sing the praises of God? 42. If you do not mix salt in your food it will have no good taste. The wealth of a miser does not reach those who are worthy of a gift. 43. If a warrior has no bravery, why

should he in vain carry a weapon? In making friendship with a miser, one will never find joy. 44. If one does not know the *Gayatri mantra* why call himself a Brahman? Although loaded with ornaments, still that is all useless if without the *Mangalasari* ornament. 45. If one has not the knowledge of reasoning, the sixty-four crafts are useless to him. If one has no compassion for living beings, why prate with his lips over his own knowledge? 46. Or if one has not the favour of God, one has composed his verses in vain. So if one has not full repentance in his heart, his wandering from one sacred place to another results in no advantage to him. 47. Lust, anger, pride, and envy are the worst faults of a person. If there is no repentance in his heart, these sins will not be washed away by bathing at these sacred places. 48. As the son of Kabir now stood on the banks of the Gomati he made obeisance and with feelings of love praised God. 49. He then waded in the water and bathed with his clothes on. He prayed, 'Oh Ganges, wash away my faults, and end my re-births.' 50. Having bathed in this way and made the twelve marks on his forehead with clay, and having placed around his neck the *tulsi* garland, 51. and having brought into his mind the Lord of Dwarka, he mentally worshipped (*manas-puja*) and with love in his heart, entered into the temple to see Him. 52. At the great door of the temple he bowed prostrate on the ground. Then entering the inner shrine, he embraced the feet of Shri Krishna. 53. Now lovingly opening his eyes, he brought the image of Shri Krishna before his imagination, and singing His names and great deeds he waved auspicious lights.

A MERCHANT GIVES KAMAL A DIAMOND

54. Living in this way, the *bhakta* Kamal remained four months at Dwarka and in love composed

poetry describing the good deeds of Hari. 55. Having completed four months at Dwarka in the acquisition of knowledge, by association with the good, and three times a day entering into the temple to see and worship God, he left that place. 56. He made his obeisance to the image of Krishna, prostrating himself on the ground. With love he prayed, 'O God, give me again the opportunity of coming here to see and worship Thee.' 57. Thus praying, he immediately started on his way. As he walked along he saw the town of Chitrakut which he entered. 58. There was a merchant by name Vishnudas (a worshipper of Vishnu), supremely pious and generous. He came and with feelings of love made obeisance to Kamal. 59. Having a great desire to welcome him he took the *bhakta* Kamal to his home, lovingly washed his feet and placed a meal before him. 60. For the night a *Hari-kirtan* was arranged, and all the people of the town assembled. They listened with love and their minds became absorbed in the theme. 61. The merchant then thought to himself, 'What shall I give him? If I should place before him a heap of money, he would not care for it.' 62. In his treasure-house he had a diamond which he quickly brought. He seated Kamal and placed it at his feet. 63. He said to him, 'This little brilliant diamond will dim the lamps; take it to your home and place it in your house. 64. At night-time if you place it before you, there will be no darkness.' Kamal replied, 'Kabir will be very angry with me on account of his indifference to worldly things. 65. Diamonds and crystals look alike to my sight. Why do you give it to me and urge me to take it? 66. Money should be offered to Brahmans. Diamonds and other jewels should be offered to kings, and food and gifts should be given to living beings. You know this, for you are a wise man. 67. One should give to rope-dancers, jugglers, and players, the old clothes. One should give dry provisions of food to the holy

men who are performing austerities. 68. One should give daintily cooked food to *Sannyasis*. They should be given the yellow robe and the loin cloth. We are worshippers of Vishnu, indifferent to worldly things, with minds always satisfied. 69. Having no desires in my heart, why do you force me to take this diamond? Why serve a meal to those already satisfied? Why not give it to those in distress from hunger? 70. A great cloud may rain upon the sea, but the sea has no need of it, so you have uselessly brought and given me this diamond.' 71. As the *bhakta* Kamal thus replied to him, the merchant prostrated himself on the ground before him, and unknown to Kamal, the merchant tied the diamond in Kamal's garment.

UNWORTHINESS OF ACCEPTING GIFTS FOR 'KIRTANS'

72. He soon left that place and came back to Benares. He entered into his home and embraced the feet of Kabir. 73. His son placed the diamond before Kabir, and related the things that had happened to him. Kabir was overcome by the recital and at once fainted away. 74. His heart was full of repentance, and he wept aloud. His wife immediately came out and grasped her husband by his feet. 75. The dutiful wife said to Kabir, 'Why are you so troubled to-day? What have you seen to-day of evil omen that has aroused the feeling of repentance in your mind?' 76. Turning his back towards his son, he said to his wife, 'It seems to me that our whole family line has been sunk in shame. 77. Our Kamal has sold our good name, and brought back this diamond, and therefore, my good wife, I have fallen into this sea of sorrow. 78. It is as if one had scattered musk in the bazaar, and tied up ashes in his garment; or as if one had driven away a well-versed person in the *Shastras*, and in his stead had brought a *Mang* into his home; 79. or as if one should throw away a

bottle full of the sacred water of the Bhagirathi and should take in its stead water from a washerman's pot or as if one should drive away from his home the Dweller in the sacred place and put a thief there instead; 80. or as if abounding in the worship of Vishnu, one should resort to a cemetery and worship Vetal there; or as if giving away books on the *Vedanta* philosophy, one should bring back immoral books; 81. or as if one should give away the sandalwood of mount Malaya, and bring back instead the stinking *hingam*; or like giving to crooked dealers a place in your neighbourhood, and driving away those of religious character; 82. or like giving away the horse of the sun and taking the washerman's donkey; or like giving away the sweet nectar, and taking curdled milk in his vessel. 83. So, O wife, I think to myself that my son, with a secret desire, has committed a wrong. He has sold the name of Ram and has brought here this diamond. 84. Therefore my heart is full of grief, and I fell to the ground in a faint.' Hearing his father's words, Kamal started from there, 85. and going back to where the merchant was, he returned the diamond. Then he came back to his home and bowed to his mother and father. 86. He told them all that happened. When Kabir heard his story he was full of joy. Just as a good *guru* rejoices when his disciple becomes indifferent to earthly things; 87. or as when a mother sees her child free from its illness, she overflows with joy; or as when Shri Ram was delighted when he heard of the bravery of Lava and Kusha; 88. so seeing Kamal free from hindrances, Kabir at once embraced him. And he (Kamal) embracing Kabir's feet, gave himself up to the worship of Shri Ram.

KABIR AND KAMAL AS ROBBERS

89. It now happened on a certain occasion, that a large company of saints who lived at sacred places came to

Kabir's house. 90. It was at the first watch of the night that these saints came to Kabir's house. Both father and son came forward and prostrated themselves on the ground. 91. Kamal hastened to bring a woollen blanket for them to sit upon, and he said to the saints, 'O *Swamis*, seat yourselves on it.' 92. When the saints saw what was being done, the three parties felt joy, just as Indra felt joy when he saw Sanak and the others; 93. or just as after many days of drought, a great number of clouds should pour down rain, making men happy, so Kabir felt joy; 94. or it was as if one should give to a sick person nectar to drink; or as when a *Chatak* bird drinks nectar from the moon; or as when wick and oil are placed in the lamp, it is seen to give bright light; 95. or as when the God-loving *bhaktas* full of joy, nod their heads in gladness while listening to a *kirtan*; or as when the daughter of Janaka (Sita) was full of joy when she met Maruti in the forest of Ashoka; 96. so Kabir felt great joy as he saw these great saints. Going aside he said to his wife, 'We must give these saints something to eat. 97. These *bhaktas* of Vishnu who reside at sacred places have come to our home. If we permit them to sleep here hungry, our reputation for goodness will be lost.' 98. Now there was not the least bit of food in the house, so the distress of the couple was intense; but now listen to what the wife said, when she heard her husband's remark. 99. She said to Kabir, 'O lord of my life, I do not see what is to be done. If we go to our neighbours to borrow, they will give us nothing whatever. 100. We could go into the bazaar and buy, but we have no money. So take your son with you and go and steal something. 101. Break open the shop of the merchants who seem to have an abundance of materials for food and bring back the food which you steal, and serve a meal to these saints.' 102. The *bhakta* Kabir assented to this.

He took a sword, and the *bhakta* Kamal took a crowbar, and they hastened to go. 103. They came into the bazaar, and broke open the shop of the merchant. He put the son inside the shop, and he himself remained outside. 104. It was now midnight, and the merchant was in heavy sleep. Kabir called to his son from outside that he should hasten in what he had to do. 105. When Kamal looked into the shop he saw piles of money, garments and ornaments. Seeing them he felt a sense of disgust. 106. The son brought out of the shop flour, rice, sugar, split peas, melted butter, crystallized sugar, and gave them to Kabir.

HONESTY EVEN IN THEFT

107. He also brought out turmeric, assafoetida, cummin seed, salt and vegetables and plates of leaves, just sufficient to provide what was needed for the saints. 108. Just as when a thirsty man, though he sees an abundance of water in the Ganges, drinks just enough to quench his thirst, and then comes out of the river; 109. or as when a hungry man has a dish offered him with a great abundance of food on it, still he eats only sufficient for his stomach's need; or as when *Sannyasis* beg food on their open palm and will not eat more than a morsel; 110. or as when *Vaishnava bhaktas* when listening disregard faults in the *kirtan*, and accept its good points; or as when a royal swan sits in the water and separating the milk in it from the water, drinks it; 111. so although Kamal saw with his eyes garments, ornaments and a heap of money he rejected them all, and took with him only the materials needed for cooking. 112. As he hastened to come out of the house a thought came into his mind, 'The grocer is fast asleep, I ought to waken him. 113. If one's enemy is fast asleep, and one kills him in that state, or if one reviles anyone behind his back, he will fall into the horrors of hell. 114. If in a battle anyone pursues a fleeing enemy; or if

anyone steals fearlessly, or if one sets fire to a house inhabited by men, he will fall into the horrors of hell. 115. Now I am a wise *bhakta* of Vishnu and I know what is wrong and what is right. So I will waken the grocer and quickly run away from here.' 116. Then taking courage he moved quickly to the side of the grocer, and slapped him on his back, saying, 'You ought to be awake. 117. We are two thieves who have broken open your shop. We are going away with the materials for cooking, I tell you this.'

KAMAL ASKS HIS FATHER TO CUT OFF HIS HEAD

118. The grocer sat up, but Kamal started to run away. As he was passing through the narrow opening both his feet got caught. 119. When half his body was outside, the merchant seized him. It was as if a deer, escaping from a snare, should find itself in a forest full of hunters; 120. or as if a royal swan should go to lake Manas and there should be suddenly seized by a falcon; or as when a parrot in its ignorance finds itself in a trap; 121. or as when the king of the Kauravas arranged his army in a circle and in it was caught the child of Subhadra (Abhimanyu); or as when the *kokil* bird, while flying about in the flower garden, is caught by a hunter; 122. so Kamal, as he hastened to run away, had both his feet seized by the grocer. The child Kamal then called out to his father. 123. He said, 'As the Son of the wind (Maruti) was carrying away mount Dron for the aid of Ram, while on his way Bharat wounded him and threw him down, that is just happening to us. 124. The grocer will now come outside and shout in the bazaar. When the people of the town hear him, they will come rushing to see what the matter is. 125. All the men and women will regard us as the thieves of the town, so you cut off my head and hurry back to our home. 126. If you hold in your mind any idea of love (that I am yours), it will be to the loss

of your reputation for goodness. If people hear the story of your stealing, saints will not come and sit in your house; 127. just as when dutiful wives, hearing a statement that there are prostitutes present, get up and go away; or as when the Mang (out-caste) comes into a house, those learned in the *shastras* and *pandits* will not remain present; 128. or just as when a wise person hears his good *guru* reviled, he gets up and goes away; so hearing the story of your stealing, saints and *sadhus* will get up and depart; 129. so, O *bhakta* of Vishnu, ocean of peace, complete in all good qualities, now listen to me. Put aside all ideas of love and of my belonging to you, and cut off my head with your own hand.' 130. Listening to what his son said, Kabir was pleased in his mind. He took the sword in his hand and cut off his son's head. 131. He then made the bundle of materials for cooking, and taking it up, hurried back to his home. There he told his wife what had happened.

SAINTS FED IN KABIR'S HOME

132. In lovingly relating this courageous act of Kabir's, my whole mind is overcome with wonder; so I, Mahipati, will seek for illustrations of it and give them to you who are listeners. 133. Just as when the Dweller in the Kailas (Shiva) came as a guest into the palace of Shriyala and asked to be served with human flesh, he (Shriyal) killed his own son; 134. so this noble *Vaishnava* did the same thing. But this illustration will not be adequate because the Husband of Parvati (Shiva) persecuted Shriyal, and therefore he killed his own son. 135. But in the present case no saint asked Kabir for a meal, and yet he killed his own son. Therefore the illustration I have used seems deficient, as all clever and wise men will recognize. 136. Where is anything to be found as solid as the earth? Where elsewhere is to be found the vast extent of space? Where is a tree to be seen as

worthy of worship as the *Pimpal* tree? 137. There is truly no bird like the eagle. There is no river mightier than the Bhagirathi river. As for depth, no other collection of water surpasses that of the sea. 138. What fruit is there equal to that of the wish-tree? Or what cow is superior to the wish-cow? One might search through the three worlds and not find a mother equal to Anasuya. 139. What planet is there in the heavens equal to the brilliancy of the moon? In all the line of demons there was no such generous giver as Bali. 140. What poet has there ever been equal to Valmiki, who declared future events out of his own mind? If one searched throughout the three worlds, one would not be able to find or see a monkey equal to Maruti. 141. What is the use of using too many illustrations? Illustrations really belong only to those to whom they apply. I might hunt everywhere and not find so noble a *bhakta* as Kabir.

142. Kabir put the bundle down on the floor and gave Kamal's head to his wife. Her love for him overwhelmed his mother, and tears flowed from her eyes. 143. 'O my child, you are one of great good fortune. You have sacrificed your body for saints. Coming into this worldly existence you have made Shri Ram your own. Thus you have saved our whole family line.' 144. Saying this, Kabir's wife restrained her feelings by the force of her courage. She took the cooking materials and started to cook. 145. She mixed the nine different kinds of materials into a dainty dish and served the meal to the saints, saying as she served them, 'This is a blessed day. I have seen the feet of saints.' 146. Kabir gave them straw mattresses to sit on, and served these saints. It was now sunrise and these *sadhus* at once arose.

KAMAL'S BODY IMPAIRED

147. After their early morning devotions, these *Vaishnavas* went to their bath. Meanwhile the grocer came out

of his house and shouted aloud. 148. Hearing the shouting, all the people came there in a hurry. They came to where the thief was, and looked at his condition. 149. They said, 'His head has been cut off and taken away. Who can now recognize him?' They remarked to the grocer, 'Your fate works most curiously. 150. One of the thieves has killed this man and taken away his head. The God of all has protected you. If it had not been for that, you would have truly met with calamity. 151. When one has a great deal of money with one he should not sleep alone. In the possession of money, there is great and continual danger. 152. If one loves his money, his friends and brothers become his enemies. Money works in two ways. It both saves and kills. 153. If one is confined by the king's court, money can procure his release. The beheading of this thief must have been done for the sake of his money. 154. You have laid up good deeds from former births, and therefore your life has been preserved. Perhaps they were not thieves; they must have been very good men. 155. There was a pile of money in your shop. How is it that they left the garments and ornaments, and took away only a little cooking materials? This seems very strange to us.' 156. Thus the different classes of people discussed the subject, and expressed their various opinions. The grocer, however, hurried away and reported the matter to the king. 157. He said, 'Two thieves came and broke open my shop. I caught them in the act of taking away the materials of food. 158. One of the thieves cut off the head of the other and took it away.' Hearing him say this, everyone present laughed. 159. The king, however, became very angry and gave the command to his officers, saying, 'Impale the thief. He must be punished.' 160. Hearing this command, the officers hurried in their anger and impaled Kamal's body. 161. To bestow punishment upon a dead body, to enter into discussion with a person

of great mental ability, to pick up a quarrel in a foreign country, are all bad actions in wise people.

KAMAL RESTORED TO LIFE BY THE SAINTS

162. The saints and *sadhus* had gone to the river-bank to bathe. They performed their worship of God and returned to Kabir's hermitage. 163. Finally taking leave of Kabir, these dwellers in sacred places started on their way. Kabir made a *namaskar* to these saints, and accompanied them to see them off. 164. The wife was bitterly weeping. She prostrated herself on the ground before these saints, and said, 'When shall I see your feet again?' 165. Speaking thus humbly to these saints, the two accompanied the saints to see them off. As they came out of the city an extraordinary event took place. 166. As the company was hurriedly walking along the path, they suddenly saw a headless corpse impaled upon a stake. The saints saw it from afar. 167. As they stood still for a moment to look at the sight, a most extraordinary thing took place. Kamal joined his hands together and made a *namaskar* to the saints and *sadhus*. 168. The men and women expressed their astonishment as they saw this most unusual act. It seemed to them extraordinary that a headless corpse should make a *namaskar*. 169. The saints and *sadhus* said to Kabir, 'The corpse is making a *namaskar* to us. How is it that life has been preserved in a body without head? 170. When a tree is cut down what would make its branches suddenly show signs of life? If the feathers of a bird are plucked from it, what would enable it to fly in the air? 171. If the strings of a *vina* are broken, how can it be played upon? So, seeing a corpse with life in it, seems to our minds a most unusual thing.' 172. Kabir joined his hands palm to palm, and said to the saints, 'Bhishma fell on the bed of arrows, and yet his life was preserved in his body.

173. Abhimanyu, in order to relate to Arjun his sorrows when he fell on the battlefield, had his life preserved in his body with courage. 174. Also when Ravan was making trouble for Jatayu his body was overwhelmed with pain, his desire to see Shri Ram preserved life in his body. 175. So this thief was a *Vaishnava*. He had a great desire to make a *namaskar* to your feet. Therefore his life remained in him. 176. The desire of his heart has been fulfilled. He has seen you. Now he will leave his perishable body and live in his everlasting home.' 177. Hearing him say this, the saints replied, 'Who indeed was this thief?' Then Kabir related to the saints the whole story. 178. The *Vaishnavas* then said, 'Although we had not asked for food, how is it that Kabir should kill so good a son as Kamal?' 179. Hearing them say this, the noble *Vaishnava* answered, 'All earthly things are perishable. Whatever is seen to have a form must in the end disappear. 180. Suppose I had not killed Kamal, would he thereby have remained immortal?' Listening to this remark, a sense of compassion arose in the hearts of the saints. 181. The saints said to Kabir's wife, 'Hasten and bring the head and show it to us. Hearing this remark, she hastened back to her home. 182. She took her son's head and brought it back to the saints. When the compassionate saints saw it they were moved with emotion. 183. They took the corpse down from the stake and placed the head upon it. The men and women looked on with wonder. Listen now to the strange thing that happened. 184. As the saints placed their hands upon the head of Kamal, he came to life, arose and made a *namaskar* to the saints. 185. All the inhabitants of Benares now prostrated themselves on the ground before Kabir. Said they, 'This *Vaishnava* is supremely wise, a complete saviour for all dull-minded beings.' 186. The saints gave him their blessing and started on their way to sacred places.

Listen now to the delightful story which will be related in the next chapter. 187. This book containing the history of the saints might be considered as a beautiful temple in the sacred city of Pandhri; where the eternally loved, dark-complexioned One for ever stands on a brick; 188. where *sadhus* and *Vaishnavas* sing His praises out of love, and there I, a sinner and an ignorant person, have come to see and worship Him. 189. With reverence I take in my hand these verses, like *tulsi* leaves and flowers. I, *Mshipati*, fall at His feet in order to ask Him for His beneficent love.

190. *Swasti* (Peace!). This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. The Lord of the world will be pleased if you listen to it. Therefore listen, you God-loving pious *bhaktas*. This is the sixth very delightful chapter.

CHAPTER VII

KABIR CHOOSES RAMANANDA AS HIS GURU

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Krishna.

1. Listen now. The book that contains the stories of the saints may be considered as the ocean of milk, in which water-animals in the form of illustrations rush hither and thither in the water, in their love of it. 2. Waves of joy arise heavenward and seek to split the space above, the space that is knowledge. Pious clouds come rushing over the sea, and drink the water of these stories. 3. Then they go and rain down the water-joy upon those who have become heated by the fever of this earthly existence. 4. The favour of Shri Pandurang is the full moon, which when it rises in its love, produces the tide on the limitless sea, a tide that cannot be resisted. 5. He who will bathe in the sea of this book at the time of a festival, when a praise service is being held, will find severe diseases of this earthly existence certainly disappear.

KABIR WEEPS AT THE SOUND OF A GRINDING MILL

6. In the previous chapter there was the holy story of how the saints raised the son of Kabir to life. Let the hearers now listen to the holy story of what happened afterwards. 7. Once upon a time the father of Kamal went into the bazaar at night. He was worshipping Shri Ram at that time full of love. 8. He took a *vina* (lute) in his hand and sang the praises of God in his sweet voice. He brought to his imagination the form of Shri Ram, and sang with a heart full of love. 9. His mind discarded desires, affections, honour, pride and wrong wishes. He put aside egoism and the thought of 'I' and 'thou,' and gave himself to contemplating Shri Ram. 10. There was a grocer's wife in the

bazaar sitting there grinding. When the *bhakta* Kabir saw her grinding, his heart was overcome with emotion. 11. He stood there and wept aloud. The men and women in the bazaar seeing him do this, laughed and wondered why he did so. 12. One of them said to Kabir, 'Why are you crying here? Who has been giving you trouble? Tell us.' 13. A great many people said the same thing to him, but he would not reply to any of them, for he thought to himself, 'These people cannot remove my sorrow. 14. If one tells his grief to one already in sorrow, one feels his pain all the more. If a frog makes a friend of a serpent, the serpent will not give him the least joy. 15. A wise *Pandit* will not ask a drunkard any questions on good thoughts and morals; just as a thoughtful man will never take medicine from the hand of a sick man; 16. just as the *chatak* bird will not drink the water of the river, even if it be intensely thirsty; or as the *chakor* bird finds no satisfaction until the moon arises; 17. or as an orator will never speak with love and enthusiasm to wicked and ignorant hearers; or as the royal swan will never bring to mind pearls made of quick silver; 18. or as when a twice-born (Brahman), seeing a Mang at a distance, will not pronounce a blessing, or as a clever and wise man will not talk in private with a reviler.' 19. So when these avaricious lovers of wealth asked Kabir that question, he would not give them any answer, but continued crying bitterly. 20. The various classes of people said to one another, 'Kabir has gone crazy. He is crying for nothing in this bazaar.'

KABIR CONSOLED BY NIPAT NIRANJAN

21. Just then a *sadhu*, named Nipat Niranjan, happened to come there. He at once said to Kabir, 'Why are you manifesting such grief?' 22. When Kabir opened his eyes and looked, he saw an ocean of knowledge before him

Then taking courage he replied to him. 23. He thought to himself, 'If I tell him the truth, he will remove at least a part of my trouble.' Thus thinking to himself the *bhakta* Kabir spoke as follows: 24. 'A sick person feels great joy in his mind when telling of his pain to a good physician.' Just as a daughter-in-law does not hesitate to tell of her sorrows to her own mother; 25. or as a good disciple, if he has doubts in his mind, tells them to his *guru*; so the father of Kamal told the reason of his crying to the *sadhu* Nipat Niranjana. 26. Kabir said to him, 'O good *guru*, my heart is full of repentance. You, kind sir, have questioned me in affectionate terms, so listen, and I will tell you why I am crying. 27. As I saw the mill being turned, I saw the grains of wheat turn to flour. Just such is my condition. I have fallen between the millstones of this earthly existence. 28. I was therefore seized with fear, and have manifested this violent grief. Who besides you can remove the sorrows of this earthly existence?' 29. Hearing this, Nipat said to him, 'Why do you mourn in vain? As you saw the mill turning, your mind felt a sense of repentance 30. So, O *bhakta* of Vishnu, I will remove your doubts on this question. It is when you discard the central prop and wander about that you become as it were flour in the mill of *Kal* (death). 31. Just as grain in the mill adhering to the central prop, is not turned to flour, so those who are devoted to the worship of Shri Ram are not caught in the cycle of death. 32. You are courageous on account of your righteousness, and indifferent to earthly things. You are a mountain of peace and forgiveness; you see the fearsome things in a dream. Why do you in vain fear them?' 33. Hearing him say this, Kabir was awakened to the truth, and the two embraced one another with feelings of love. 34. These noble *Vaishnavas* made loving *namaskars* to one another. Kabir then hastened to leave there, and returned to his hermitage. 35. There in

many forms of verses he continually sang the praises of Hari. He continually performed *kirtans* full of joy and love.

ONE WITHOUT GURU IS WITHOUT LIFE

36. He said to himself one day as his mind was thinking about it, 'If one does not have a *guru* while in this earthly existence, he should be called a man without life. 37. It is useless to have a domestic life without a wife, and a home without children, and ornaments without the saffron mark on the forehead of a woman (indicative of her husband living). 38. If a tree grows, but yields no fruit; or if a king is born without possessing valour; or if one should cook a meal without the use of salt, its saltlessness will make that food useless; 39. or like a youthful body with no life in it; or a banker without money; or an officer without authority; of what value are these? 40. The rainy season without a cloud, a great lake without water, a festival without a sacred place and observed in a miserable village, 41. a corn-cob without grain on it; of what value are they? A home seems empty without a master; a praise service without love is like the singing of obscene songs. 42. As friendship without any regard, or as knowledge without any compassion, so why should one accept the state of a *sannyasi* without repentance? 43. There can be no enjoyment without money, no religious observance without some rule, and why should those without peace be called saints? When a great man possesses no peace of heart, why do people needlessly call him a great man? 44. Just as the *chatak* bird seems to be without beauty until the moon arises; so this human body has experienced many rebirths in vain if it has not had a good *guru*. 45. So I must go with feelings of reverence as a suppliant to the *sannyasi swami Ramananda*.' Having decided this in his mind, he remained with that

determination. 46. When after seeing many kings with her own eyes, and carefully considering the matter, Sita saw the form of Shri Ram, her heart chose him at once. 47. When the daughter of king Bhimaka (Rukmini) heard of the beautiful form of Shri Krishna, she sought to win him as her husband. So it was that Kabir held the desire for the dust of Ramanand's feet. 48. Finding himself alone one day, he at once arose and went to the hermitage of Ramanand and lovingly embraced his feet. 49. Standing first at a distance, Kabir besought Ramanand saying, 'Your greatness must show me compassion.' 50. When Ramanand heard Kabir's voice, he put his fingers in his ears, went into a cave and sat alone on his mat. 51. Kabir stood outside and said in his soft sweet voice, 'A lowly and helpless one, I stand at your door. Give me your assurance and satisfy my desire.' 52. Ramanand said to Kabir, 'You were born in a Muhammadan family. I have, therefore, no authority whatever to give you instruction. 53. All wise men recognize that seed should be sown in a field after the examination of its soil. In making a gift, one should first seek someone worthy of it. When giving a daughter in marriage one must choose the proper bridegroom.' 54. Kabir replied, 'I have determined to come to your feet. I have not spared body, speech or mind in doing so. 55. The moon loves the *chakor* bird, but even if the love may not be exclusive, yet God in His pleasure rains nectar on it for its devotion. 56. Should the sun not express its intense love for the lotus by rising, still it will not open by an attachment for something else. 57. In the making of an earthen image of Dron, the reverence of the Koli (Ekalavya) bore fruit. So I have embraced the *swami's* feet with body, speech and mind.' 58. Thus speaking, Kabir again with love prostrated himself on the ground before the *Swami*. He then hastened back to his home with his mind full of intense love.

59. One day while sitting alone he thought to himself, I must hear the sound of Ram's name from the lips of my *swami*. 60. What methods shall I adopt that the dust of his feet may cling to me ?' He then dug a ditch in the path and laid down in it. 61. The lotus in the lake Manas closes its petals at night time, and says to itself, ' When will the sun arise ? It will make my heart rejoice. ' 62. Or as when the *chatak* bird is exceedingly thirsty it longs for a cloud, so the *bhakta* Kabir lay in the ditch waiting for his *guru*. 63. Just as on the beautiful day of the full moon the *chatak* bird wishes for the sight of the moon. Or as a child overcome with hunger, waits for the coming of its mother. 64. Or as when an excessive drought having taken place men long for the clouds, so the *bhakta* Kabir in his love waited for the coming of Ramanand. 65. Now it happened that there were four *ghatikas* remaining of the night, and *swami* Ramanand was on his way to bathe in the river Ganges. 66. As he was rapidly walking, his foot touched Kabir and he exclaimed, ' Ram, Ram ! Whom has my foot touched ? ' 67. The *bhakta* Kabir having heard him say this, stood up and said, ' You, *swami*, have done me a great favour today. 68. Your feet accidentally touched my forehead, and I heard the mantra, " Ram, Ram. " I see no one as fortunate as myself in all the three worlds. 69. All the good deeds that I may have committed during the infinite number of my rebirths, have now come to their fruition. Today birth and death have ceased for me through the touch of the feet of my *guru*. 70. If fate comes to one's aid, grains of sand may become brilliant diamonds. If the water of a well contains salt, fate can make it like nectar.' 71. So the *bhakta* Kabir, in his love, danced before the *Swami* Ramanand. His heart felt intense joy, because it was full of happiness. 72. It was like that of a hungry man receiving dainty food. Or as when a cloud rains upon a withering tree ; or as when the

husband of Shachi gave nectar to drink to one who had no longer to live ; 73. or as when a poor man finds a heap of money ; or as when a sick man receives a divine medicine ; or as when a man seeking final-deliverance becomes associated with the good, he cannot contain the joy that he feels ; 74. or as when a girl who is living with her mother-in-law meets her own mother ; or as when a poor person obtains a wish-cow ; or as when a king through his power gains his seat on the throne. All these have joy. 75. As when the *muni* Gautam arrived at the river Godavari his mind was full of joy ; or as when Bhagiratha brought the Bhagirathi river—these felt joy in their hearts ; 76. or as when the son of the Wind (Maruti) was in the forest, he suddenly met Shri Ram ; or as when Narad, seeing Vyas, became full of joy ; 77. so the heart of Kabir was now comforted. *Swami* Ramanand smiled, astonished at what was taking place.

RAMANAND TESTS KABIR

78. He kept silence, however, and went on to perform his bath, saying to himself, ' I have never seen one so determined as Kabir seems to be. 79. So I will give him a little suffering, and so give his mind a test, as experts melt and examine inferior kind of gold ; 80. or as experts seek to discover the true diamond by placing it upon the anvil and striking it with a hammer ; or as when they test the jewel in the serpent's head by winding thread around it and throwing it into a blazing fire ; 81. or as when Vishvamitra gave Harischandra's mind a severe test ; or as when Shiva came as the uninvited guest to Shriyal ; 82. or as when Karnu fell on the pile of arrows when Krishna went to him for some gift ; so I will assume an outward anger and test Kabir's mind.'

83. On a certain day Kabir went into the bazaar singing and dancing with joy. Tears of happiness flowed from

his eyes in the fulness of his love. 84. As he danced in his love he said to himself, 'By holding in my heart the lotus feet of my *guru* Ramanand my mind has joy.' 85. As he was thus singing in his love, Ramanand heard from a distance. He took off his wooden sandals and said angrily to Kabir, 86. 'You call yourself my disciple without any reason for it. When did I give you instructions? What witness have you employed to prove that you are my disciple? Tell me.' 87. So saying he struck Kabir on his head with his sandal, just as a mother outwardly manifests anger to her child; 88. or again as a mother outwardly pretending anger gives her daughter instructions; or as a teacher punishes his pupil in order that he may gain knowledge; 89. or just as men forcibly brand their cattle to drive away all diseases; or as an expert melts the gold to test it; 90. so in order to test the determination of Kabir, Ramanand struck him on the head with his sandal. Blood flowed freely, but Kabir was full of joy. 91. Said he, 'Give attention to what I say. When you gave me the instructions that made me your disciple, there was no witness present, therefore, O *Swami*, you could treat me with contempt. 92. Now in the presence of everyone, you gave my head a blow with your sandal. That act proclaims to the people that everyone should know that I am your disciple. 93. I have appointed as my witnesses water, the earth, air, space, light and God, that I have placed my service at your feet.' 94. As the *bhakta* said these things the good *guru* was very pleased. He went up to Kabir and placed his hand on his head. 95. Saying, 'Seeing your determination, my test of you has satisfied my mind. Now constantly repeat the *mantra*, "Ram Krishna" and sing their praise day and night.' 96. As the *sadguru* said these things, Kabir became full of joy, and composing verses of various kinds, he sang of the goodness of Shri Ram. 97. Putting aside all wrong desires, all hopes for popular

honour, putting aside all sensual desires, putting aside all pride of knowledge, he continually sang God's praises. 98. All the people of Benares said to Kabir, 'Blessed are you.' Such high reputation became intolerable to the evil-minded persons.

KABIR'S PUBLIC PERSECUTION

99. When evil-minded persons hear the praises given to the good, they have doubts arisen in their hearts; just as when the sun arises, owls become ashamed and go in hiding; 100. or as when thieves are intensely troubled when they see the moon arise; or as when a miser hears the great praise given to a donor his mind burns with malice; 101. or as when a prostitute becomes angry, as she hears praise given to a dutiful wife; or as when hearing from anyone an exposition of the *vedanta*, a heretic becomes irritated; 102. so, as soon as Kabir's high reputation spread, revilers sought to find some fault in him. These evil-minded persons then met together in private and discussed the matter, 103. 'Through the unusual service rendered by the *bhakta* Kabir to saints, his reputation has vastly increased. But he killed his own son with his own hand, and the saints raised him to life. 104. From that day everyone bows to him. So now unknown to Kabir, let us bring here a company of saints and good men. 105. Let us write letters to them, and some day bring a company of *Vaishnavas* here. When Kabir sees with his own eyes the great number of saints, he will run away. 106. If a very great gathering of these saints should once take place, Kabir would become disgusted with them. Then the saints will curse him and no blame will be attached to us. 107. Starting a quarrel between the demons and the gods, the son of Brahmadev (Narad) watched the fun; or as having started a fight between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, Shakuni watched them from a distance; 108. so let us

invite a vast number of saints, and dishonour the *bhakta* Kabir.' Such was the plan which these evil-minded persons formed at that time. 109. Writing letters in the name of Kabir, they sent them to Hardwar, Mathura, Gokul and Vrindavan, and to the city of Dwarka as well. 110. All the *Vaishnavas* were invited to come on a certain day in a certain month. They also sent messengers, inviting all the mendicants who lived in the sacred cities. 111. They decided among themselves not to let Kabir know of this. If these saints came unawares, what would he do? 112. If there should be a great gathering of a hundred thousand or more on some special date, who was there so foremost in doing good that he would provide them all with food? 113. So they spent their own money in inviting these *Vaishnavas*. The evil men arranged for Kabir's discomfiture, that they might bring out his faults. 114. Just as Duryodhan endangered his merit and sent the *yogi* Durvas to the Pandavas, so, with evil thoughts in their mind, these people invited an innumerable number of saints.

SAINTS SERVED BY GOD IN VARIOUS FORMS OF KABIR

115. Having listened to the reading of Kabir's letters, the saints bowed their heads in his praise, and on the day appointed in the letters, they arrived. 116. An innumerable number of saints arrived from east, west and south. Kabir bowed to them and lovingly embraced them. 117. Seeing this enormous gathering of *Vaishnavas*, the saint Kabir was full of joy. Said he, 'A happy day has arisen to-day. for with my own eyes I have seen the *Vaishnavas*.' 118. The crooked-minded men began to wag their heads in derision; 'Now let us see what is going to happen.' Looking at one another they clapped their hands. 119. Noticing this difficult situation the Dweller in Ayodhya, the Life of Janaki (Ram), said to Himself, 'I cannot bear to have any lack found in my *bhakta* on my

account. 120. Kabir is one entirely detached from the thinkings of this world. Now that this innumerable gathering of saints has taken place, I must be his helper and protect him.' 121. The *Vaishnavas* of the sacred cities suddenly arrived and encamped on the banks of the Ganga river. The Lord of the world seeing this, arrived to relieve Kabir in his distress. 122. He became a Kabir to as many of the noble *Vaishnavas* as had arrived. The Holder of the Bow (Ram) assumed for the occasion an infinite number of forms. 123. Hari took the form of Kabir in various ways and served these *bhaktas*. The evil-minded sought to see the fun, but seeing the astonishing sight, 124. and taking one another by the hand, they went into the gathering to investigate. When they saw with their eyes an infinite number of Kabirs, their mind was filled with amazement. 125. God felt great pleasure in serving His saints. In assuming these infinite forms His wonderful power of creating appearances was seen. 126. As men and women looked about to see the fun they everywhere saw the *bhakta* Kabir. Each Kabir was serving the saints with reverence and caring for them. 127. One washed their feet, one gave them a bath, one prepared the sandalwood paste used in the worship of God. 128. One stood before them with hands joined palm to palm. One massaged their feet. One held their wooden sandals. Such were the illusory forms of Hari. 129. One sang before them and another gave them to eat. The Life of the world gave them *pan-supari*. 130. He helped some to lie on beds, and himself sat by them. To some of them Krishna spoke in tender tones. 131. Krishna powdered *bhang*, and gave to some. To some He gave the *kusumba* juice to drink. He filled the pipes of some and gave them to smoke. 132. The Saviour of the world said to some, 'Let us hasten to the temple.' To some He was constantly saying, 'Show me your favour.' 133. On the foreheads of some he made the marks with the

paste of white clay. Making a garland of *tulsi* He would put it on them and hold a mirror before them. Shri Ram put these on with His own hands. 134. The Lord of the world sat before some, rubbing them with the saffron and sandalwood paste. He put musk on the foreheads of some, and gave beauty to their eyebrows. 135. The Life of the world put on raiment and ornaments on some. Some He took aside and requested them to teach Him the knowledge of the soul. 136. He took the sandals of some, and with feelings of reverence held them on His head. Before some of them the wonder-working Hari sang songs. 137. The Life of the world prepared straw mats for some and laid them down to sleep. To those who had a hankering for opium, He brought and gave it to them. 138. Innumerable people sat down to eat and there the Lord of the world served them. In His love He gave some water to drink. 139. In some places Krishna was making garlands of *tulsi* and placing them around their necks. In some places He had taken fans in His hands and was delighting people with the cool breeze. 140. In some places the Life of the world made the saints lie down, and He sat by them massaging them. In some places He lovingly sat to listen to books being read. 141. When some went to bathe, the Lord of the heart went with them. The Dweller in the heaven Vaikunth would say to some, 'Tell me something I can do for you.' 142. He sat near some and gave them a light lunch. The Husband of Rukmini waved the whisk on some. 143. Just as the one sun is reflected in all vessels of water and is still untouched by the water, so the all-pervading Krishna manifested Himself in the form of Kabir. 144. Long ago when Krishna was a child, the cowherdresses took him by the hand and came to complain to Yashoda. He then suddenly manifested Himself in numberless forms. 145. While the daughter of Drupad was serving a meal to a gathering of Kauravas some evil-minded

men gave her trouble. He then appeared before each one's plate in the form of Draupadi and reproached Duryodhan. 146. So Krishna, seeing the loving devotion of Kabir, assumed innumerable forms. Men and women saw the amazing sight and wondered at it.

147. The *Vaishnava bhaktas* remained there in the sacred city of Benares for three nights. During all these times, the Lord of the heaven Vaikunth lovingly served them. 148. The Lord of the heart with His own hands gave to every one garments and ornaments. Whatever anyone desired, he obtained. 149. The Husband of Sita, having seen these *Vaishnavas* on their way, He became invisible.

PERSECUTORS OF KABIR REPENT

Then all these evil-minded men came to Kabir and embraced his feet. 150. They said to him, 'You are a *bhakta* of Vishnu, we have troubled you greatly, but Ram has been your helper, and increased your extraordinary praise. 151. Moths try to put out the bright flame of a lamp, but it is not put out. The hatred of the fire-fly cannot hide the brightness of the sun. 152. Although the Kauravas sought to burn down the Pandavas in the lacquer houses, they could not burn them. The internal fire of the ocean seeks to burn up the ocean, but it can never be burned up.' 153. Thus saying they again prostrated themselves upon the ground. They put aside their unreasonable anger, and lovingly sang the praises of his goodness and good name.

THEME OF THE NEXT CHAPTER

154. In the next chapter, the Husband of Rukmini, who is the ornament of *bhaktas*, an Ocean of Mercy, will be described as *avatar* in the form of Dnyaneshwar in this mortal world. 155. That story, with its nine sweet juices,

I will serve on the plates of those who are anxious for it. Those who are fortunate, God-loving, and who hunger for it, can eat and drink it with love. 156. The wise *bhaktas* drive away the flies in the form of doubts to a distance and enjoy the fragrance of this story. Mahipati, your servant beseeches you lovingly to take it.

157. *Swasti* (Peace !) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. The Lord of the world is pleased when He hears it read. So you, God-loving pious *bhaktas*, listen. This is the seventh very delightful chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

DNYANDEV AND HIS GRANDPARENTS

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh, Obeisance to Shri Krishna

1. To-day is the very happy day on which we have seen the book relating the stories of the saints. Both hearers and speakers have received its nectar with love. 2. To speak, however, of the stories of the *bhaktas* as nectar seems to be a comparison that is deficient. The Husband of Shachi drank the nectar of immortality, but did He gain final deliverance from rebirths? 3. On the contrary, those who drink the nectar of these stories attain final deliverance. Therefore, listening to the stories of the saints causes rebirths and deaths to cease. 4. One might compare these stories to the river Ganges, but the saving merit of the Ganges cannot be weighed in the same balance as one weighs the meritorious nectar of these stories; for, in order to gain final deliverance through the Ganges one needs to be sawn asunder at the confluence of the three rivers (Ganges, Jumna and Saraswati). 5. Such are not the praises of Hari. Men become pure in heart by merely listening to them. Therefore clever and wise people speak of these stories as nectar. 6. God loving *bhaktas* regard these stories as more brilliant than the sun, and as making men feel a coolness greater than that of the moon, and regard them as purer than space itself.

DNYANESHWAR'S ANCESTRY

7. Now give me your attention. Brahmadev and Shiva suddenly appeared on the Ocean of Milk to see and worship Hari. 8. The Husband of the daughter of the Ocean of Milk (Hari) said to them, 'Let us become *avatars* in the world of mortals, in the form of Nivritti, Sopan and Dnyaneshwar, and manifest such deeds as may please us.

9. We will take birth at the same place, as three brothers. Muktabai, the Primal Maya, will become our sister.'

10. On the bank of the Ganga (Godavari) there is a celebrated sacred place named Apegaon known all over the world. The town clerk was Govindpant. He was a *bhakta* of Vishnu. 11. His wife Nirabai was a supremely pious and dutiful woman. Being with child she greatly desired a son. 12. The personification of indifference to worldly things came into her womb. Nine months as nine-fold devotion were completed, and she gave birth to a son.

DNYANDEV'S FATHER VITHOBA

13. When the mother and father saw the son born to them as the personification of *bhakti*, knowledge and indifference to worldly things, they were full of joy. 14. On the twelfth day they named him Vithoba. When he had fully completed his eighth year, he was invested with the sacred thread. 15. Vithoba studied the *Vedas* and *Shastras* and became proficient in grammar and poetry. He now entertained a wish to visit the sacred places. 16. With repentance in his heart, he asked leave of his mother and father and said to them, 'Give me permission to go to the sacred place of Pushkar (in Rajputana).' 17. Hearing him say this his parents were pleased. Vithoba bowed to them, and at once left. 18. If the heart does not attain indifference to earthly things, the study of the *Shastras* is in vain. If a deaf man should have very large ears, of what use would they be to him? 19. The peacock looks as if it had eyes all over its body, but what use are they if they lack sight? 20. Of what use is the enlarged growth on the neck of a goat? Of what use is a dense forest of *Sauri* trees? Of what use is the sweet singing of those who sing love songs? Of what use is a widow in her youth? 21. All these are like a face without a nose; or an officer without authority; or as a grown up man without manliness is good for nothing.

22. So although the *Shastras* may be profoundly studied, yet without the heart experiencing repentance, of what use are they? It would be like a crane who sits apparently performing some religious act but really to swallow fishes.

VITHOBA'S WANDERINGS

23. So with repentance in his heart, Vitoba started on his wanderings to sacred places. Putting aside love and affection for earthly things, he gave himself up to the worship of Hari. 24. He came first to Dwaravati, and there he bathed in the Gomati river. Seeing there an image of Krishna, he lovingly prostrated himself before it. 25. He then hastened to the place where God became an *avatar* in the form of a fish, who both killed and saved the monster Shankha and is the Home of, Final Deliverance. 26. From there he went to Pindaraka. From there he visited Mangalahuda. He saw the domes of Dwarka, and then proceeded again on his way. 27. After a visit to Sudampuri (now Porebunder) he came to Mulmadhav where King Bhishmak gave Rukmini in marriage to Krishna. 28. He paid his respects to the sacred place Bhaluka, where Shri Krishna ended His avatarship. From there he hastened on to Prabhaslinga. 29. He worshipped at Sorati-Somnath (a sacred place in Kathiawar); then hurried on from there, and saw the kind of a cave in which Muchakund had lived. 30. He saw the place where Kalayavan was burnt to ashes by Muchakund. Then coming to Dhawalpuri he visited that cave which was Muchakund's place of rest. 31. He paid his respects to all the great sacred places along his route described in the *puranas* and known the world over. He then came to Saptashringi. 32. He paid his respects here to Adimaya and bathed in the Arunawaruna. From there he travelled eastward to the Godavari river, the sight of which gave him great joy. 33. He saw Kapileshwar with his own eyes and then arrived

at Trimbak. He bathed in the Kushavart pond and paid his respects to Gangadwar (the source of the Ganga). 34. He circumambulated the Brahmagiri mountain, keeping it to his left, this gave him great joy. He came to Bhimashankar where through his repentance he became pure in heart. 35. Every day as he walked along he sang the praises of Hari with his lips. From there he soon came to Alandi.

VITHOBA MARRIES THE BRAHMAN SIDHOPANT'S DAUGHTER

36. After bathing in the Chakratirth, he sat down to worship God. Just then the Brahman Sidhopant came there to bathe. 37. Seeing a *Brahmachari* before him, Sidhopant prostrated himself on the ground. 'Tell me your name,' he said. 'Where have you come from?' 38. The Brahmachari replied, 'I belong to a family in good circumstances at Apegaon on the banks of the Godavari. So the elders speak of us. 39. My aged mother and father live there. I have been to Dwarka and all other sacred places, and now I have arrived at Alandi.' 40. The Brahman replied, 'Blessed is the day in which you, my *Svami*, have come here. Now come to my house and by your presence make my home holy.' 41. Thus saying, Sidhopant took him at once to his own house. He gave him a meal of delicious food, and made him lie down to sleep. 42. In a dream Shri Pandharinath came to Sidhopant and said, 'Give your daughter, adorned with jewelry, to this Brahmachari.' 43. The moment he heard this in his dream he felt great satisfaction. After finishing his usual bath and devotions, he reported what had been told him in the dream. 44. The Brahmachari replied, 'What you say is absolutely true, but Pandharinath has given to me no command whatever.' 45. Sidhopant replied, 'Then remain here over this day. If what I say is true, you will most certainly have the same dream.' 46. The Brahmachari then arranged his bedding

near the *tulsi* altar, and at once went to sleep. While all sorts of thoughts, wise and foolish, were passing through his mind, he saw the following in a dream. 47. Pandharinath, the Pervader of the universe, was telling the young Brahmachari in a dream, 'Four *avatars* will be born to you by her. 48. So bow your head to My command and accept the gift of his daughter.' The Brahmachari after seeing this in this dream woke up. 49. A Brahman astrologer was consulted, and their horoscopes agreed in thirty-six points. The wedding day was appointed, and all the marriage arrangements were made. 50. The gods were installed; the Brahmans were feasted. Ganesh who removes hindrances was worshipped. Sweet music was played and the auspicious ceremony of *Punyahavachan* (blessing the day) was performed. 51. All kinds of dainty food were cooked and given to the Brahmans. The bridegroom was worshipped by the bride's father at the town line, and Brahmans recited the eight verses of blessing. 52. 'Victory, Victory to Mukund, the Enemy of Mura (Krishna), the Eternal Being, the Enemy of Madhu, and Kaitabha, the Ornament of His *bhaktas*. In every way protect the bride and bridegroom. 53. Victory, Victory to Thee, Slayer of the Demon Shankha. Victory, Victory to Thee, Who took the form of a tortoise, churner of the ocean, who took the form of a wild boar, Slayer of Hiranyaksha, protect this bride and bridegroom. 54. Victory, Victory to Thee, half-man half-lion, Protector of Pralhad. Victory to Thee, in the form of Vaman, the Troubler of Bali. Victory to Thee, Holder of the axe, Slayer of the thousand-armed One, protect this bride and bridegroom. 55. Victory to Thee, son of Dasharath and Slayer of demons. Victory to Thee who played His pranks at Gokul, Son of Nand. Victory to Thee, in the form of Buddha, O Janardan, protect this bride and bridegroom! 56. Victory to Thee, in the form of Kalki *avatar*, Slayer of despised foreigners, Found-

er of religion, Life of the world. Victory to Thee, Giver of blessing to Pundalik, Husband of Rukmini, protect this bride and bridegroom.'

57. After reciting these verses of blessing, the Brahmans repeated the word '*Savadhan*' (Beware!) Many musical instruments were now played, and the ceremony of taking one another by the hand (marriage) was completed.

VITHOBA AND SIDHOPANT GO TO PANDHARPUR

58. After the four days of the marriage festival, they made their bow to Sidhopant and said, 'We must go to Pandhari in the month of *Ashadh* (July) to see and worship Shri Panduraag.' 59. Then Sidhopant with his family took him (Vithoba) and his wife on a pilgrimage to Pandhari. He bathed in the Chandrabhaga, and worshipped Shri Pundalik.

60. If Pandhari is compared to other sacred places, any such comparison seems deficient. No one sees a planet in the sky as brilliant as the moon. 61. What metal is superior to gold? Whose praise is greater than that given to Vishnu? One may search as one will, and not find a diamond as brilliant as the Kaustubh. 62. What bull is superior to the *nandi* of Shiva? What performer of austerities equals Shiva? What *Shashtra* is superior to the *Bhagavadgita*? One might hunt through the three worlds and not find its equal. 63. One has never seen or known a *mantra* superior to that of the names 'Ram, Krishna.' There is no other religious teaching superior to that taught by the *Bhagavat*. 64. So there is no other sacred city to be seen by one's lotus eyes in all this round earth like that of Pandhari. The moment it is seen it burns up mountains of sins. 65. You may say, 'How can Pandhari be superior to *Saptapuri* (the seven great sacred cities, Ayodhya,

Mathura, Maya, Benares, Kanchi, Avantika, Dwarka), the givers of final deliverance from rebirths.' There takes place the destruction of pride, and egoism does not remain. 66. Moreover, by bathing at other sacred places one's pride especially grows, but Pandhari, if seen even from the distance, moves evil men to repentance.

67. Well, this praise of Pandhari's greatness must suffice, for to say more would greatly increase the length of our story. Sidhopant with his son-in-law remained in the sacred city of Pandhari. 68. They played on the cymbals and *vina* and drum, and as *Vaishnavas* danced and sang with love, even the Lord of the heaven Kailas (Shiva) seeing that interesting sight, nodded His head in joy and love. 69. After the party had circumambulated the city, they came to the great door of the temple. By the eagle platform Vitthal bowed prostrate on the ground before God. 70. Sidhopant took both his daughter and son-in-law by the hand and placed them at the feet (of Vithoba). 71. After embracing the god, they tightly held His feet. When the great festival was over Sidhopant 72. taking his daughter, his wife and all his attendants returned to Alandi.

VITHOBA VISITS RAMESHWAR

Vithoba now said to Sidhopant, 'I wish to go to Rameshwar, but will return quickly.' 73. Recognizing his motive, Sidhopant gave him permission, saying, 'Quickly perform that pilgrimage and come back to my home.' 74. He made his bow first to Pandurang, and then quickly started, visiting one after another the chief places described in the *Puranas*. 75. He saw Mount Shaila, Mallikarjuna, and Nivritte Sangam; their power is unfathomable. The moment they are seen a heap of sins turns to ashes. 76. As Vitthal hurriedly walked along the path, he kept thinking in his mind of the image of Vitthal and with his lips he sang the praises of God's name with love. 77. After

seeing Ahobal, Narsinha, Vasudev and Lord Vyankat in Mount Giri and Mount Arun, he worshipped Chidambar. 78. After visiting those places he saw Gokarna. He bathed at Hatakeswar, and then hurried from there. 79. He saw with his own eyes the mountain from which Hanumant flew in search of Sita. From there he hurried forward. 80. After seeing Janardan he arrived at Rameshwar. He there accomplished his purpose and then started to return. 81. He came to Kolhapur and there bathed on the Panchaganga. He saw and worshipped Lakshmi. Then he started on his way from there. 82. He came into the valley of the Krishna river, and there bathed at Mahuli Sangam. Continuing from there he returned to Alandi. 83. With supreme love he embraced Sidhopant, bowing before him prostrate on the ground and at his feet.

VITHOBA RETURNS TO HIS PARENTS

84. After remaining there four nights, he said to Sidhopant, 'I feel I ought to go and see my mother and father. 85. If you will give me permission I will go at once.' Sidhopant assented and said to him, 86. 'Go with your wife and visit your parents. I will also accompany you in order to meet them.' 87. Sidhopant then took with him his daughter and son-in-law, and went to Apegaon, and there he met Govindpant. 88. Vitthal bowed to his mother and father and embraced them, and Sidhopant told them in detail the story of their son. 89. When Nirabai heard his explanation she was very glad. Just as the daughter of Janak rejoiced when Ram, after his marriage, came to Ayodhya; 90. and seeing Shri Ram and Sita before her, his mother Kausalya could not contain her joy; so, Vithoba's mother, seeing her son and daughter-in-law, was extremely happy. 91. It was just as Kunti was full of joy when Arjun, the brother of Bhima, won the bet and brought Draupadi. Such was the case now. 92. In order to honour

the parents, Sidhopant gave them garments and ornaments. Then after obtaining leave from them, he returned to Alandi.

VITHOBA GOES TO ALANDI WITH SIDHOPANT

93. Now it happened on a certain day that both father and mother left their bodies and went to the heaven Vaikunth. 94. Vithoba never entertained disgust for the concern which his domestic duties gave him; just as when the three seasons come, they are accepted by every one; 95. or as when the rivers are in flood they do not increase the water in the ocean; or as when in the hot season water evaporates, one does not notice the lack of it; 96. so Vithoba considered both joy and sorrow as alike. Sidhopant then learned of this state of Vithoba's mind. 97. Feeling that his son-in-law would be experiencing sorrow, he felt he should visit him and comfort him. So then he returned to Apegaon. 98. He said to his son-in-law, 'You are one indifferent to earthly things, and yet all kinds of things are needed in one's domestic life for the daily and occasional necessities. 99. Therefore do me the favour of coming with me now to Alandi. It is Hari who cares for you, but your conduct is contrary to popular custom.' 100. Vithoba assented and Sidhopant took with him his daughter and son-in-law and very quickly returned to Alandi. 101. Residing in this sacred city was a great comfort to Vithoba's mind. He daily performed praise-services in praise of Hari, and continually met *sadhus*.

VITHOBA BECOMES A SANNYASI

102. On the eleventh day of the month Ashadh (July) and Kartik (November) he was accustomed to go on a pilgrimage to Pandhari. Many days passed but they saw no signs of a child being born to them. 103. Vithoba now said to his wife, ' My mind has become dejected. I want to go to Benares in order to join the order of the *sannyasis*.

104. This is the way my mind feels, and I ask your permission to go.' Rakhumabai gave him no reply, because her mind was so troubled. 105. She hurried to her father and told him the whole affair. She said, 'The lord of my life asks my permission to join the order of *sannyasis*. 106. Sidhopant said in reply to her complaint, 'So long as a man has no child, he should never enter the order of *sannyasis*, such is the command of the *Vedas*. 107. Beware, lest you give him permission.' Having received this reply from her father, Rakhumabai was always careful to watch what she said.

108 It so happened on a certain day that Vithoba said to his wife, 'Give me your permission to go and bathe in the Ganga.' 109. Very carelessly she assented. He was satisfied with her reply, and went to Anadavan (Benares). 110. Just as when a cobra escapes from the juggler and crawls into an ant-hole in the forest; or as when a parrot escapes from its cage and goes and sits on the tree; 111. or as when a *sadhu* finds comfort in leaving an assembly of crooked men; or as when a dutiful wife runs away privately from a company of prostitutes; 112. or as a deer runs away from the clutches of a tiger; or as when a saint leaves a town of revilers and goes to a great sacred city; 113. or as the *muni* Shuka ran far away from Rambha; or as the ocean came out of the womb through the action of the *rishi* Agasti; 114. so with that same satisfaction in his heart Vithoba came to Benares. He bathed at the junction of the Triveni, and there experienced repentance of heart. 115. After worshipping (Bindu) Madhav (Krishna), he went to Prayag in the month of Magh (February) to bathe. From there he returned and came to Pushkar (a sacred place in Rajputana). 116. At this place there lived an innumerable number of saints, *sadhus* and *Vaishnavas*. Here while

listening to the explanations of the *Bhagvadgita*, he heard of the principles of the order of *sannyasis*. 117. He said to himself, 'It is difficult to endure the difficulties created by *Maya*. I must take thought how to escape the ever-returning births and deaths. 118. He therefore went as a suppliant to a *sannyasi* named Shri Ramashram. Vithoba embraced his feet and said, 'Initiate me into the order of the *sannyasis*.' 119. The *sannyasi* asked him in reference to what previous order he belonged, and whether he had a wife, a son, brothers and other relatives? 120. He replied, 'I am all alone. I have no share of wife or children. Therefore, as soon as I have experienced repentance I have come with reverence as a suppliant to you, my *swami*.' 121. Seeing that this saint seemed one free from all wordly passions, the *sidguru* said, 'I agree.' So he gave him the *mantra* that initiated him, and he entered into the order of the *sannyasis*.

122. After Vitthal had thus entered the fourth stage at Benares, Sidhopant indirectly heard this news regarding him. 123. Hearing that her husband had become a *sannyasi*, Rakhumabai became deeply concerned in her mind. Said she, 'O lord of my life, why have you cast me away in the wilderness of this world?' 124. Just as the good Draupadi felt at separation from the Pandavas, or as Damayanti wept when separated from Nal, or as Taramati was scorched by the fire of sorrow when she found herself without Harischandra, 125. or as when death approached Satyavan, Savitri sought to commit suicide, or as when hearing of the death of Jayadev, Padmavati fell in a faint, 126. so the faithful wife of Vithoba cried aloud when she heard the news of his becoming a *sannyasi*. But being comforted by her mother and father, she restrained her mind with courage. 127. After completing her domestic duties it was her custom to

worship the pimpal-tree. By her very many austerities all her faults were destroyed.

VITHOBA'S DISLOYALTY TO HIS WIFE FOUND OUT

128. Shripad, the head of the *sannyasis*, who had admitted her husband to that order, happened to come to Alandi. Rakhumabai seeing him there approached him to make him a *namaskar*. 129. Shripad had seated himself at the time on the stone platform surrounding the pimpal-tree. Rakhumabai made a *namaskar* very reverently. 130. Very graciously he gave her a blessing: 'Be the mother of eight sons, and one possessing a husband.' Hearing him say this she was exceedingly astonished. 131. As Rakhumabai smiled to herself, Shripad questioned her. He said, 'Mother, why do you regard what I said as a matter to laugh at?' 132. She replied, 'Because you gave me the blessing that I should always have a husband, and be the mother of sons. But oh chief of the *sannyasis*, how can this result without my husband? 133. My husband has left me, and with repentance has entered the order of the *sannyasis*. Therefore, when you gave me your blessing, I thought it a very strange thing. 134. To sow seed in a fireplace, or for a cloud to rain down upon a rock, such is your blessing given to me, without asking me any questions. 135. It is like showing a mirror to a blind man, or singing before a deaf man, or giving dainty food to a sick man, without giving the deed a thought. 136. Just as it is useless to blow the fire when there are no live coals, or bringing a lamp without oil in it; or as it is in vain that a beggar pleads with a miser; 137. or as it is useless to sow the seeds in the ground when the clouds have poured down no rain; or of what use is it for a physician to give the royal medicine to a man destined not to live? 138. When the moon is in its dark half, why should an astrologer allow the bride to

marry? Or after the sun has set, of what use are the gifts given in worship? 139. So you did not bring the facts (of my case) to your mind, and yet gave me your blessing. A promise that *you* utter cannot prove untrue, however, and that is why it amused me.' 140. While Rakhumabai spoke Shripad felt great surprise. He thought to himself, 'It will be necessary to prescribe a penance to the one who admitted Vithoba to the order of the *sannyasis*. 141. If a disciple abandons his young wife when as yet she had no offspring, and enters the order of the *sannyasis*, then for both disciple and *guru* the *Shastras* have prescribed a penalty. 142. When one speaks in a mine, the echo comes back to him; so although I asked him his condition, yet my mistake has come back to me. 143. It is like the moon laughing at the stars, when it itself has spots; or as if the ocean should blame the Ganges, when itself is salty; 144. or as when a man finds fault with dainty food when his mouth tastes bitter; or as when a person blind from his birth should blame the sun; 145. or as when a person without a straight nose should get angry with his mirror; or as when a lamp has darkness underneath it, but shows light to others; 146. so I have done what is wrong and needlessly blame others. I feel that the injury I have caused her will destroy my good deeds.' 147. So he asked Rakhumabai, 'Who are your relatives here?' She stood before him with hands joined palm to palm, and replied in a humble tone of voice: 148. 'I have a mother, father, brothers and sisters, but because of my separation from my husband I seem like one without a protector.' 149. Shripad then commanded her to invite her father and bring him there. She hastened to her home and brought Sidhohant. 150. When he saw this chief of *yogis* he made him a prostrate obeisance. He worshipped him by the use of flowers and perfumes and washing his feet, and ended by giving him to eat. 151. He stood before him with hands

joined and asked, 'Where have you come from, my *swami*? And where are you going to from here? Kindly tell me.' 152. Shripad replied, 'My home is at Benares. With intention of going to Rameshwar I have reached this southern country. 153. Your daughter has told me all about herself. I must therefore now hasten back to Benares.' 154. Shripad further added, 'According to scripture authority my good deeds will go for nothing, because of the fault committed against her. 155. Bring Rakhumabai with you, and let us go to Benares.' When he said this, Sidhopant fell at his feet, and said, 156. 'You are merciful. Let us hasten to go.' He took his daughter with him and started. 157. Arriving at Benares, Shripad went to his hermitage. He called Chaitanya [as Vithoba was now called in the order] before him, and asked him again about his former condition of life. 158. 'Tell me now. Did you have a wife or did you not in your home when you were a householder? You told me an untruth. Now keep nothing whatever back. 159. Tell me the whole truth.' And with that, he placed his assuring hand upon him. Hearing the *sadguru* say this, Chaitanya (Vithoba) replied in the same way as does 160. a child when it has committed a fault and its mother speaks to it with anger; it timidly confesses to its mother; so Vithoba confessed to his *guru*. 161. When a subject has done what is wrong and the king has punished him, he very timidly tells him what had happened, just so it was with this *sannyasi* Chaitanya (Vithoba); 162. or as when a sick man eats some indigestible food and the physician in anger asks him about it, the sick man tells the truth from fear of further sickness; 163. or as when the youngest of the daughters-in-law in the performance of her domestic work fails in some matter that has been told her, and she confesses timidly when the mother-in-law becomes aware of it; 164. so Vithoba replied very timid-

ly to his *sadguru*, feeling in his heart great fear lest this chief of the *yogis* should curse him. 165. He said: 'I did truly abandon my young wife while yet without offspring.'

VITHOBA AS HOUSEHOLDER AGAIN

Shripad hearing him say this, called Rakhumbai. 166. He now said to Chaitanya (Vithoba), 'Take back your wife, return at once to your own country, and live according to the rules that apply to you. 167. If you hold the fear of doing what is forbidden and have no doubts in your mind, then my command to you is your authority to obey, and God will be your Helper.' 168. Having received this blessing, Chaitanya (Vithoba) worshipped his feet. He took his wife by the hand and started for his own country; 169. just as the Vindhya mountain range accepted Agasti's command, and fell down upon the earth; so accepting his *sadguru's* wish, Chaitanya (Vithoba) hastened on his way.

170. Thus Sidhopant arrived at home bringing with him his daughter and son-in-law. When the people heard the news, all the evil-minded began to laugh at them. 171. They said, 'How is it that after entering the *sannyasi* order he has now become a householder?' One said, 'He has done what is improper, because he is a man of faulty life.' 172. Another one remarked, 'He must be sensually inclined.' A third remarked, 'He is a miser and a vile hateful fellow.' Still another remarked, 'We should never even look into his face. 173. As one who first drinks nectar and then takes intoxicating drinks, abandoning his connection with the *sannyasis*, he has become absorbed in earthly things. 174. It is like one who at first carefully studies the *Vedas*, and then takes in his hand some obscene book. So, determined to cast aside indifference to earthly things, he has returned to the sorrows of the domestic life. 175. He has left off the worship of Vishnu and has brought

upon himself the favour of devils; or as if one should leave his residence in a sacred city, and come and live in some miserable village; 176. or as if one should give up association with Brahmans and set his affection upon the unnamables (untouchables), so he has abandoned the gain from indifference to worldly things and fallen into the maze of domestic life.' 177. So everyone now began to revile him, but Vithoba had peace of mind; just as when a cloud rains upon a mountain it is never washed away; 178. just as an eagle will never fly away out of fear of a serpent; or as an elephant is never frightened by the barking of a dog; 179. when the sea roared, Agasti was not frightened; and when the sun sees a firefly with its eye it is not troubled; 180. so when the waves of trouble came upon Vithoba he drank deeply of peace; he stopped the entrance of desire and anger; his action was unusual and beyond comparison. 181. The Brahmans turned him out of caste. His relatives abandoned him. He built a hut in the forest and there lived with his wife. 182. In order to provide for his wife he obtained food by begging. Day and night, never ceasing for a moment, he repeated the names of God. 183. He spent his time in listening to and contemplating the *Bhagavadgita* and *Bhagwat*, with a mind continually at peace.

THE BIRTH OF DNYANDEV

In this way twelve years passed and then children were born to them, 184. three sons and one daughter; these were their children. And by merely listening to their names dullards and fools are purified. 185. The first one born was an *avatar* of (Shiva) the Husband of Mridani (Parvati); they gave him the name of Nivriddhi. The *avatar* of Vishnu came to birth in this world and was given the name of Dnyandev. 186. Sopan was the *avatar* of Brahmadev. Adimaya (the primal force of the universe)

took the form of Muktabai. In their births Rakhumabai took great comfort.

MAHIPATI AS GOD'S DRUM

187. And now, fortunate hearers, listen with reverence to the next chapter with its delightful story. Just as the *chakor* bird, drinking the nectar of the moon, looks at it with close attention; 188. or just as a deer enraptured over music forgets itself, so do you hearers listen with reverence. 189. Or as the *chatak* bird, when thirsty, longs for the rain from a cloud, so with fondness listen to the story with its nine sentiments [love, heroism, compassion, surprise, mirth, wrath, fear, disgust, peace]. 190. The stories of these *bhaktas* have a depth of meaning indescribable by words. It is the Husband of Rukmini who is really relating it. Just as the sound proceeds from a drum, but it will not sound unless one plays upon it. 191. so my mouth has as it were a skin stretched over it, and it is God who makes me compose this book. Mahipati is a mere instrument in God's hand, as all wise saints know.

192. *Suasti* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it, the Lord of the earth will be pleased. Listen therefore, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the eighth very delightful chapter.

CHAPTER IX

LIFE OF DNYANDEV (Continued)

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to the Husband of Rukmini

BENEFITS FROM THE STORIES OF THE SAINTS

1. Blessed is this day on which the stories of the saints are related. Those who listen to them are fortunate possessors of love and *bhakti*. 2. Listen now to the words in which the story of the saints is related. As it enters into the heart through the door of the ear, peace and forgiveness move in them as they become indifferent to earthly things. 3. As one listens to the story through the ear, compassion for every creature arises in the heart. Through the eye of knowledge wrong thinking at once flees away. 4. He who makes a collection of such books at his home, hindrances in his life flee far away. Shri Hari with a disk in His hand protects him in every way. 5. Those who continually sing the stories of God's *bhaktas*, the Husband of Rukmini will meet with them and the longings of these hearers will at once be fulfilled.

BRAHMANS REFUSE TO INVEST VITHOBA'S CHILDREN WITH THE SACRED THREAD

6. In the previous chapter, attentive hearers learned the fact that Nivritti, Dnyandev, Sopan descended as *avatars*, and Muktabai as the primal force (of the universe). 7. But everyone reviled them, saying, ' One should not even look into their faces. Those children have been born among the low caste and brought a stain on their Brahmanhood.' 8. Day by day they grew and appeared as youths. As their mother and father became concerned regarding them, 9. the wife said to her husband, ' I have great concern in my mind. We must ask permission

of the Brahmans, and invest our sons with the sacred thread.' 10. On a certain day therefore, Chaitanya (Vithoba) gathered together an assembly of Brahmans and joining his hands he pleaded with them: 'Swamis, forgive me my transgression Listen to the pleading of a humble person. 11. Consult the *Shastras* that contain the religious principles and prescribe a penance for us.' Saying this, Vithoba prostrated himself on the ground before the Brahmans. 12. The eldest son, Nivritti, then said to them, 'Merely by seeing you, we have become free. Prescribe at once penance for us six persons.' 13. The *pandits* skilled in the *Shastras*, and the highest rank of the Brahmans, consulted the books and replied. 'There is no other penance for you except death.' 14. The Brahmans said, 'Put yourselves under a saw, or burn yourselves to death with repentance. 15. Aside from these penances there are no other prescribed for you.' Hearing this reply of the Brahmans, Vithoba's mind was filled with repentance. 16. He made a *namaskar* to the Brahmans and quickly started away leaving his wife, his sons, his daughter and his home. 17. He did not even glance backward, much to the astonishment of the Brahmans, and they remarked, 'He has burnt up all his sins by bathing in the sacred waters of repentance. 18. The *Shastras* speak of no penance superior to that of repentance. Through the favour of his *sadguru* he has become pure.' 19. Nivritti then said to the Brahmans, 'Tell us what we are to do, what penalty do the *Shastras* prescribe for us?' 20. Hearing his question the Brahmans said to him, 'Go now to Pratishtan (Paithan) and bring from there a letter declaring you to be pure.' 21. Nivritti said to the Brahmans, 'What shall we go and tell them? We have no authority to tell them regarding our caste or family. 22. We are neither Vaishyas, Kshatriyas, nor Brahmans. We are of the imperishable, the ancient of days, the

eternal, the self-knowing perfect one. 23. We are neither water, light, the heavens, the earth, the wind, nor the original elements. Nor can we be said to possess the divine form of the universe. 24. We are not god-attendants of Shiva, nor are we celestial beings such as *Yakshas* and *Kinnars*. We are neither *rishis* nor demons. We do not possess attributes, nor are we unchangeable. We should not be called formless.' 25. Nivriddhi said to Dnyaneshwar, 'Such being our ancestry, if we do go to Paithan, what are we to tell the Brahmans there?' 26. Dnyandev replied, 'The man who acts contrary to scripture commands is worthy of blame, such is the teaching of the *Shastras*. 27. Although the man who has knowledge becomes a *jivanmukta* (free while living), he should not leave the rules that are prescribed for him. Moreover, those who are *sadhus* should show others the right way by themselves walking in it. 28. To act contrary to what is prescribed in the scriptures should be recognized as the supreme fault. Whatever one's special duties are, they should be performed. So have spoken the Brahmans learned in the *Vedas*.' 29. Dnyandev then said, 'Nivriddhi, this is what the *Shastras* have to say regarding one's duties. I have therefore replied to you because of our close friendship.' 30. Sopan then spoke, Of what value is caste or family? Without *bhakti* the feet of Shri Hari can never be attained. 31. Durvas, the *muni* Vasishtha, Gautama, Vyas, Valmiki, and the great Agasti and the Pandavas, in what scripture are the families of all these declared noble? 32. Although one may be born in the noblest families, and although he may have studied profoundly the *Vedas*, still, unless he has *bhakti*, all this is in vain. The *Shastras* do not praise such. 33. If one places one's *bhakti* on God, of what necessity is there of being of high caste?' Such were the words that Sopan addressed to Dnyandev. 34. After this discussion among themselves, they gave an answer to the Brahmans.

DNYANDEV AMONG PAITHAN BRAHMANS

After making them a *namaskar* they at once started on their way to Paithan. 35. After reaching the banks of the Godavari they performed all the duties devolving upon the pilgrims to sacred waters, and then entering into Brahmapuri, they made their bow to the twice-born (the Brahmans). 36. They collected an assembly of Brahmans and told them plainly just what had happened. The Brahmans of the highest rank after listening to them said, 'It is evident that you have fallen from your high state.' 37. When they read the letter (from the Brahmans at Alandi), the whole affair became known, and they remarked, 'These are the children of a *sannyasi*. There is no penance that can avail them. 38. If a *Shudra* is bathed in the Ganges, will he thereby become a pure Brahman? If a touchstone is applied to a piece of pottery, it will never turn to gold. 39. If one should give water to seed that has been baked, it will never sprout. If one gives medicine to one whose life is about to end why look for his recovery? 40. So these can never be made pure by sacred waters or religious observances or by any number of penalties.' Such was the decision of the whole assembly of Brahmans. 41. They said, 'According to the opinion of the *Shastras* there is only one remedy. If they do that, what necessity is there of penance? 42. They should go as suppliants to Shri Hari (God) and worship every existing thing. Donkeys, dogs, elephants and the like should be worshipped as if they were the same. 43. They should bow with the same reverence to a hog and an out-caste with the thought that God is in them all; they should bow to them in love'. 44. After listening to this reply, Nivritti was highly pleased. Dnyandev and Sopan also felt supreme joy. 45. They remarked, 'This rule of religion and morals is just as it was in our hearts.'

Muktabai also accepted the decision with pleasure. 46. Listening to their (strange) names, the Brahmans manifested great surprise and said, 'Why should we call you Dnyandev? 47. How can we call you Dnyandev? Have you lovingly studied the *Vedas* or become acquainted with the *Puranas*? 48. If one has no efficiency, of what good is it to speak of one's self as a great person? If a cow has no milk in her udder, of what value are her long horns? 49. A great eye without sight, or the assuming of responsibilities without being respected, or a man without manliness, what use is there for such to exist? 50. Divine knowledge without compassion for creatures, singing without enthusiasm, food cooked without salt, never produces a good taste. 51. If one has no courage, why go on to the battlefield? If one has not lost desires, why should he be called indifferent to earthly things?'

DNYANDEV MAKES A BUFFALO REPEAT THE VEDAS

52. While they were thus speaking and saying among themselves, 'What is in a name?' one of the Brahmans remarked, 'A young male buffalo with a leather water-skin on his back is coming towards us. 53. His name also is Dnyan.' Listening to this remark of the Brahman, Dnyandev joined his hands palm to palm, and said, 'Listen to my words. 54. I cannot see the least difference between this male buffalo and myself. The *atma* (soul) that pervades every body is alike in every creature. 55. If an infinite number of jars are filled with water, the sun would be reflected in all of them. So the All-pervading, the Holder of the disk (Krishna) is alike in every creature. 56. There might be eighteen kinds of vegetables, but the water that feeds their roots is the same for each. Just so the Lord of Rama (Krishna) is alike in every existing thing. 57. The gold is the same in all ornaments, but the ornaments are seen to be different

So God pervades all existing things alike. 58. One thread is used in the weaving, but the cloth woven appears in different forms. So the Holder of the disk (Krishna) pervades all existing things alike.' 59. A Brahman hearing him say this remarked, ' You are needlessly talking too much.' Then taking a whip in his hand, he angrily struck the buffalo. 60. That made Dnyaneshwar violently tremble, and the welt appeared on his own back. When the twice-born (Brahmans) saw this, they exclaimed, 61. ' If there is no difference between you and the buffalo, then let it recite the *Vedas*.' Hearing these words of the twice-born (Brahmans), the *bhaktas* who knew no differences did as follows. 62. He went up to the buffalo, and placed his hand upon its head, saying, ' Recite at once the *Rigveda*, and satisfy these earth-gods (Brahmans). 63. As soon as he said this a most extraordinary thing happened. The young buffalo recited the *Vedas* with proper intonation. 64. The buffalo then recited all four of the *Vedas* and gave pleasure to the Brahmans. They exclaimed, ' No one has ever seen so wonderful a thing in this world of mortals. 65. When a sick man drinks nectar, his disease immediately disappears. If the poor man has the favour of a wish-cow, he is no longer despondent. 66. If the sun shows favour to the blind man, what will he not be able to see? Or if Sarasvati (goddess of speech) kindly gives her blessing to a dumb man, will he not speak? 67. If Ganpati shows His favour, the *fourteen sciences will become as plain as the lines on one's palm. By association with the Husband of Mridani (Shiva), *yoga* in its eight forms can be acquired. 68. So by the hand of the Giver of blessing, Dnyandev made the buffalo recite the *Vedas*.' All the Brahmans were full of astonish-

* The four *Vedas*, the six *angus* (grammar, prosody, astronomy, pronunciation, interpretations of unusual terms, the Hindu ritual), the eighteen *Puranus*, *mimansa* or theology, *nyaya* or logic, and *dharma* or law.

ment, and they felt repentance in their hearts. 69. They remarked, 'We have studied the *Vedanta* and all those parts called *Upanishads*, but God has never given to us such great power. 70. What has never been heard of before, our eyes have seen today in our very presence. What Brahmadev could not perform, that seemingly impossible thing in this universe has taken place. 71. These three are evidently the *avatars* of the three gods, and Muktabai is the *avatar* of *Adimaya* (primal force of the universe). No penance is of value to them. Just as the river Ganges cannot be defiled (so they cannot be defiled). 72. We preach to others freely, but we do not act according to it. Wishing for wealth and honour among men, we have spent our life in vain. 73. We have not seen in this world such noble Brahmans as these.' This is what all the twice-born (Brahmans) said, adding, 74. 'Blessed are their mother and father. Both of them must have performed good deeds in their former births.' With these expressions of astonishment the Brahmans remained silent. 75. But Dnyandev said to them, 'O *Swamis*, what I have done is through your power, I am truly an ignorant person. It is your feet that manifest this power.' 76. All the people of Paithan were moved with much love and reverence. They exclaimed, 'Blessed are these *bhaktas* of Vishnu, who in this earthly existence are entirely indifferent to earthly things.' 77. They now began daily to bathe in the Godavari, to listen to the explanations of the *Vedanta*, and the stories in the *Puranas*. At night time there were *kirtans* in praise of Hari, and every one came to listen. 78. Seeing the extraordinary miracle they had performed every one showed them respect. After many days passed in this way another most extraordinary thing happened.

ANCESTORS COME TO THE FEAST AT WHICH
THEY ARE WORSHIPPED

79. On a certain day, the owner of the house where,

Nivriddi, Dnyandev and Muktabai were staying began the ceremony of worshipping his ancestors. 80. When he went to invite the twice-born (Brahmins) to be present, they said to him, ' You have kept in your house the children of a *sannyasi*. 81. Therefore we cannot come to your house to eat.' Hearing their words the man was deeply concerned. 82. He hurried back to his home and sat down depressed in mind. Dnyandev asked him what had happened. 83. ' Why are you so troubled today and sitting so silent ?' Hearing this question, 84. the Brahmin replied, ' Today is the holy ceremony in honour of ancestors, but the Brahmins will not come to the feast. Therefore my mind has become sad and I am sitting here silent.' 85. Dnyandev then said to the Brahmin, ' Do not be troubled in your mind. The ancestors will come to the feast in visible form. 86. Calm your mind, and do the necessary cooking in your house.' Hearing this prediction the man was astonished 87. After finishing his bath and devotions and thus purifying himself he prepared and served many kinds of dainty food on leaf plates. 88. Dnyandev sprinkled the rice and brought down the ancestors in visible form. He worshipped their feet and gave them seats in the chief place. 89. He gave them garments, ornaments, adornments, *tulasi* leaves, garlands of flowers, the twelve forehead-marks, the beautiful sacred thread, and gifts of gold. 90. In this way having worshipped them he offered to them an abundance of incense and lights. The twice-born (Brahmins) thought this very strange and in their minds they expressed their astonishment. 91. When Dnyandev made the offering to God in the form of the ancestors in visible form these ancestors very graciously began to eat the food. 92. He served to them whatever pleased their taste until all of them were satisfied. He gave them water to wash their hands, then offered them the *pan-supari*, and gifts of money.

93. When it was said to them, 'Return to your abodes, these ancestors became invisible, and all the Brahmans of Paithan discussed the matter among themselves. 94. They said, 'Dnyandev has done a wonderful thing. He has feasted the ancestors in their actual visible form. We have never seen nor heard so great a miracle in this world of mortals. 95. Through our obstinate pride we rejected the invitation to the feast. So the ancestors came in person and took away the gifts. 96. Just as Shiva devoured the offering, and the guardian of the idol remained silent, so it seems it has happened to us. 97. It is as if the sun came in person and took away the image of the sun, and the astrologer whose mind was full of expectations remained chewing his cud. 98. The guardian of the scared city has taken away the victim that was placed near the altar of sacrifice. The keeper of the treasures strongly objected, but his opposition was of no avail. 99. Just as when Indra and those with Him came in person and took away the materials offered in sacrifice, the fire itself remained silent, so it has happened to us. 100. Just as when ghosts come in visible form and take away what has been offered to them, and the sorcerer, thinking what is done as of no value, remains hungry; 101. so these ancestors have taken away the gifts of gold and the dainty food. Because we were filled with pride, we have lost everything. 102. Blessed are these: Nivritti, Dnyaneshwar, and Sopan, noble *Vaishnavas*, and Muktabai who is the visible *avatar* of *Adimaya* (the primal force). 103. A penance cannot be of any value to these three divine beings. They are world *gurus*, uninfluenced by their bodies, and *jivanmuktas* (free while living).'

104. They therefore wrote a letter to that effect and gave it into the hand of Sopan. 'The young male buffalo has recited the *Vedas*, and in the same way it is still reciting them.'

105. When a touchstone touches iron, it always turns it to gold, so this buffalo was day and night long reciting the philosophic teachings of the *Vedanta*. 106. Hari gave to Dhruva an immovable place. His seat will never be removed. In that same way Dnyandev gave to this buffalo the everlasting knowledge. 107. Upamanyu was seated by the ocean of milk and continued without ceasing to drink the milk. Just so Dnyandev made the buffalo recite the *Vedas* without ceasing. 108. Just as *Yogis* sit on seats of spikes and yet feel unceasing joy, so this buffalo is absorbed in the knowledge of the *Vedanta*.

DNYANESHWAR WRITES HIS 'DNYANESHWARI' AND
'AMRITANUBHAV'

109. Dnyaneshwar realized the truth of the above, and discussed the matter with Nivriddhi. He said, 'Through this continually recited knowledge of the buffalo, the Way of Works will be destroyed. 110. The deep inner meaning of the *Vedas* is a secret. If it is plainly divulged to people, it will drive away the misunderstandings of those devoted to the Way of Works. There will then be nothing left of sacrifices.' 111. After explaining this to Nivriddhi, he made a *namaskar* to the Brahmans, and having asked their permission to take away the buffalo, they obtained leave from the Brahmans and started on their way. 112. As they left the town the Brahmans walked with them to see them off. Tears filled their eyes, and they lovingly embraced them. 113. With hearts stirred with emotion they conversed with one another. The Brahmans remarked, 'The time has been well spent in our association with Dnyaneshwar'. 114. The men and the women of the town accompanied them for one mile. And then Dnyaneshwar pleaded with them to return to their homes. 115. They then made a *namaskar* and returned, while Nivriddhi, Sopan and Dnyaneshwar, with their sister Muktabai, 116. walked along the road full of joy. With love they sang

the praises of Hari (God) and composed wise verses containing the nine emotions. 117. When they arrived at the sacred town of Mahalaya (modern Nevasa), they remained there. They bathed in the sacred waters of the Pravara river, and there met with the Lord of Mohani. 118. There Dnyaneshwar composed his Marathi commentary on the *Bhagavadgita*, and showed an easy way for the dull-minded, the fools and all ignorant persons. 119. To begin with, it is like the brilliant gold on which is the setting for diamonds; it is like dainty food prepared from grain in order to give to the tongue the pleasant taste; 120. or like a golden ornament that adorns a beautiful body; or like the scattering of very small seeds, that finally show their beauty in flowers and fruit; 121. or like the power of the wish-tree which is made to appear beautiful through the imagination; or like the full moon raining down nectar for the *chakor* bird. 122. Dnyandev composed this Marathi book to make plain the deep meaning of the *Bhagavadgita*, in order that the wise, God-loving, pious men might have true knowledge. 123. Nivrutti, who was Dnyandev's *sadguru*, said lovingly to him, 'From your own thoughts on the subject, compose the *Amritanubhav*.' 124. Replying that he would do so, he placed his head at his *sadguru's* feet. Then giving thought to his own spiritual experiences, he composed the *Amritanubhav*. 125. In order to destroy the pride of Brahmadev, Krishna created cows and calves, and Dnyandev composed the *Amritanubhav* to answer the proud heretics who talked in vain out of their own imaginations.

126. After having lovingly made a *namaskar* to the primal-power, Mhalasa, the party hastened from there to come back to their own part of the country. 127. As the four walked along the path, they lovingly repeated the names of God. At night they lodged in some town and performed a *kirtan* in honour of Hari. 128. Having left

all thoughts of love and affection, of honour and dishonour, and all pride of body, they looked upon every creature, from Brahmadev to insects, as the same. 129. One day while walking along the path, they encamped in the forest belonging to Alandi. Here the animal that recited the *Vedas* died. 130. Having placed it in a tomb, they caused it to reach the state of final deliverance. Saints are always merciful mines of compassion and givers of assurance. 131. After worshipping the tomb, they smeared it with *shendur*. That place is still called Mhasoba.

132. From there they hastened to return to the town of Alandi. Muktabai said to Nivritti, 'We must see the place where we were born' 133. When all arrived at Alandi, all people there felt very happy. With feelings of love they worshipped their feet and embraced them. 134. The people had already heard what had happened at Paithan. In addition Sopan showed to the Brahmans the letter he had brought with him. Listening to it, all were amazed. 135. It was clearly written in the letter that the three brothers were the *avatars* of the gods. Hearing this, the Brahmans were lost in wonder. 136. And so after listening to the letter from Paithan all the Brahmans accepted its contents, and acted just as Indra and the other gods act in obedience to the command of Brihaspati; 137. or as *pandits* acknowledge the authority of the *Puranas* uttered by the lips of Shri Vyas; or as a good disciple studies philosophic subjects at the command of his *guru*.; 138. or as clouds move in the same direction as the wind; or as our sense organs act in accordance with the desire of our minds; 139. or just as a sun-flower turns to wherever the sun may be; or as when water is in the form of a stream it flows by reason of its fluidity; 140. in whatever direction the wind blows the banners wave and musical instruments sing in harmony with songs sung giving due attention to the stops; 141. just so, the Brahmans

of Alandi worshipped the three brothers according to the suggestion of the Brahmans of Paithan. They said to one another, 'Truly three gods have descended as *avatars*.' 142. And as they lovingly performed *kirtans*, all the people came to listen to them. They remarked, 'These *sadgurus* have become *avatars* for our sake.'

DNYANESHWAR AND HIS OPPONENT VISOBA CHATI

143. There was a very hateful Brahman there, whose name was Visoba Chati. He was continually reviling these four children. 144. He exclaimed, 'These are the children of a *sannyasi*. One should not look into their faces.' He was continually muttering these revilings. 145. Just as the moth in accordance with its character should seek to put out the light; or as the fire-fly should say, 'I will utterly destroy the sun;' 146. or as when Hiranyakashipu muttered to himself in rage when he saw Prahlad; or as Duryodhan was filled with anger when he heard of the praises given to Dharma; 147. or as the ten-necked monster (Ravan) was filled with wrath when he heard the story of Ram's heroism; or as *pandits* with feelings of hatred rebuke authors when they see books written in Marathi; 148. or as when thieves see the full moon they revile it; or as astrologers with hatred oppose the teachings of Shhadev; 149. in that same way Visoba Chati continually looked at them with his wrathful eyes; if he saw them anywhere he felt greatly troubled. 150. He would remark, 'These are children of a *sannyasi*. One should never even look into their faces. If we look at them, they will make us the same as themselves.' 151. Now it happened on a particular occasion that the festivals of Dasara and of lights were being celebrated. Nivritti said to Muktabai, 152. 'Prepare some very excellent pancakes for us, and give them to us to eat.' Assenting at once, she collected the materials necessary for the

cooking. 153. In order to bake these cakes she went to the potters' factory for an earthen pan. As she went along the street, she suddenly observed Visoba. 154. Seized with fear, Muktabai hid herself behind something. He at once rushed towards her, and said to her, 155. 'For what purpose are you hastening? Tell me at once.' When Muktabai heard him say this, she trembled violently. 156. For just as the lotus flower has fear aroused in its heart when it sees an elephant, or just as the *kokil* bird (cuckoo) trembles violently at seeing a falcon, 157. or as when a deer searching for water in a forest, sees a hunter in the distance; or as when a cow sees a tiger, she trembles violently with fear; 158. so with extreme fear she replied, 'I am going to the potters' field to purchase an earthen pan. 159. Nivritti has told me to make at once some pancakes.' Hearing her reply, Visoba broke out into a laugh. 160. He struck Muktabai, and then went and told the potter that if he gave the earthen pan to her, he would punish him at once. 161. 'I have lent you money and I shall demand it at once.' Hearing this threat the potter was very troubled. 162. If one gets no profit from any source but has to pay money on the debts he owes people, or when one has a severe illness; one should recognize it as due to the anger of God. 163. If one lives in a poverty-stricken home, or if one mourns over a son dying in adult age, or if people revile one who is honoured by others, this also should be recognized as due to the anger of God. 164. Or one may have studied a subject all one's life and yet on an occasion may not remember the right reply while many wrong thoughts arise in the mind; this also should be recognized as due to the wrath of God. 165. Or an enemy discovers one of our secrets and then everyone speaks alike in reference to it, anger then grows in the heart; this should be recognized also as due to the anger of God. 166. A householder (lover

of his family) when travelling is greatly disturbed from his lack of food and at his home his wife bitterly complains of the same; this also should be recognized as God's anger. 167. If in one's old age one's limbs are without strength, or if none of his sons come and inquire for his welfare, or if his wife speaks harshly to him, that should be regarded as due to God's anger. 168. Well what is the use of any further illustrations? A man enjoys or suffers according to his own acts. So when he heard Visoba's threat the potter remained silent. 169. Just then Muktabai arrived and said to the potter, 'Give me at once an earthen pan on which to bake my cakes.' 170. The potter answered her, 'We have not yet prepared the earthenware for baking. After I have baked them, then you may come and take away an earthen pan.' 171. Hearing his reply, Muktabai returned to her home very much concerned and weeping with a pitiful voice. 172. Just then Dnyaneshwar returned to his hermitage after performing his bath, and suddenly there fell on his ear Muktabai's pitiful cry. 173. Dnyandev drew her close to himself and with his hand caressed his sister. He said to her, 'Why are you sad? Tell me at once.' 174. She said, 'I was on my way to the potter's house to bring an earthen pan for baking cakes and Visoba met me on the way and angrily struck me. 175. He went and said to the potter, "Do not give the earthen pan to Muktabai." I then returned home and am sitting here weeping. 176. Nivriddhi gave me the command to make the cakes to-day with my own hands. Therefore I am sitting here disconsolate. What shall I do? 177. Just then Visoba Chati began to look at them from a distance through a window, and in order to hear everything they said in detail he stood outside. 178. Dnyandev then said to Muktabai, 'Why are you being troubled for nothing? I wonder what I should do in view of his character.'

DNYANESHWAR'S POWER OF 'YOGA'

179. Dnyandev then made use of his powers of *yoga*. He kindled his internal fire and flames came out of his mouth. His eyes were seen to be blood-hot. 180. Like gold when heated, so his back became bright red. Visoba stood outside and viewed the wonderful sight. 181. Dnyaneshwar then said to Muktabai, 'Bake the cakes on my back.' She immediately brought together the materials for the cakes and properly rolled them out. 182. In a moment the cakes were baked and ready, and Dnyandev put out his internal fire. 183. She served the milk of *bhakti* and love in a cup of joy. Then for sugar she used the joy of peace, whose sweetness is unlimited. 184. Into this milk she broke the cakes of experience and the four sat down together to eat them, Nivriddhi, Dnyandev, Sopan, and the sister Muktabai. 185. As all four partook of the first morsel they exclaimed, 'Shri Hari is the real enjoyer of this meal.' All this time Visoba stood outside watching the wonderful sight. 186. Then with a repentant heart he thought to himself, 'These are really divine persons. I have needlessly troubled them. I have not taken proper thought. 187. I found a mine of jewels and diamonds, and I thought they were glass beads, and so by a careless thought I took a sling in my hand and slung away wish-jewels. 188. I saw a wish-tree, but thinking it to be a mere *hivar* tree I applied the axe to it. Before a blind man the most precious diamonds are but like common stones. 189. Ganges water when put into a bottle, a drunkard understands as intoxicating liquor; or it is as when an unfortunate man comes near a pile of jewels, and it should seem to him to be merely a fire; 190. or as when Duryodhan thought to himself, "Shri Krishna the *avatar* of the Supreme Brahm (God) is my brother-in-law and I thought wrongly regarding him and needlessly troubled him.'" 191. Having thus repented, Visoba said

to himself, ' I must go as a suppliant to them. I must take by force what they leave on their plates, and thus bring about my well-being.' 192. Thus thinking, Visoba rushed into their home and came into the room where they were sitting eating. 193. Dnyandev hid his plate behind him, but Visoba forcibly swooped down on it and grabbed from it a morsel of food. 194. As he put his morsel into his mouth, Dnyaneshwar said to him, ' Why are you becoming a scavenger bird ? Go away from here at once.' 195. Hearing this, Visoba took that thought to his heart, and no language can describe his state. 196. Whatever is beyond description in words was here united into one person, and the darkness of his ignorance then entirely disappeared. 197. A sound comes out of a bell, then disappears in the same place, so becoming united with Brahm's essential form, Visoba remained without any duality in his nature. 198. Then joining his hands together palm to palm, he placed his head on Dnyandev's feet. Dnyandev understood his thought and gave him the blessing of assurance. 199. Just as Valmiki put aside his evil nature as soon as he saw Narad, so by association with Dnyandev, Visoba gained a character of goodness, 200. because Dnyandev said to him, ' Why are you eating like a scavenger bird ?' From that time he was called Visoba Khechar.

201. The story to be told in the next chapter is exceedingly interesting. Hearers must listen to it attentively. As it falls on their ears, they become regardless of other things and all faults disappear. 202. Just as when the sun arises the darkness sets, so when the *Bhaktavijaya* falls on anyone's ears ignorance is driven away. 203. When the touchstone touches iron its name and form at once change. So the moment one hears the stories of saints, the thought of all earthly affairs disappears. 204. The history of the saints cannot be fully described in

words, but the real relator of it is the Husband of Rukmini. To Mahipati has come the office of being His attendant in order that He might use him as His instrument.

205. *Swasti* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it, the Lord of the earth will be pleased. Listen to it, you God-loving pious *bhaktas*. This is the ninth deeply delightful chapter.



CHAPTER X

LIFE OF DNYANDEV (Continued)

*Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to the Husband of
Shri Rukmini.*

THE STORIES OF SAINTS SWEETER THAN NECTAR

1. To-day good fortune has arisen for those who have listened to the *Bhaktavijaya*. This joy cannot be described in words. What then shall I say with my lips? 2. It is as if a wish-tree sprang up in the garden and bore wish-jewels as its fruit; or as if an abundant rain of nectar should fall on the earth; 3. or as if twelve suns, becoming cool, should shine at the same time; or as if all rivers began to flow over the earth with nectar as their waters; 4. or as when a mine has been opened containing precious stones, diamonds and wish-jewels, a fortunate man should wholly drive away his laziness and take them away with him; 5. or as if in a moment's time sand itself should become like diamonds and precious stones; or as if common stones should become eternal wish-jewels. 6. All kinds of right and wrong thoughts and poverty have fled away. Therefore listeners have received waves of the nectar of love. 7. I think that the sweetness of love is superior to nectar. The immortals who drink nectar, long for the nectar of love. 8. The gods that drink nectar perish at the end of the ages, but those who drink of the supreme spiritual nectar they exist for all eternity. 9. Therefore give close attention and listen to the stories, you God-loving *bhaktas*. As the stories fall on your ears all your sins in half a moment's time are destroyed.

DNYANDEV AND NAMA GO TOGETHER ON PILGRIMAGE

10. It came to pass on a certain day that Dnyandev came to Pandhari and conceived the desire of meeting Namdev.

11. As he entered into the house of Nama he saw him from a distance. Namdev prostrated himself on the ground before him and lovingly embraced him. 12. He worshipped him with the usual materials and said to him, 'My good fortune has arisen to-day, because the king of wise men has kindly come to my home. 13. My good deeds in a former birth have come to their fruition. I have met Pandurang in visible form. 14. In order to save those who are entangled in the deeds of this earthly life, and those ignorant men intoxicated by the seductions of this life, you, O *Swami*, have become an *avatar*.' Saying this he again prostrated himself on the ground before him. 15. Dnyan-dev then said to Nama, 'Your good fortune is a special one. God is near you without ceasing. I see no limit to your good fortune. 16. You have received the joy and sweetness of His love. Desire and thirst for the things of this life have passed away. The family in which you were born has a holy ancestry. 17. If you will listen I will tell you one of the secrets of my heart.' He then took Nama by the hand, and led him into the interior of the house. 18. He said, 'Although a *Jivanmukta* (free while living) has become free from sin, he should not leave off the worship of his *guru*, of God or of sacred places. I desire to see all the sacred places on the surface of this earth in your company. 19. With this purpose in mind I have come to meet you. Tell me whether the desire of my heart will be fulfilled or not. 20. Having heard this remark Nama became very sad and said, 'Why should I abandon the sacred city of Pandhari, and wander to sacred bathing places? 21. That is like throwing nectar away and going from house to house begging for gruel; or it is like throwing away the precious *kasturi* (musk), and like carrying ashes in one's cloth. 22. Why should one leave the shade of the wish-tree and search for a forest of *shindi* (palm) tree? Why leave untouched the

dainty food on a plate, and eat fallen leaves? 23. Why drive the royal swan away and in its place bring a crow to one's house? Why fling away diamonds and precious stones and fill one's cloth with sand? 24. Why leave off listening to the hymns of the *Samaved*, and listen to sensual songs? Why drive away the wish-cow and bring home a goat? 25. Having decided the matter in his mind, Nama said to Dnyandev, 'I am not master of myself.' So saying he bowed at his feet. 26. 'I am subject to him who has cared for me and supported me, and I call myself His in body and speech. Who is the beloved life of Rukmini, and the giver of the promise to Pundalik. 27. I am subject to Him with all my heart. You go and ask Him. If He gives me the command to go with you, I will respect His words.' 28. Dnyandev replied to Nama, 'I understand your purpose; you are clever, wise, and generous, and the home of *bhakti* and knowledge.' 29. Then giving him an embrace he took Nama by the hand and said to him, 'Let both of us go to the temple and ask God to give His command.' 30. So taking Nama with him, Dnyandev came to the great door of the temple. He lovingly bowed prostrate on the ground near the eagle-platform. 31. He then came to the inner shrine and there he saw God standing on the brick. He embraced the god and with sincere feeling worshipped His feet. 32. The secret thought which he had in his mind he told the god, and as God heard his wish he began to smile. 33. The One dark as a cloud said to Dnyandev, 'You are intelligence itself in visible form. You are as pure as crystal. You are untouched by the association of desires. 34. You are absolutely in the form of soul. Why do you want to wander to sacred bathing-places? Why apply a paste to the surface of the sun? 35. Why again and again use means to make the moon cool? For what purpose should one turn the ocean of milk into a guest? 36. Why does the moon need the

gentle cooling breeze of a fan? What paste should one use to cool the moon? 37. It is not necessary to teach Ganpati. It is not at all necessary to teach Sarasvati the sixty-four arts. 38. Just so, Dnyandev, why do you want to wander to sacred bathing-places with useless thoughts in your mind? Why wander about uselessly? 39. The other replied, 'True, true. What you say is perfectly right, but I want association with such a God-loving *bhakta* as Nama is. 40. I want the joy of association with him, and so make my life worth living.' Thus saying he lovingly placed his head on the god's feet.

41. Then the Lord of Pandhari smiled and looking towards Nama He said to him, 'Dnyandev, who is actually God supreme, desires your company. 42. So, go with him at once and come back again soon. Accomplish whatever purpose you have in your mind. 43. But whether sitting or lying down or walking do not forget me. And Nama, life of my life, let your love of Me continue.' 44. Thus speaking, God's throat choked with emotion. Then turning towards Dnyandev, He said, 45. 'You are wise and the very image of joy. I have one thing to ask you. Let the remembrance of it continue in your heart. 46. Nama grew up by My favour; I have always loved him. For once I might bear separation from Rumā (Lakshmi) but I could never be separated from Nama. 47. You have put Me into a dilemma, for I do not like to go against your wish. There is no one dearer to Me than Nama.' 48. God then took Nama by the hand, and gave him into the hand of Dnyandev, saying, 'Never neglect him, lovingly care for him. 49. You are putting Me in a great difficulty in asking Me for the beautiful jewel (Nama) around my neck. So take care of this uncouth, innocent, crazy Nama, 50. Never have I been separated from Nama, but because of My respect for you, I am sending him with you.' 51.

Thus speaking the Husband of Rumā was moved with emotion. Tears filled His eyes. 52. Dnyandev then placed his head at God's feet and immediately started, taking Nama by the hand. They came first to the bank of Chandrabhaga river. 53. After both had bathed they walked round the tomb of Pundlik. They made a *namaskar* before his feet and then crossed over to the other side of the river. 54. After seeing Nama off, Krishna returned to His own temple. Just then Rukmini came with a golden vessel to wash his feet. 55. When she gazed into His face she saw His eyes were filled with tears and His whole body was wet with perspiration. The Mother of the world was astonished. 56. Rukmini placed Her head upon His feet and said to Him, 'Your condition today seems very strange. I feel very surprised.' 57. Hearing Rukmini's question the Life of the world said, 'My heart has been broken by the arrow of separation from Nama. 58. I love him greatly and therefore I feel very sad. By no method of joy does My mind become quieted. 59. Aside from Myself, Nama has no close friends and relatives. I feel great concern as to how he will keep alive without Me? 60. Dnyandev came as a beggar and has carried away the wealth I had stored up, miserly as I am, in the form of God-loving Nama who is a mine of *bhakti*. 61. Nama is the child of My old age, and I am very fond of him all the time. But Dnyandev has forcibly dragged him away from Me, and taken him away to wander to sacred bathing-places. 62. I am, as it were, a tree in the form of the earth, and Nama is the moisture of My roots. Dnyandev, a water-deity as it were, has drawn it away. 63. As I was watering the tree, Nama gave it moisture like a cloud of joy. Dnyandev coming like a tornado carried it far away.' 64. Hearing Him say this, Rukmini replied, 'Weeping, pain, and desires do no injury to those whose lips repeat Thy name.' 65. Hearing her, the Life of the world answered, 'You have spoken the truth, but I cannot endure a single moment

without My *bhakta*. 66. I am the unmanifested and the formless but have assumed attributes for the sake of my *bhaktas*. I have created the Heaven of *Vaikunth* for My *bhaktas* to dwell in. 67. My *bhaktas* alone have the right to become sharers in my good fortune. I alone know their necessities. 68. Aside from My *bhaktas* no one knows my heart's secrets.' This the Lord of Heaven said to Rukmini with great emotion. 69. 'These *bhaktas* of mine put aside all pride, and become one with Me in essence, just as there is no difference between a lamp and its light; 70. or just as the sun and its rays are always united; or as gold and brilliancy are always found together. 71. Nama is the dust of the feet of the chiefs of the *bhaktas*, who have the experience of soul-knowledge. I am separated from him to-day and therefore I am sad.' 72. Thus saying, the god fainted away and fell on the ground. Mother Rukmini, the Mother of the world, was greatly alarmed. 73. But regaining her courage, she awakened the god from his faint. She then invited all *bhaktas* to come there and told them what had happened. 74. She said, 'The Holder of the disk (Krishna) suddenly gave a great sob and fell down in a faint. Do something to help. Come near Him and tell Him.' 75. The *bhaktas* fanned Him with their clothes and asked Him, 'O Ocean of mercy, Saviour of the world, why art Thou so overcome to-day?' 76. Hearing the words of His *bhaktas*, He aroused Himself by force of will. The Life of the world awakened from His faint and said with emotion, 77. 'There is nothing that I am more fond of than Nama. I feel as though I must hold him to My heart in an embrace. 78. I am always working to meet the needs of My *bhaktas*. I am ashamed to say so. But Nama has never put me into difficulty in working for him. 79. I have not given him the four chief ends of the existence of man. After his birth he made Me his debtor through service. 80. Slaughtering those powerful enemies,

lust, anger, pride and envy by his heroic deeds he conquered the difficulties of this earthly existence. 81. He put envy and conceit far from him. He freed himself from those enemies such as illusion and earthly attachment. And Nama has no fondness for exalting the inferior deities. 82. Nama will not bow to any other God than Myself. He has not seen one moment's rest for his soul except in Me. 83. As he walks along the path, he must often be weary. Who will ask him whether he is hungry or thirsty? This is what severely troubles me.' 84. As God said this, the *bhaktas* shouted out, 'Victory, victory,' and overflowing with joy and love they prostrated themselves at His feet. 85. From there they came to the eagle-platform, dancing with joy. They again prostrated themselves here before Him. 86. Seeing them do this, the Life of the world became slightly conscious.

NAMDEV'S DOUBTS AND DNYANDEV'S REPLIES

In the meantime Nama looked back very often. 87. He cried, 'O, God, Thou hast forsaken me. Thou hast not come to see me off.' Thus speaking he fainted away. 88. Just as a child cries aloud when separated from its mother; as a young deer feels when losing sight of its mother-deer hunts for her in every direction; 89. and as a man overcome with hunger, suffers from lack of food; and as one overcome with thirst hunts for water; and as the *chatak* bird, in its thirst, watches for a cloud; 90. and as a *chaker* bird, on the first day of the month, searches for the moon; and as a fish in the hot season is troubled by lack of water; 91. and as when a young turtle is hungry and does not see its mother within sight; so by separation from Pandurang, Nama was overwhelmed with grief. 92. He said to himself, 'I find myself in a forest overcome with anxiety. I see no one who is near and dear to me. Thou art my father and mother. O God, rush to my help. 93. O

Lord of Pandhari, Thou alone art my dearest friend, my brother and my uncle. O Shri Vitthal, Helper of the helpless, Thou alone art my family deity. 94. Thou alone art the means for my gaining final deliverance. Thou, O Cloud of intelligence, who knowest the thoughts of the heart, who knowest whether my words are true or false, O Shri Vitthal. 95. O Ocean of mercy, supreme Lord of the earth, Nama is in great trouble without Thee. Look upon him with the eye of mercy, and let him be in the chamber of Thy heart. 96. Thus Nama, overcome with grief, used moving words. Dnyandev then addressed him. Listen to what he said. 97. 'With streams of love in your heart, why are you sad? God being in your heart, you are needlessly troubled. 98. O chief of *bhaktas*, think for a moment. Your joy is in your heart. You yourself without question are the visible God with attributes. 99. The fragrant perfume, existing as it does in the navel of the deer itself, the latter needlessly wanders through a forest in search of it, so you, ignorant of your own spiritual nature, are overcome by the pain of separation. 100. It is as if untold wealth lay buried in the house of an unfortunate man; he does not see it and therefore he goes hungry. Such is your case.' 101. Hearing his words, Nama replied, 'Show me God Supreme before my eyes, and possessing attributes, with His feet parallel on a brick, 102. clothed around His waist with a yellow robe, with both hands on His hips. Show me this Advocate of *bhaktas*, and Saviour of the world. 103. Show me the object of contemplation for Sanak and the others, the precious ornament of Shiva, the Husband of Rukmini, the Life of the world. 104. Show me at once Him of whom Narad and Tumburu with love sing day and night, the Giver of the promise to Pundalik. 105. I know nothing of the means adopted in the *yoga* philosophy. My resting place is the Life of the world. O Dnyandev, if I do not

meet Him, my life will desire to depart. 106. Dnyandev replied, 'O God-loving *bhakta*, there is no place empty of God. Abandon the idea of any difference in nature and recognize in your heart the One Being who is without a second.' 107. Nama hearing this replied, 'The *chatak* bird will not drink water out of a river; he will only drink gladly of streams of water from the skies. 108. So God fills the whole universe, this seems to me as a false theory, just as a dutiful wife will not listen to the story of anyone aside from her husband.' 109. In reply to this, Dnyandev said, 'The Being who is imperishable and One only, whom the wise worship, it is He who is in your heart.' 110. To this Nama replied, 'I am fond of a form that has attributes. For to look at it, is refreshing to the eye. I feel as if I wish to listen to songs in His praise.'

DNYANESHWAR ASKS ABOUT 'BHAKTI' FROM NAMDEV

111. Dnyandev seeing Nama's firm resolve, said, 'Blessed is your pure faith.' In this manner they exchanged their experience every day. 112. They tested their discussion by experience. Thereby they felt extremely happy, and that brought them joy which their hearts could not contain. 113. Dnyandev further said to Nama, 'Explain to me in detail the way of *bhakti*, by which you have made God subject to yourself. 114. In what way should one worship God? How should one listen and contemplate? What is study? What is the way of gaining courage? 115. What is that we should call peace? Tell me this in detail. For many days I have had it in my mind to ask you. 116. Tell me of the means of deliverance which you have obtained through your own experience.' Dnyandev with hands joined together palm to palm, thus pleaded with Nama. 117. Having listened to his words, Nama tightly embraced Dnyandev's feet. His voice choked with emotion, and he said, 118. 'I do not

know much about philosophy, and so I have been consigned to your care. The Husband of Rukmini placed my hand in yours. 119. I know little. I am very ignorant, and yet you ask me metaphysical knowledge. It is as if the wish-tree should become a beggar and go to the house of a miser. 120. Or as if the Himalayas should become heated and call out, " Fan me with your garment; " or it is like the sun saying to anyone, " Light a lamp and bring it to my house; " 121. or it is as if the sky should say, " Give me an extended place in which to live; " or as if the earth should come to the king, and ask him for a written deed of land; 122. or as if the ocean should wish to go and bathe in a pond; or as if a wish-cow should ask of a common cow to permit her to drink her milk; 123. so you, humbling yourself, are asking me for metaphysical knowledge.' Thus speaking, Nama held Dnyandev by the feet. 124. Dnyandev said to him, ' Have no doubts in your heart. Abandoning all feelings of duality, speak out of your own experience. 125. Nama, your clear speech seems to me deeper than the sea. The collection of the moisture of the supreme divine joy is always cool, and refreshing. 126. My ears are hungry to listen to it immediately, so let the nectar of divine knowledge at once rain down on them. 127. You are a refuge of rest, and therefore I have sought your company. Nama, you are God's loved one, you have made even Him subject to you. 128. Aside from the emotion of love, why does one need any deep knowledge ? Just as the great and the little stars wander all night long in the starry heaven, 129. the north polar star (Dhruva) looks very small; still it is placed where it is ever unmoved; so Nama, you must never speak of your knowledge as little. 130. If a fire becomes a great flame it does not spread an entirely pure light in the house; tell me how it can claim equality with the pure light of the lamp. 131. A lion's body seems small,

but no elephant can endure its gaze. So Nama, your knowledge is superior by means of the brightness of your courage. 132. One may have collected a large quantity of medicines but it cannot be the equal of nectar, so even learned men have no knowledge equal to yours. 133. The flower of the cotton plant is without fragrance; yet from king to common citizen it is regarded as an adornment. So Nama, your knowledge is seen to be what would save the universe. 134. To listen to it my mind is filled with intense desire and love. Now cease your silence and supply my longing.'

NAMDEV'S TEACHING TO DNYANESHWAR ON 'BHAKTI'

135. To this request of Dnyaneshvar, Namdev gave reply, 'Listen then with reverence to my experience, O *Swami*. 136. One should have the determination to be indifferent to all earthly passions. One should have unchanging compassion on every creature. One should not have the troublesome thought of 'I' and 'thou'. One should not have any perplexities about the earthly life. 137. As soon as one reaches this condition his worship may be called pure. And if he does not have these characteristics, why adopt useless means of acquiring them? 138. One can bow outwardly and at the same time remember the faults of the person bowed to; just as a man with keen appetite may eat dainty food along with a fly in it. 139. Not to have in mind (any idea of) the superior and the common, that should be regarded as unceasing worship, for there is no cessation of the supreme divine joy in the heart. 140. God fills the universe, He pervades the universe. With that fixed thought, one should keep his mind steady. This is called contemplation, and it is an everlasting cloud of joy. 141. Now you have asked how one should listen. Just as a deer, absorbed by the sound of music, forgets all about itself; 142. just so with one's mind lost in the subject, one

should listen to services of praise in honour of God. To this the wise and experienced give the name of *bhakti* through listening. 143. Just as a miser, giving his whole attention to his business stores up money; so take thought for what is for your good. This is called contemplation. 144. Now as to study, it is like a woman giving her love to a man (who is not her husband but) who lives in her house according to popular custom. 145. The *chatak* bird lives on the earth, but it is always giving attention to the clouds in the heaven. The lotus remains in a pond, but its thought is towards the sun. 146. While a cow is feeding on the hillside, it has its thought fixed on her calf; a miser with his mind placed on his wealth wanders about in the bazaar; 147. a goldsmith fixing his attention on the stealing of gold, forms it into an ornament; the *chakor* bird though far away gazes at the moon; 148. a woman taking a water vessel on her head, walks along with uncumbered hands giving her attention to the vessel on her head, and at the same time gossiping; 149. a bee fixing its thought on a flower yet lives humming in the air; so while performing one's domestic duties in their outward form, God should be in one's heart. 150. Vitthal should be wholly in one's heart, but His form should be seen in every creature. One should entirely cast aside all wrong activities and thoughts and have love in one's heart. 151. He is called great who disassociates himself from worldly things and, standing alone with a character of goodness, wisdom and courage, devotes himself entirely to the loving *bhakti* of one God. 152. One should regularly sit down by himself and perform services of song in praise of God. All means that are employed contrary to this should be considered as bondage. 153. Thus I have told you my experience regarding body, speech and the feelings of the mind. But the one who is really telling this is the Lord of Pandhari, the Husband of Rukmini, Shri Vitthal.' 154. Hearing

Nama's words, Dnyandev was greatly amazed. He said, 'There are many *bhaktas*, of Vishnu, and in the future also there will be an innumerable number, 155. but Nama's teaching is most unusual. One should not speak of it as being in the least out of the way. To-day a rain of nectar has fallen upon us. 156. This unlimited joy and peace hardly ever takes place in anyone. So consider it in your mind and let its cause and effect remain in your mind; 157. There have been many writers of the *Shastras* and there have been many wise minds that have become well known. There have been many learned men devoted to the performance of deeds, and there have been great men revered by others. 158. Though a man may understand the art of poetry, though he may be clever in all the arts, though he may become very active and a ready speaker, though he may have become a reader of the *Puranas* and a seeker after salvation, still I cannot see him as the equal of Nama. 159. There may be *jivanmuktas* (free while alive), who have the knowledge of the soul and acquainted with the *yoga* philosophy, and who sit down absorbed in contemplation, but I see no one among them like Nama. 160. *Yogis* sit on iron spikes and live amongst men indifferent to earthly things, but in the whole three worlds one like Nama cannot be found. 161. Nama's method of *bhakti* is never understood by others, except by the Husband of Rukmini, the Lord of Pandhari who stands on a brick. '

DNYANESHWAR AND NAMDEV VISIT DELHI

162. Such were their daily and occasional discussions, as they walked along full of joy. Suddenly in their wanderings to sacred places they arrived at Hastanapur (Delhi). 163. Namdev in his love was singing of God's goodness. As he came near the city every one looked at him. 164. As they listened to Nama's most unusual expression of love, they prostrated themselves before him,

and taking cymbals, *vina* and drums they danced while singing songs of praise. 165. Having heard of Nama's *kirtans* an innumerable number of people gathered together. They carried musical instruments and banners and organized a great assembly. 166. Flags on which was the design of an eagle were waved, and musical instruments made a great sound. Joy filled Hastinapur and cries of 'Victory, victory,' called out aloud the names of God.

THE DELHI KING KILLS A COW WHICH NAMDEV
RESTORES TO LIFE

167. The Muhammadan king who lived in the city heard of the affair. He was told that the *bhakta* Nama was on his way to visit sacred bathing-places and had arrived from Pandhari. 168. 'He is performing *kirtans* in the city and these have absorbed the interest of the men and women.' When the king heard of this his heart became full of anger; 169. just as when the moon arises, the thieves curse it in their hearts; or as at the sight of the thousand-eyes (the sun) the night-wanderers (evil spirits) become enraged; 170. or as heretics curse in their minds after listening to the knowledge of the *Vedas*; so an intense hatred arose in the king's heart. 171. But he said to himself, ' I must go and see for myself Nama's recitation of Hari's deeds. If I am not convinced by it, I shall call it a heretical production.' 172. Thus thinking to himself, this evil-doer came to the *kirtan*; as if a Mang (an out-caste) should suddenly intrude into an assembly of Brahmans; 173. or as if a dog should enter into a Brahman's kitchen and touch his food; or as if that terrible disease (leprosy) should attack one in his youth; 174. so this evil-minded man came suddenly and sat down in the *kirtan*. Just then Nama was filled with a sense of love, as he was describing the attributes of Shri Hari. 175. The sky reverberated with the sound

of the cymbals, the drum and the *vina*. To that was added the loud hand-clapping. The enthusiasm was without limit. 176. Now what did that Muhammadan do in the midst of the enthusiastic *kirtan*? He killed a cow. And he said to Nama, 'What is it you are singing, you heretic? 177. If you will raise this cow again to life I shall regard your songs as true. If you do not bring the cow to life, I shall kill you with my own hand.' 178. When this evil-doer said this, the men and women became greatly concerned. Their minds were thrown into confusion and the enthusiasm of love melted away; 179. as when dainty food has been served on plates and suddenly poison should fall on it; or as when reading a book, a moth should put out the light; 180. or as if a poor man should find a mine of wealth, and then a ghost be created there; or as when one is singing with a clear voice, and suddenly his throat should fill with phlegm; 181. or as when a field of grain should grow ripe and bear fruit a hundred thousand fold, locusts should attack it; or as when performing an auspicious ceremony in one's home it should at that moment be visited by death; 182. or as when the *chakor* bird is gazing at the moon, the monster Rahu should come in between; or as when Agasti was drinking up the ocean, all the water animals were thrown into confusion; 183. such was the confusion felt that night by all the listeners. They sat silent in their places, for they could do nothing else before the king. 184. The Muhammadan king said to Nama, 'When are you going to raise this cow to life? Give me some evidence of your truth, and then go on praising Hari.' 185. The noble *Vaishnava* having heard him replied, 'O king, it will certainly take me four days from today to do it.' 186. Having heard him say this, the king went back to his palace. Namdev brought Hari to his mind, and earnestly asked Him to come to his help. 187. 'Victory to Thee, Merciful to the lowly, Purifier of the sinner, Lover

of His *bhaktas*, Cloud of compassion, Witnesser of the thought of the heart, Mine of goodness, Ornament of His *bhaktas*, Govinda. 188. Victory to Thee, Father of Brahma-dev, Dweller on the ocean of milk, Thou whose form has attributes, Lord of the heart, Giver of blessing to Pundalik, Lord of Pandhari, Victory to Thee, the Indestructible, the Guru of the world. 189. Victory to Thee, Ram, Slayer of Ravana, Giver of joy to Nand, Slayer of Kans, Destroyer of the pride of the Kauravas, Protector of the Pandavas, Shri Krishna. 190. Victory to Thee, Ocean of goodness, Cloud of joy, Thou who didst protect Draupadi from shame, Husband of Rukmini, lotus-eyed One, the Ornament of His *bhaktas*, Pandurang.' 191. Thus Nama filled with enthusiasm of love expressed his mournful thoughts in the midst of the *kirtan*. His throat choked with emotion. Tears flowed from his eyes. 192. The large assembly of those who came to hear him began also to weep. For a whole day they sat there. 193. When the sun arose they got up and went to their homes; just as when in a time of famine the hypocritical donors send away those who come to them to beg; 194. or as when the organs of sense become weakened, men of gay life discard sensual things; or as when contractors see a loss coming to them and desert their province and country; 195. or as when the cool season arrives, the clouds vanish from the sky; or as when the rays of the sun fall on the colour of the *palang* wood and makes it fade; 196. or as when a king falls on the battlefield, his army deserts him and flees away or as when the life of a creature is passing away it has to leave its body; 197. or as when a poor man comes to a well-to-do man, evil-minded relatives send him away or as when old age comes, the organs of sense cease to function properly in a man, 198. so as men listened to Namdev's *kirtan*, and saw his extreme distress, they all got up and left. 199. Nama took the head of the cow in his

lap and wept. He cried out and said, 'O Lord of Pandhari, Shri Hari, come quickly to my aid. 200. Hast Thou been sleeping near to Rukmini, and therefore been much delayed in coming? Or hast Thou been sitting listening to *kirtans* of the God-loving *bhaktas*? 201. Or hast Thou, O Krishna, got entangled in the thoughts of *Yogis*? Or has anyone put Thee into difficulties and so Thou art remaining entangled in them? 202. Or, O Vishnu, hast Thou been sitting receiving the worship of those who regard Thee as possessing attributes? Or has Indra taken Thee along with Him for the purpose of drinking nectar? 203. Or have pilgrims who belong to Thy *bhaktas* arrived at Pandhari to see and worship Thee? And therefore, O Lord of the Heart, Thou hast long delayed coming to my help? 204. Rich people worship Thee, providing many kinds of ornaments, garments and adornments and perhaps absorbed in these Thou hast forgotten all about *me*.' 205. Thus for four days, day and night he cried to God to come and help him. The earth was sprinkled by the tears that fell from his eyes. 206. He cried, 'O God, hasten quickly, for *kal* (death) has come to swallow Thy Nama. I am overcome with concern, like fish out of water. 207. Hearing these moving words the Holder of the disk (Krishna) immediately came, and manifested Himself in Nama's heart. 208. He immediately raised the cow to life and then said to Nama, 'Awake to consciousness.' Nama seized Him tightly by the feet, and now listen to what he said. 209. 'O God, in what business hast Thou been entangled? O eagle-bannered One, for four days Thou hast put me to an extreme test.' 210. God replied, 'O Nama, it was you who made a needless promise. Why did you needlessly say that it would take four days to raise the cow to life? 211. If you had only replied to the king that you would immediately raise the cow to life, I should certainly have rushed to your aid. 212. It is your

own mistaken thought that has borne fruit. Why do you needlessly blame Me? For I, God, am subject to you, and I naturally act through My love to you. 213. I accept as My duty the words that fall from the lips of My *bhaktas*. The prophetic words which Valmiki used compelled Me to follow them. 214. When a seer looks into a mirror he sees himself just as he is. So when a man conceives of Me in his heart, I, the Saviour of the world, am just as he conceives Me. 215. Just as a crystal assumes the colour of the thing on which it is placed, so I, who am subject to My *bhaktas* become just as they would like Me to be.' 216. Speaking thus, the Holder of the disk (Krishna) became invisible. Nama opened his eyes and looked, and the cow was sitting there raised to life. 217. Seeing this amazing thing, the people reported the matter to the king. Hearing this most extraordinary news, the Muhammadan king arrived on the scene. 218. Seeing the cow whose head he had cut off now raised to life, the king made a *namaskar* to Nama. 219. All the people felt great joy and exclaimed, 'Blessed is the *Vaishnava* Nama, whose love for God, Brahmadev and the other multitude of gods are unable to fully describe.' 220. Hands were clapped accompanied by cries of, 'Victory, victory.' The assembly of *bhaktas* rejoiced. Nama then arose and reverently worshipped Vana-nali (Krishna). 221. As the final hymns of praise were sung, all shouted, 'Victory, victory.' Blessed is this noble *Vaishnava*, for he has made the Holder of the *sarang* bow (God) subject to him.

222. Listeners must now give attention, and become absorbed in the stream of these stories; just as the Ganges river in its love becomes one with the ocean; 223. or as the royal swan comes to lake Manas and there chooses the milk out of the water, so discard the waters of wrong thinking and drink the nectar of love. 224. If you give good attention, great enthusiasm will come in their

recitation, and then Pandurang, rendering His favour, will bring about the destruction of the sorrows of this life belonging to His servants. 225. The Merciful to the lowly, the Husband of Rukmini, will cause me further to describe their lives in this book. Mahipati who is as it were His stamp, conveys this message to you listeners.

226. *Swasti* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. When the Lord of the earth hears it He will be pleased. Listen therefore, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the tenth very delightful chapter.

CHAPTER XI

NAMDEV, KABIR AND DNYANDEV

(Continued)

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Krishna

THE STORIES OF THE SAINTS ARE LIKE NECTAR

1. Dear hearers, listen now with attention. You are now offered a drink of nectar, in that these stories of the *bhaktas*, with their deep and marvellous significance, have blossomed like flowers through their being related in the Marathi tongue. 2. Just as a dainty food prepared in a Brahman's house is eatable by every caste; or as ornaments of gold remarkably adorn any beautiful form; 3. or as garments woven in cotton protect all from the cold; or as pure melted butter when stored by itself never spoils; 4. or as jewels in a golden setting are useful for all wearers of adornments; or as when the seed of the nectar plant is sown in the ground and spreads a million fold; 5. or as when stones are chiselled and a temple erected in which the image of Shiva (Jashvanila) is placed; so this easily understood book has become available for all. 6. But if anyone has a contrary opinion and says, 'How much are you going to boast of yourself?' I reply, 'I have spoken to you as to an intimate friend with thoughts of love. 7. Though you needlessly blame me, do not neglect the *Bhaktavijaya*. Disregard its faults and accept its good qualities. You have the right to do this. 8. On the other hand I Mahipati and dullness come in the same schedule of analogy. Let it be firmly understood in your minds that the Husband of Shri Rukmini is the composer of this book. 9. How can the dolls dance when the cords that move them are broken? If the wind ceases to blow, the trees will never wave.' 10. It was rela-

ted in the former chapter how Namdev raised a cow to life, and how the king came and worshipped his feet and every one rejoiced. 11. After performing this miracle he took leave of all, and as he walked along by day and night he was continually repeating the names of God. 12. In whatever country he visited the sacred bathing places he composed verses in the same manner there. In their various languages he described the priceless qualities of God. 13. If I should mention in detail these sacred bathing places in the various countries, this book will be extended too much. Namdev visited all of them and finally came to Anandavan (modern Benares). 14. He bathed in the Bhagirathi river. He saw and worshipped Vishveshwar (the Lord God of the universe). Having thus carried out his purpose, his mind was full of supreme joy.

KABIR'S WIFE AND THE REPENTANT GROCER

15. Namdev remained there for four months, and then a very extraordinary thing happened. There suddenly came some saints to Kabir's house. 16. It was midnight when they arrived and all in the house were asleep. But suddenly Kabir noticed the arrival of the noble *Vaishnavas*. 17. Kabir and his wife both arose and made them a prostrate obeisance. Their house was in a dilapidated condition and very old. The wattle walls were in a broken state. 18. There was not a bit of food in the house. The children had gone to bed hungry. They removed the matting from underneath the children, and gave it to the saints to rest upon. 19. Kabir said to his wife, 'We must make them an offering.' She said to her husband, 'That is true, but I am troubled in mind. 20. There is no grain in the house and no one in the city will lend us any.' Then taking courage into her heart she went alone into the bazaar. 21. As she walked rapidly along the street

she worshipped Shri Ram in words that fell from her lips. Said she, 'If I do not get food after this effort it will bring loss to my good deeds.' 22. Having arrived at the row of grocer shops she looked about her and spied in one shop a grocer who was awake. 23. Coming to the shop she spoke to him in her sweet voice, 'Some saints have come to our house as guests, arriving from visits to sacred places. 24. They need to be given provisions of food. Do not delay giving them to me. Whatever price you may name I will bring it to you.' 25. The grocer said to her, 'Whose wife are you, and who are you?' She replied sweetly, 26. 'The noble *Vaishnava* who was born in a Muhammadan family, Kabir, is my husband. Get up quickly and give me the materials I need. The saints are hungry.' 27. As this beautiful woman said this the grocer became enamoured of her, just as when Indra saw Ahilya he had a wrong thought; 28. or as when Bhasmasur was overcome with desire when he saw the beautiful Parvati; or as Ravana looked upon the Mother of the universe with a sinful eye; 29. or as Duryodhan entertained an evil desire about faithful Draupadi the wife of the Pandavas; so this sinful-minded grocer spoke to the wife of Kabir. 30. 'If you will do for me as I wish I will give you the materials. I will give you as many garments and adornments as you may ask of me. 31. If you have any hesitation in your mind then go back to your home.' Hearing the words of this evil man she thought to herself, 32. 'If I say *No* to him, where else can I obtain any food? The saints will go hungry and that will be a loss to my good deeds. 33. Act according to circumstances; give a reply as occasion demands; perform a *kirtan* after judging the character of the audience; and sow seed according to the nature of the soil. 34. King Harischandra of the noble character carried water at an out-caste's house and his queen Taramati suffered great mortification.

35. Chaff should be blown away in the direction of the wind. When one is sinking, one may seek the support of an out-caste. In time of famine, beggars have to ask for food even of a miser. 36. In order to carry on their domestic affairs Brahmans may have to serve Muhammaddans. When the king of the *Kali Yuga* (evil age) comes to power at times, he compels men to do something unusual. 37. The *Shastras* have spoken to men of what is their duty and what is not their duty. But if by doing what is not one's duty, one is thereby united to the feet of Shri Hari, one should do it. 38. One's mother and father are as it were sacred bathing places. To an elder brother honour is due just as to them. The command of one's family *guru* and that of a guest is one's authority for action. 39. If Bharat had listened to the wish of his mother, how would he have been united to the feet of Shri Ram? Because Prahlad turned against his father, Narahari was pleased with him. 40. Bali would not listen to the words of Shukra, and he offered to Vaman as much land as His three steps would cover. The cow-herdesses deserted their husbands and became absorbed in the form of Krishna. 41. Violating the commands of their husbands, the wives of the *rishis* carried food (to Krishna). If they had obeyed the commands of the *Shastras* they would have been separated from the feet of Shri Hari. 42. And now, if I should consult the *Shastras*, my guests who are saints and *sadhus* will remain hungry. So I will give my promise to the grocer and thus accomplish my purpose. 43. Then since I respect the names of God, the Dweller in Ayodhya, the Life of Janaki, who sees the thoughts of the heart and is a Cloud of intelligence, will deliver me from all my troubles.' 44. Kabir's wife then courageously replied to the grocer, 'First give me the materials for cooking, then I will truly come. 45. The night is now far spent and the saints at my home are hungry. If

I am delayed, these *Vaishnavas* will have gone to sleep.' 46. The grocer heard her but did not think she was telling the truth; just as in Duryodhan's sight no one was good. 47. A blind man thinks everyone is blind. To a thief the moonlight seems filthy. The sick exclaim, 'What made you cook this bitter food?' 48. A miser has no compassion towards other lives. How can a meat-eater feel any love? One ill with tuberculosis does not even in his dreams see himself with a beautiful body. 49. How can an evil man possess a feeling of love? A reviler does not see anyone as good. A low caste man does not believe that a Brahman's conduct is ever true. 50. So this grocer would not accept the promise of Kabir's wife as worthy of belief. So he said, 'If you will give me a definite promise, I shall regard it as true.' 51. Listening to the words of this evil-minded one, by the strength of her courage she controlled her mind. She thought to herself, 'If I do not give him the promise I shall not receive the materials' 52. So she gave him the promise and took in her garments the materials she needed. She hastened back to her home, and prepared these materials for cooking. 53. The saints then said to Kabir's wife, 'We wish to do the cooking ourselves.' The *Vaishnavas* then very lovingly took the cooking vessels and began to cook. 54. With great pleasure they prepared many various kinds of dainty food which was served on plates, and Kabir and his wife began the ceremonies of the saints' worship. 55. They offered to them perfume, rice, garlands of flowers, fragrant ointments, incense, and bowed to them with reverence. 56. The saints had their appetites satisfied with such food as they liked. Kabir's wife then called her husband into a private room. 57. The wife said to Kabir, 'You must remain with the saints. I gave a definite promise to the grocer, and was thus able to bring home quickly the cooking materials. 58. Give me your permission to fulfil the

desire of the grocer. If I delay any longer the day will dawn, and that will mean loss of my character for truthfulness.' 59. Kabir the *bhakta* listening to what she said replied, 'I also will come along with you. The grocer's kindness towards us has been very great. 60. The saints have been able to-day to obtain food. This will be credited to him as a good deed. We have no way of repaying his kindness. 61. You have thought of a good way of doing this and have offered your own body in the service of the saints, so I will take you on my shoulder and carry you there. 62. A heavy rain is falling, a dense terrible darkness has settled on this night and I am afraid to let you go alone.' 63. Thus speaking, Kabir made his wife sit on his shoulder and immediately hurried along to the bazaar. 64. As they passed along the street both of them lovingly worshipped Shri Ram. They exclaimed, 'Blessed is this happy day, which brought the *Vaishnavas* to our home' 65. Thus conversing with one another they quickly arrived at the shop. Kabir then said to his wife, 'I will now go back home. 66. The saints are still at our home and might suddenly leave. I must hasten to go to them to serve at their feet. 67. Do not hesitate in the least. Carry out the wishes of the grocer.' Having thus spoken, the *bhakta* Kabir hastened homeward. 68. The grocer with his evil desires was sitting waiting for her. He thought to himself, 'She came alone tonight, and deceiving me, she has gone away.' 69. As this evil-doer was thus talking to himself he saw before him the wife of Kabir. It made him happy to see that she had kept her promise. 70. Sitting in his usual place the grocer said to her, 'The clouds are pouring down rain without limit, how is it that your feet are not covered with mud? 71. This fact perplexes me, so you, good woman, tell me the truth.' The good woman having heard him say this replied to the grocer, 72. 'Listen to me, you good sir. I will tell you

exactly what happened. After having given you my promise I supplied the wants of the saints. 73. The *Vaisnavas* were well satisfied. That good deed will go to your credit. Your great kindness to us can never be repaid. 74. I call myself a faithful wife. The command of my husband is my authority for action. I gave you that promise because of the distress in which I was. 75. I told Kabir, the lord of my life, what had happened. He carried me on his shoulder and brought me to you. 76. He then went back. Now put aside your doubts and do whatever your mind wishes.' 77. This mass of goodness having thus spoken, the grocer became repentant. He said to himself, 'I have come to the state of a human body, but I have not accomplished anything thereby. 78. After wandering for eight million four hundred thousand births I have suddenly attained this human body. Now I have taken no proper thought, and have allowed my mind to incline to sensual things. 79. Kabir is indifferent to earthly passions and generous, and I have cruelly troubled his wife; just as if a man should take in his hand an axe and cut down a *tulsi* plant; 80. or as if one should take a hoe and forcibly tear down a sacrificial building; or as if one should push aside all worship of Shiva and belabour His emblem with kicks; 81. or as if one purposely spilled a jar of nectar; or as if one purposely crushed the Shaligram (emblem of Vishnu); or seeing a banyan tree or *pimpal* tree, should cut them down with an axe; 82. or as if one should cross the Ganges without bathing in it; or as if one should revile the *Shri Bhagwat*; I have committed just those kinds of faults in causing this trouble to the *bhakta* Kabir. 83. I have never seen any other husband who would thus lend his wife to the use of another man. Blessed are you, O mother, mine of good qualities, the first mother, mother of the world.' 84. Thus repentant in heart he made her a *namaskar* and said, 'I am

your child, you are my mother. Do not keep in your mind my transgression. 85. In my ignorance I, who know but little, have troubled you. Forgive me all I have done and give me your blessing. 86. Take me as your child by the hand and place me at Kabir's feet.' Thus speaking, he placed his hands on her feet again and again. 87. Hearing him say these moving words, she exclaimed, 'O grocer, blessed is your mind. I see it as soft as butter. 88. The greatest men have expressed the opinion of the *Shastras*, that though one may have constantly committed very many evil deeds, if finally repentance is aroused in the heart, those sins at once disappear. 89. It is as if one should eat poison and then should receive a drink of nectar. By that he escapes harm, so all wise men say. 90. So listen to me, you courageous man. Just as soon as your heart felt repentance, the disease of sin in this earthly life ran away from you. 91. I will now at once cause you to meet Kabir.' Hearing her say this, the grocer was filled with supreme joy. 92. He put aside pride and conceit. He abandoned all evil qualities. He left seductive illusions and firmly held to qualities that are characterized by goodness. 93. And so becoming pure in heart, and bright with light, he left his shop. He hastened from there, having cut through the net of illusions. 94. In company with Kabir's wife he arrived at her home in less than a minute, and with feelings of reverence and love he made Kabir a prostrate *namaskar*. 95. He said, 'I am an ignorant, stupid child. I have truly committed an infinite number of transgressions. You must forgive me, your slave, and lay your hand upon me and give me your blessing.' 96. Kabir was a perfect reader of inward thoughts and he recognized in the grocer the feeling of repentance. He then embraced the grocer and saying 'Fear not' he gave him his blessing. 97. Such was the God-loving *bhakta* Kabir, always trusting, believing, under-

standing, and as for himself he was indifferent to all earthly things but full of compassion towards others. 98. The grocer having thus repented he began to worship Shri Ram. Such is the greatness of association with a saint. Even the *Vedas* and *Shastras* cannot understand its full power.

KABIR MEETS DNYANDEV AND NAMDEV

99. Namdev heard of the very extraordinary reputation of Kabir. He told Dnyandev of it and the two came to visit Kabir. 100. When Kabir saw Dnyandev and Namdev he made a prostrate *namaskar* at their feet. Kabir seemed very happy and embraced them with love. 101. He spread a straw mat on the floor for them to sit upon and the eyes of both of them became filled with nectar of love.

102. Dnyandev said to Namdev, 'Remember what happened long ago, how God whose home is on the ocean of milk gave you a command. 103. You are in reality Uddhav, and this *bhakta* Kabir is the *avatar* of Shuka, and both of you descended into this world of mortals as *avatars* in the heart of a shell. 104. The *bhakti marga* (the way of devotion) has become soiled. All mankind was sunk in worldly concerns, and you came to this world of action to save them.' 105. When Dnyandev had thus spoken they bowed to one another. There was a mutual recognition of the facts of their inner condition. 106. Dnyandev said to Kabir, 'The sacred city of Pandhari lies in the country of the South. It was there that the Dweller in the Heaven Vaikunth came to visit Pundalik. 107. Though in the absolute form of the supreme Brahm, He took on a human form. He performed miracles of various kinds. He is the Life of the world. He is Nama's Life of love and remains standing on a brick. 108. Some day you must come and see that ancient sacred city with your own eyes.' Hearing Dnyandev's remark, Kabir fell at his feet.

109. Kabir said to Dnyandev, 'I shall surely come to see and worship Him on the eleventh day of the bright half of the month of *Kartik* (November).' Such was his promise. 110. Dnyandev and Namdev now took leave of Kabir, and at once started from there. And now, you good people must listen with reverence to the delightful story which will now be related. 111. Just as the thirsty man drinks water, or a hungry man eats delicious food, so giving your mind's attention to these stories of the *bhaktas*, listen with reverence, you pious folk. 112. If you have this feeling of love in your heart, it will bring infinite gain. This is Mahipati's plea to his listeners. May you have joy and happiness.

113. *Swasti* (Peace!). This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the earth will be pleased. Listen, you God-loving pious *bhaktas*. This is the eleventh very delightful chapter.

CHAPTER XII

NAMDEV AND DNYANDEV (Continued)

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Gopal Krishna.

THE STORIES OF THE SAINTS SATISFY THE HEART

1. To-day the three worlds are in the happiness of plenty. For the cloud, the *Bhaktavijaya*, has moistened the soil from the sky above. It has thundered aloud from the heaven of intelligence, and has poured down the water of Brahm-joy. 2. The true-hearted ones who may be likened to the *chatak* bird have already satisfied their thirst. For other men, with minds both good and bad, there have grown many kinds of grain. 3. For the evil-minded, brute-like men there are plenty of weeds. The water which has soaked down deep into the soil has become useful for many. 4. On the rocky soil of those without any desire to listen the rain flowed away as it fell. Those surplus streams, however, flow on and remain in the sea of knowledge. 5. It is there that the wise and pious men swim about as fishes. And as the stream of water comes towards them in the form of waves of joy they play about with love and happiness.

DNYANDEV GETS WATER FROM A DEEP WELL

6. In the previous chapter the story was told of the meeting of Kabir and Nama (and Dnyandev). They remained by the bank of the Ganges for four months and then retraced their steps. 7. They visited Gaya and Prayag (Allahabad) and from there journeyed to Ayodhya. Then making rapid visits to Mathura and Gokul they arrived at Dwarawati. 8. As they were returning they had to pass through the desert of Marwad, and being overcome with thirst they searched about for water to drink. 9. Suddenly they spied a deep well and as they looked down

into it they could not determine its depth. They were puzzled to know what device to adopt to obtain some water. 10. Then Dnyandev said to Nama, 'There is a method which is possible for me.' Saying this he reduced his own size through his *yoga* powers and went down into the well. 11. Having drunk the water he quickly came out again.

WATER COMES IN ANSWER TO NAMDEV'S PRAYER

Nama was now extremely thirsty but could think of no way of obtaining the water. 12. Dnyandev then said to him, 'Why is your heart troubled? I will bring the water and give it to you at once. 13. You know nothing of the methods of the mystic *yoga* power by which one can reduce his size. No longer hold in your mind the feeling of duality, and drink the water. 14. Do not refuse to drink the water taken from my hand, for the soul which is a Cloud of intelligence is one and pervades every living being alike.' 15. Nama replied, 'Vitthal is the soul in every heart, so, O *Swami*, why will he not put away my distress far from me? 16. Have patience for a moment and see a miracle.' He then closed his eyes and brought the Lord of the Yadavas (Krishna) to his mind. 17. Nama brought into his imagination the image of Pandurang and thus prayed to him. 'Rush to my aid, O Husband of Rukmini. Why hast Thou forsaken me? 18. Thou only art my mother, my father, my dearest friend, my brother and uncle. Thou alone art my family deity. Why hast Thou forsaken me to-day? 19. Thou art my wealth and my property. Thou art my philosophic knowledge. Thou art my accomplishment of *yoga*. I recognize no other source. 20. Now hurry to my aid, lest Thou shouldst see my end. O Thou merciful One, Helper of the helpless, be the Helper of Thy lowly one.' 21. As he was saying these things tears flowed from his lotus-eyes. Said he 'O God, my courage will not hold out any longer.

Without Thee my life is in great trouble. 22. I Thy ignorant child am Thine in body, speech and mind. I am overpowered with thirst today. To whom shall I go for help? 23. O Giver of blessing to Pundalik, O Husband of Rukmini, from birth I call myself one cared for by Thee. And now, O Cloud of mercy, if Thou forsakest me, who will be the one to be ashamed? 24. For in the *Vedas* and *Puranas* Thou art described as the Helper of the helpless, and if Thou forsakest me it will become evident at once that Thy noble reputation is false. 25. When the crocodile seized the Gajendra (the noble elephant) Thou, O God, Lord of the heart, didst hasten to help him; with the same speed come to my help to-day. 26. When Draupadi was in distress, Thou didst quickly come to her aid, but it would seem that Thou hast forgotten all Thy compassion. 27. O Husband of Rukmini, when sending me to visit sacred bathing places, Thou didst give me into Dnyandev's hands. Why art Thou regardless of me today, O merciful One, and dost refuse to come? 28. Thou compassionate One, Lord of the earth, do not give me this trouble. But hasten to the aid of Nama, overcome with thirst, and despondent without Thee. 29. If Thou dost not come here to-day all evil-minded men will laugh at me. So hasten to my help and care for me who am Thy lowly one.' 30. (In this connection) let us think now of Pandharpur, that heaven upon earth where Shri Hari lives in His temple and where His heart's love for His *bhaktas* is the same for ever. 31. For while this compassion was moving in His heart, the Lord of the earth said to Rukmini, 'If I can only see Nama once more, I will never separate him from me.' 32. Rukmini said, 'Dear God, why is it that today this tender love has come to thee? What trouble has come to Nama, that Thou shouldst be so sad?' 33. Hearing her, the Life of world replied, 'Today my left eye throbs and my left arm twitches. I therefore feel concerned. 34. I feel

greatly troubled as to which of My *bhaktas* is in distress. I am unable to find out.' So said Krishna. 35. 'May the howling wind not affect them, my dear *bhaktas*. I cannot understand which of them is affected by thirst or hunger.' 36. After Rukmini had listened to His remark, she began to give close attention to the thought and just then the mournful cry of Nama fell on her ears. 37. Said she, 'O God supreme, Nama is overcome with thirst and is crying to Thee for help. Rush quickly to his aid. Do not delay a moment.' 38. The moment He heard her suggestion He hastened more quickly than thought. Just then the well with a rumbling noise became filled, and began to overflow. 39. As Dnyandev saw this miracle, he thought to himself, 'This is a most remarkable deed. I do not understand how Nama has made God his debtor.' 40. Then awakening Nama to consciousness he lovingly embraced him and said, 'Krishna has come to your aid, and has shown us this seemingly impossible miracle. 41. The monkey made stones float on the water. Vashishtha heated his staff. And the son of Gadhi (Vishwamitra) created a new world by his own power. 42. Bhagirath with great effort brought the Bhagirathi river down to the surface of the earth. After making Shiva favourable to him, Gautam brought down the Godavari river. 43. But in a more wonderful way at Hastinapur he (Nama) raised a dead cow to life (see Chapter X) and now when overcome with thirst he has brought up the Ganga from the regions below.' 44. In thus speaking to Nama he brought back somewhat of his consciousness. Then drinking of the water freely Nama said to Dnyandev, 45. 'God always supplies that which I earnestly request of Him. When I see the *tamal* dark One then only my eyes become cool.' 46. To this Dnyandev replied, 'I have seen *yogis* sitting in contemplation but in seeing them my mind never attained a sense of peace.

47. To you alone my sense of love has become infinite. I cannot think of anything else but you. You, a *bhakta* of Vishnu's personification of love, have made the Husband of Rukmini subject to yourself. 48. Krishna the Supreme Spirit is beside you. Blessed, O Nama, is your family line. I feel the same happiness that a cow feels on seeing its little calf. 49. In seeing your noble qualities my mind has become filled with the joy of love. As I listen to your praise of God, I no longer care for pilgrimages and sacred places. 50. The *Vedas*, *Smritis* and the *Puranas* are fully enamoured by the qualities of Hari. And seeing your love, the *yogis* have cast aside their contemplation. 51. The crowd of *Rishis*, *Gandharvas* (celestial singers), Brahmadev, Indra and other deities sought with feelings of love to fathom the formless One, 52. yet they were unable to attain God. But you made Him subject to yourself.' Having said this, Dnyandev embraced Nama's feet. 53. That well, where Nama became overwhelmed with thirst, still flows today in that very place in the Marwad country. Pilgrims assemble there in the month of *Margashirsh* (December) 54. If I should stop to relate the glory of that sacred bathing place, it would vastly increase the size of this book. Dnyandev and Nama now departed from that spot.

DNYANDEV AND NAMA ON PILGRIMAGE

55. They saw many sacred bathing places in the different countries through which they hastened. They visited Badrikashram in the Himalayas and arrived in the Himalaya mountains. 56. They visited Jagannath of Odhya where God lives in the form of Buddha; and even in the *Kali Yuga* seemingly impossible miracles still take place here today. 57. After visiting Onkar and Amaleshwar they went on to Kedar. From there they visited Mahakaleshwar at Ujjain. 58. After seeing that place, they came back

and after visiting Paralivaijanath they arrived at Soratisomnath. 59. Their next place was the mountain of Shri Shaila where the Husband of Parvati lives (in a Shiva temple). For sixty years He had been waiting for these *bhaktas* to come there. 60. After visiting this place they hastened on to see Ghrishneshwar. I am not able properly to describe the great glory of the sacred bathing place Seval. 61. From there they came to Nasik and Trimbak where they bathed in the Kushavart pond. After worshipping the five-faced One (Shiva) they departed from there (see page 88 of Nama's *Gathas*). 62. They had a view of the western ocean and then arrived at Bhimashankar where they worshipped Janardan. From there they started for Rameshwar. 63. Thus taking one after another the most important sacred bathing places on the surface of this earth, among which the most distinguished of them are mentioned as well known and with high reputation in the *Puranas*. 64. Ayodhya, Mathura, Kanti, Benares, Dwara-wati, Avanti and Maya, the seven cities as givers of salvation, were lovingly visited with repentant hearts. 65. To this may be added the celebrated twelve *Jyotirlingas*. I have mentioned only these; still there are many on the earth which remain to be mentioned, but to what length should I go in speaking of them in this book? 66. Just as when one looks at the moon, the eye without any effort sees the stars; or if one dug up a tree and gave it to anyone, the branches would naturally go with it; 67. or as when drinking nectar it includes every medicine; or as when studying the *Vedanta*, one thereby understands the meaning of the *Vedas*; 68. or as when worshipping the *Ashvattha* tree, it is the same worship given to eighteen bhars (a bhar is 8000 tolas) of vegetables; or as when one sees the serpent on which the earth rests, he has seen practically all other serpents also; 69. or as when offering a garland of *tulsi* leaves to Vishnu, there is included

in it the sixteen materials of worship; or as when having seen the Husband of Mridani (Shiva) one has seen all *yogis*; 70. or as when one sees the elephant *Airavat*, he has really seen every elephant on earth; or as when the Husband of Shachi (Indra) becomes pleased, the other gods are pleased also; 71. or as when the son of Vinata (the eagle, Vishnu's vehicle) comes in to one's sight, that includes all birds; or as when one sees the Himalaya mountains, the whole stable creation becomes known; 72. so, in describing the greatness of the seven salvation-giving cities, and the greatness of the twelve *lingas*, one has naturally met with the names of the other sacred bathing places on the earth.

NAMA AND DNYANDEV AT NAGNATH

73. After visiting Rameshwar both returned from there. The God-loving *bhaktas*, Nama and Dnyandev, finally arrived at Nagnath. 74. The fourteenth of the dark half of the moon in the month of *Magh* (February) is the special night for the festival in honour of Shiva. On such an occasion Nama and Dnyandev arrived at that place. 75. Just as on the first day of the bright half of the moon in the month of *Chaitra* (April) the cycle of sixty years comes to one's home; or as when on the second day of the bright half of the moon in the month of *Magh*, Dharmarao (god of death) comes to His home; 76. or as when on the third day of the bright half of the moon in the month of *Vaishakh* one's host of ancestors come as one's guests; or as when the elephant-faced god (Ganesh) arrives on the fourth day known as *Ganesh Chaturthi*; 77. or as on the fifth day of the bright half of the moon in the month of *Shravan* (August) the great serpent comes to one's home; or as when the Husband of Mhalasa (Khandoba) is to be met in the month of *Margashirsh* (December); 78. or as when on the seventh of

the bright half of *Magh* (February) the sun comes as a guest; or as when the king of the Yadavas (Krishna) comes at the time of *Janmashtami* (or *Gokul Ashtami*) to occupy His cradle; 79. or as when the son of Kausalya (Ram) on Ramnavami day (the ninth of the month of *Chaitra* or April) suddenly arrives playing; or as when on the tenth of *Vijaya* (the month of *Ashvin* or October) the Mother of the world (Parvati) comes hastening home; 80. or as when on the eleventh of *Ashadh* (July) one sees the image of Shri Vitthal as seen by the God-loving *bhaktas*, who look upon Him with great pleasure and feel a joy which their hearts cannot contain; 81. or as when on the twelfth day of the bright half of the moon in the month of *Kartik* (November) Shri Krishna comes to Vrindavan; or as when on the thirteenth of the month in the evening, the Husband of Mridani (Shiva) returns at the time of the evening worship; 82. or as when on the new moon day of the month of *Shravan* (August) Nandikeshwar comes back to the cows' stable; just so, Nama and Dnyandev arrived on *Shivaratri* (Shiva's festival). 83. The *bhaktas* speak of the holy city Avandhanagnath as a second Kailas (heaven). At this place and at this time of the festival both arrived with joy of love. 84. After bathing in the sacred waters and performing their usual rites of worship, they prostrated themselves before the great door of the temple with feelings of love. 85. Then in their affection they entered into the inner shrine in order to see and worship God. Here again they prostrated themselves before Nagnath. 86. They said to the god, 'O Helper of the helpless, Husband of Parvati, Dweller in the cemeteries, Holder of the *khatvang* (sword), Lord of Kailas, Digambar, Lord of the earth, King of the universe.' 87. Having thus spoken they touched the god's head with the palm of their hands, and knowing their love, Shiva was much pleased in His mind.

NAMA'S KIRTAN BEFORE NAGNATH

88. Namdev then stood before the great door of the temple and began a *kirtan*. He took in his hands the cymbals and *vina* and loudly shouted the names of God. 89. Bringing into his mind the image of Vitthal he closed both his eyes. He had no longer the least consciousness of possessing a body. 90. He put aside the thoughts of honour and insult and the proud ways of men. He put aside every form of desire and in his love performed the *kirtan*. 91. He put aside all idea of distinctions. He cut off from himself the idea of duality. He broke through the bonds made by the snare of desires and danced in his joy and love. 92. Accompanying the sound of cymbals, drum and *vina*, he performed a *kirtan* with feelings of love. A great crowd of people came with the desire to listen. 93. Just as at the time of the full moon the Husband of Rohini (the moon) looks beautiful in its various phases, and the ocean seeing it swells with the joy of love; 94. or as when the oil-wick is pushed far forward the flame is increased; or as at a Brahman's oblation the sun feels happy; 95. or as when drinking nectar, one's body becomes immortal; or as when a generous man distributes his wealth, beggars rejoice; 96. or as when the rain falls, the grass grows in desert places; or as when Brahmans receiving sweet delicious food they become supremely happy; 97. so, in listening to Nama's *kirtan* all good listeners became happy. In listening to God's goodness, in their joy of love, tears fell from their eyes. 98. Their throats choked with emotion, their hair stood on end, and the hearers for the time being lost all consciousness of body. 99. When a king throws aside the glory of courage, his army naturally does the same. If the mind drops all shame of sensual things, then the organs of sense forget their functions. 100. So when

Namdev cast aside his consciousness of body the very same thing happened to his listeners. As they listened to the character and deeds of Shri Hari they all lost consciousness of body. 101. As they brought into their minds the Lord of the world, they clapped their hands in joy, they shouted aloud the names of Vitthal, and their minds were unable to contain their happiness.

BRAHMANS ANGRY WITH NAMA

102. Brahmans just then came from bathing, having rubbed ashes all over their bodies. Around their necks they had placed garlands of *rudraksha*. Their *dhotars* were wet. 103. Their hands held the water and the sixteen materials intended for their worship. In order to bathe the god they came to the big door of the temple. 104. Here Nama was performing his *kirtan*, singing and dancing in the joy of love. An enormous number of people were assembled there and the Brahmans could see no way of getting through them. 105. Outwardly they had performed their devotions and baths, but their minds within were defiled with wrong thoughts. They said to the people, 'Look out or you will touch us; get off to one side.' 106. A bad man who has anger in his heart thinks that everybody is impure. And as he is fallen into the net of wrong thought, he does not see anyone as pure. 107. In the praise-services in honour of Hari there is no such thing as being defiled by one another, so in going into an assembly of Brahmans to see and worship Shiva and Vishnu, no one should think of defilement. 108. Anyone who says the *Bhagavadgita* or the *Bhagwat* are defiled by touch is a heap of sin. He who finds fault with the *Vedanta* should be considered the same. 109. Not recognizing the truth of this, these Brahmans were possessed with envy. They were filled with anger and spoke roughly to the people. 110. They shouted at them, 'Why are you singing here

uselessly, clapping your hands and shouting aloud? Such doings are acceptable at Pandhari only. Nagnath does not enjoy such things. 111. Every one should be addressed as he likes. Why should salt be put into milk? If you add sugar to vegetable, you never increase the good taste. 112. If you hold a perfume to the ear, it cannot smell it. Why tell stories to the eyes? 113. Show a mirror to your tongue and it cannot see itself. If you show to your eyes some sweet tasting juice, they cannot partake of it. 114. So the Lord of Kailas (Shiva), the Husband of Uma, is not fond of these *kirtans* in honour of Hari. Go off to Pandhari and dance *there* putting aside all shame.' 115. When the Brahmans said this, the listeners replied, ' You ought to bear in mind that Hari and Hara (Vishnu and Shiva) are not different from one another; 116. just as the water of the sacred bathing place and the common element of water are not in the slightest degree different; sweetness and sugar are not to be distinguished from one another; 117. a lamp and its light, a flower and its honey, are not different; the sun and its rays are not different; 118. one should not say that a cloud and water are different; one should never try to separate brilliancy from a jewel; 119. how can one point out unlikeness between delicious food and its taste? A musical instrument and its sound are always without any difference; 120. so all wise people speak of Shiva and Vishnu as really one. As the Slayer of Madan (Shiva) listened to the praises of Vishnu, He lovingly wagged His head in joy.' 121. The Brahmans hearing this reply of the listeners, grew very wrath, and said, ' These low people, with pride in their hearts, are preaching to us, 122. even to us Brahmans who are of the highest caste and who have authority to explain the *Shastras* with full knowledge. We do not approve of the principles preached by Nama. 123. Now get away from here at once; if not, we shall punish you.'

To this threat of the Brahmans no one replied. 124. 'We have already been delayed in our worship of Shiva and there is no way open for us to go into the temple,' said one. Another said, 'Beat out Nama at once. 125. If anyone of *these* people touches us, we shall have to go again and take a bath with our clothes on.' Saying this, two of them forced themselves into the midst of the audience. 126. Just as when gifts are given to those who are worthy of them, those who are unworthy are driven away by envy, so these Brahmans suddenly walked into the midst of Nama's *kirtan*. 127. They said angrily to Nama, 'Why are you needlessly making all this noise here? There is no way open to us for going through the crowd in order to see and worship Shiva. 128. You have cast aside bodily consciousness and made everyone else like yourself. In giving these men your principles you have hindered the performance of our rites. 129. Now go and stand at the back of the temple, and there you may sing without any shame.' Namdev having listened to their demand, bowed to the Brahmans. 130. He replied, 'I will do so'. And the noble *Vaishnava* went away from there. The enthusiasm of the *kirtan* immediately melted away; 131. just as when some intoxicating liquor should fall into a jar full of holy water; or as when salt is put into milk it immediately spoils it; 132. or as when the paste of sandalwood has been prepared, there should fall garlic into it; or as when *assafoetida* is mixed with musk, it naturally destroys the latter; 133. so when the servant of Vishnu (Nama) arose to go the enthusiasm of the *kirtan* melted away. Seeing this the hearts of the listeners felt extreme sorrow; 134. just as when delicious food is served on plates, and a crow snaps it up; or as when one comes back from a journey and he is robbed by thieves on the way; 135. so the crowd with troubled minds went away from here and all followed Nama. 136. In company with

Namdev they retired behind the temple of Shiva, and there sat down for the continuance of the *kirtan*. 137. When the sun sets, its rays go with it; when the king goes into the wilderness, his army also accompanies him; 138. in whatever direction the wind blows, the clouds also move along the same path; so all the listeners followed Nama. 139. With joy and shouting they clapped their hands at the name of Hari, and tears flowed down from the lotus-eyes of the servant of Vishnu (Nama). 140. Nama cried out, 'O Purifier of the sinner, Helper of the helpless, Husband of Rukmini, hasten to my help. O Life of the world, why hast Thou deserted me in this foreign land? 141. It is to-day as if a doe had discarded her young; or as if a bird had forgotten her fledglings; or as if a mother had abandoned her child in a jungle; 142. or as if the *chatak* bird were forgotten by the clouds; or as if the moon were angry with the *chakor* bird; or as if the sun were angry with the lotus; 143. today it is as if the soul has abandoned the body; or as if sight had turned against the eye; or as if the five vital airs had discarded life; such is our unhappy condition to-day. 144. O Dweller in Pandharpur, Vithabai, family goddess, how is it Thou hast forgotten me? 145. I have wandered all over the sea around the continents and with my own eyes have seen all the sacred bathing places, but I have nowhere seen a god such as Thee. 146. With feet parallel, with hands upon the hips, beautiful in form, delightful to look at, as one sees and contemplates the unclad idol, consciousness entirely melts away. 147. While the cymbals, the *vina* and the drum are sounding, and the eagle banners create a beautiful sight; as one looks at them the eyelids forget their activity of winking.' 148. Thus Nama, choked with emotion, thought of the Husband of Rukmini. Just then a most extraordinary thing happened. Listen to it, you holy, pious ones. 149. Nine

hundred thousand banners came down from heaven like lightning and suddenly stood upright where the *kirtan* was being performed. 150. They were not merely nine hundred thousand flags; they were the fruit of the nine forms of *bhakti*; or as if the nine sentiments becoming personified entered the *kirtan* performance. 151. Seeing this marvel, all men were amazed, and gazing with their eyes, stood astonished with no thought of their possessing a body. 152. This so filled with joy the servant of Vishnu (Nama) that he shouted with enthusiasm the names of Vitthal, and in his love he danced in the midst of the *kirtan*. 153. The night was one in the dark half of the moon; it was intensely dark, but the banners filled with their light every available space. 154. The joy was great in Nama's heart. The sound of the clapping of hands filled the sky. The gods rained down an abundance of flowers. The marvel was one beyond conception. 155. The people in their joy raised their hands aloft and made the sound of handclapping and of the snapping of their fingers. The sixty-four arts, personified, seemed to be standing there watching the marvel in astonishment.

NAMA'S PRAYER

156. Nama then thought to himself, 'Everything seems to be favourable here, and made so by the Lord of Pandhari, but there seems to be one thing lacking. 157. Nagnath is facing the other way. He has turned His back on this *kirtan* in honour of Hari. I do not know what wrong has been committed by me. 158. Were the temple of Shiva before us, the enthusiasm of the *kirtan* would have been great. Why does not the Husband of Rukmini come to my aid? Why does He hold His anger against me? 159. Victory to Thee, O Thou who delightest in Thy home on the sea of milk, Husband of Lakshmi, most generous One, Helper of the helpless, compassionate One, come swiftly to

my help. 160. Victory to Thee, the One who didst free Gajendra (the elephant), Home of mercy, Father of Brahmadev, King of the Yadavas, put aside Thy *maya* as I utter Thy name, and do Thou hasten to help me. 161. Upamanyu made Thee an obstinate appeal, and Thou gavest to him the ocean of milk. In the same way be merciful to me and hasten to my aid. 162. In order to protect Draupadi from shame, Thou didst make her four-handed. Be merciful to me and come to my help. 163. The Muhammadan king killed the cow in the midst of the *kirtan* and I then put Thee in trouble, O Master. Thou didst immediately come to my help and in a moment raised the cow to life. 164. When I was thirsty in the wilderness Thou didst immediately come to my assistance, but now having a hardened heart, Thou dost not quickly come, O Vitthal. 165. Shiva is sitting in His temple, with His back turned towards me. Now look upon me with the eye of mercy and come to my help, O Lord of the universe.' 166. Thus Nama, full of love, mournfully pleaded in the midst of his *kirtan*. Suddenly an extraordinarily wonderful thing happened. Listen to it, you pious *bhaktas*.

THE TEMPLE FACING EAST TURNS WEST

167. The temple that had faced the east, suddenly turned around to the west. All expressed their astonishment. Blessed was that time and day. 168. In the joy of love they clapped their hands. The whole assembly of *bhaktas* rejoiced. They cried out, ' He who wears the moon on His forehead (Shiva) has certainly come to the help of Nama. ' 169. Hearing Nama's *kirtan* the Husband of Parvati (Shiva), together with the temple, turned their faces to the west and listened with love. 170. Seeing how great was the *bhakti* of Nama, the listeners became full of joy. Nama remarked to them, ' The doer of this is the merciful Shri Hari. ' 171. This most extraordinary *kirtan* of

Nama was seen as being performed in front of the temple with the joy of love. 172. After the Brahmans had performed their worship they came outside the temple, and lo! the *kirtan* of Nama was being performed in front of the temple with the joy of love. 173. After bathing in the holy water early in the morning, they sought to make oblation to the sun. Then they remarked, 'The sun seems to have arisen in the west, 174. or else we have lost all sense of direction. Or perhaps by keeping awake, we have fallen into some misconception. Or if not that, it would seem as though Shiva had become especially pleased with Nama.' 175. After further thought they looked about them, then they glanced to see if the sacred bathing place was still the same, but they did not see it there. 176. It was the temple alone that had turned and was now facing Nama. And those many divine banners shone like lightning.

PENITENT BRAHMANS

177. Seeing this, the Brahmans were astonished and remarked, 'Even Brahmadev and the other gods could not understand the limits of Nama's power. 178. Being proud of our own deeds, we have needlessly persecuted him.' Thus repentant in heart they came into the place where the *kirtan* was being performed. 179. The Brahmans remarked to Nama, 'Blessed are you, God-loving noble *Vaishnava*, the full *avatar* of Uddhav. This we now truly understand. 180. You have performed and shown to us what the ear has never heard before, nor the eye has ever seen. O Nama, blessed is your mother. This assembly is fortunate indeed. 181. May your extraordinary praise spread throughout the three worlds, so long as the earth, the moon and the sun are seen with a form. 182. Until then, may the holy *bhaktas* sing of your life by their lips, for the ears which will listen to it will become holy in a moment.

183. Thus speaking, the Brahmaus made a *namaskar* with reverence and remarked to Nama, 'Neither Brahma-dev nor the other gods could comprehend the limits of your power. 184. Durvas, filled with pride, persecuted Ambarish. The Life of the world knowing his distress bore the sufferings of birth. 185. When the Brahmans of Pratihthan (Paithan) persecuted Dnyaneshwar, then he made the buffalo repeat the *Vedas*. 186. In the same way you have done a seemingly impossible thing. You have actually turned the temple of Shiva round.' Nama then opened his eyes and became choked with emotion. 187. Then with love he recited the hymn of praise and waved lights over the Husband of Rukmini. He lovingly made a prostrate *namaskar* and then distributed the sweetmeats. 188. At that moment the banners flew off, and at once went to their home in the Heaven *Vaikunth*. The people lifted up their faces and watched the wonderful sight. 189. The temple of Shiva that was turned round about at that time is even today the same. Shri Hari, who is proud of His *bhaktas*, Himself puts away their distresses. 190. Among the gods, the Husband of Rukmini is the most supreme. Among all *Vaishnavas*, the *bhakta* Nama stands first. One cannot see in the three worlds anyone fit to make a comparison with Nama. 191. What juice is there which can be used to make a comparison with nectar? What river can be mentioned that would do for a comparison with the ocean?

192. In the next chapter the Husband of Rukmini will cause this book to be written with its extraordinary interest. Mahipati simply bears His stamp, and here comes to the saints as a suppliant.

193. *Swasti* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the earth will be pleased. Listen to it, you God-loving pious *bhaktas*. This is the twelfth very delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER XIII

NAMDEV'S PILGRIMAGE ENDS

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Gopal Krishna.

GOD REJOICES IN THE STORIES OF HIS *BHAKTAS*

1. O hearers, listen to these strange and extraordinary stories. To-day your tongues receive supreme nectar, so that I see none as fortunate as you are. 2. Among the gods, the Lord of the heaven *Vaikunth* is superior to all. He is also fond of His loving *bhaktas*. And now these stories of the *bhaktas*, very extraordinary as they are, have become known for your good fortune. 3. The Husband of Rukmini feels very happy as the stories of the saints are being sung and listened to; just as when the moon arises the sea of milk rejoices; 4. or as when one praises the elephant-faced deity (Ganesh), Shiva and Parvati are pleased; or as a *sadguru* wags his head with love when his disciple acquires knowledge; 5. or when one sings the praises of a child the mother feels happy; or as when describing Narad's indifference to worldly things, Brahmadev rejoices; 6. just so, the Lord of the world rejoices when the stories of the saints are praised, and becoming pleased He gives an everlasting home to both listeners and speaker. 7. Therefore it is that I have called you fortunate. What gain can be greater than the home of Vishnu? I can see nothing greater anywhere.

DNYANDEV AND NAMDEV GO TO PANDHARI

8. In the former chapter there was the delightful story of how the temple of Avandhya Nagnath was turned round, and how when all the Brahmans saw the marvel they were overcome with amazement. 9. After Dnyandev and Namdev had made a *namaskar* to the Lord of the heaven *Kailas*, both left that place and returned

to Pandhari; 10. just as when a daughter who is living with her mother-in-law returns to her mother's home her mind is full of joy, so it was with Nama; 11. or as when a cow and her calf having been separated the calf suddenly sees its mother, and rushes towards her, so it happened to Nama; 12. or as when a child is playing in the street, and then goes back into the house to its mother, its heart is full of joy, so it happened to Nama; 13. or as when a young deer has wandered away for the purpose of playing about, and then comes back to its mother deer, its heart overflows with joy, so it happened to Nama. 14. Thus rejoicing at heart the two, Namdev and Dnyandev, walked rapidly along. As they approached Pandhari, they saw the dome from a distance. 15. As soon as they saw Pandhari, they made a prostrate *namaskar*. They embraced one another and both felt very happy. 16. Then taking cymbals and *vina* in their hands, they lovingly performed a *kirtan* in honour of Hari. As they approached the main door of the temple, they again made a prostrate *namaskar*. 17. Just as one lets go of a stick and it falls to the ground, so Nama becoming unconscious of his body fell on the ground. 18. Dnyandev raised him up and brought back a little of his consciousness. He took his hand in his and walked forward. 19. When they came to the god's bedroom and made their bow, the Life of the world descended from His throne and came forward to meet them. 20. The Lord of the world being moved with emotion drew Nama to His heart and removed all his calamities by waving a torch over him. 21. Nama also was filled with emotion and tears flowed from his eyes. He placed his head on the lotus-feet of the god and spoke with a sweet voice. 22. 'O Lord of the world, I am very weary. Look upon me with Thy mercy. Without Thee I am in deep distress. I cannot see what the end will be.'

PANDURANG AND NAMDEV MEET

23. 'My mind was in ignorance, and therefore I wandered from house to house, but I have seen no place even in my dreams as happy as Pandhari. 24. There are very sacred bathing places with high reputation, but my mind is attached to the Chandrabhaga, for, O Merciful to the lowly, O Pandurang, Thou causest this earthly existence of Thy servants to cease. 25. O Lord of the Yadavas, scruple arises in my mind as I see a god without eagle banners. 26. As I looked at them with my eyes, I was sorrowful at not seeing Thee, but bringing Thy form into my mind I remained quiet. 27. Thou art my dearest friend, brother and relative, and Thou alone art my family deity.' Thus speaking, Nama remained perfectly still. 28. To this the Husband of Rukmini replied, 'I was very sorrowful, I could not sleep day and night, while waiting for you. 29. When you, Nama, were far away, Pandhari seemed a desolate city. But My heart never forgot you a single moment. 30. And now, My dear loving *bhakta*, do not separate yourself from my sight. Fasten your eye upon My form and sit quietly down. 31. I love you infinitely, and you also love Me as sweetness never leaves sugar; it is the same with the sweetness of love. 32. Just as the lotus and the sun are fond of one another, so certain is our love for each other, O Nama; 33. or as the *chatak* bird and the cloud never forget one another, so great is your love and Mine, O Nama. 34. The moon and the ocean love one another infinitely; so, O Nama, to My mind is association with you. 35. A mother loves her infant child and never forgets it; so in our minds the idea of duality does not enter even in our dreams. 36. Whenever I happened to see an itinerant pilgrim, I would ask him about you, "Did you see My Nama? Was he well?" 37. If he should be thirsty or hungry, who aside from Myself would know it? Whom would he tell of his soul's secrets?

38. Perhaps he is in sorrow, and is calling for My help, He knows of no other object of contemplation day or night. 39. Aside from Me, who will ask Nama whether he is weary ? In whose shade will he sit, and rest for a moment?' 40. Thus the Lord of the world spoke His secrets to the saints. 'It may be that Nama may be in distress without Me and is just holding on to life.' 41. Then the Lord of the world bending His arm gave Nama an embrace, caressed his face, and with His hands wiped his eyes. 42. He took off from Himself His garland of flowers and *tulsi*, and put it around the neck of Nama. This dark complexioned One looked all over the person of Nama with close attention.

43. Just then some noble *Voishnavas* came to see Him ; Nivritti and Dnyaneshwar, Sopan, Visoba Khechar and Narahari the goldsmith. 44. Assembling there at this time they prostrated themselves on the ground. They embraced Nama and shouted, 'Victory, victory.' 45. and wagged their heads in the joy of love. 46. The crowd of *Rishis* and *Gandharvas* (choristers), Brahmadev, Indra and other gods also came there at that time, in order to rejoice at the sight. 47. Just then Rukmini hastened there, bringing the five-lamp platter in her hand, and in her love she waved it over these *bhaktas* of God. 48. Holding Nama by the chin she looked upon him with compassion. The Lord of the world again said to Nama :—

NAMA TOLD TO GIVE A FEAST TO BRAHMANS

49. 'O Nama, listen, you have seen all the sacred bathing places; in coming to this birth you have accomplished your good, and have satisfied the desire of your heart. 50. Now in order to complete your pilgrimage, bring your rites to a close by feeding the Brahmans. Perform what is prescribed and thus wholly complete your purpose. 51. You have suffered many things. They

will bear good fruit. Listen, O Nama, to what I have said.' So God spoke to him in love. 52. 'Although one may have wandered to many sacred places, yet if the final rites have not been performed, it will be as if the most delicious food had been cooked, and then finally not eaten; 53. or as if one should listen to the reading of many *Puranas*, yet unless they are meditated upon it goes for naught; or like ornaments beautifully formed but useless if not worn; 54. or as if one in order to have a healthy body should take medicine, O Nama, but if he did not eat digestible food, the medicine would not prove of use; 55. so you may have seen many sacred bathing places, including *Sapta-puris* [seven cities, givers of final deliverance:—Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya, Kashi, Kanchi, Avantika, Dwarawati], and yet if you do not perform the final rites, your wandering will be in vain. So say the *Shastras*. 56. This holy city of Pandhari is a heaven upon earth, far famed, and for comparing it nothing animate or inanimate exists. 57. It is a place where if one offers food to Brahmans it satisfies to the end of the ages. So collect all the Brahmans who live in the sacred city and bring them to the feast. 58. Worship them with the proper materials and give them a feast of delicious things. Offer them also with reverence the *pansupari* and gifts of money.' 59. After saying this, Krishna took Nama by the hand and led him into the inner shrine.

60. Then with a smiling face the merciful One and Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) said to Rukmini, 'My love for Nama is very great, I can never be separated from him. 61. After having visited many sacred bathing places, he is going to complete the final rites to-day.' The Life of the world having said this, the Mother of the world replied, 62. 'O Lord of the universe, Thy most beloved friend Nama has put aside all other loves and affections, and in deep love is worshipping Thee alone.

63. He has abandoned every business enterprise. Who then will perform the final rites? By serving Thee he has made Thee his debtor, casting aside pride and affection.

64. Having passed through a great number of births he has accumulated some good deeds. All these he has lovingly offered at Thy feet.

65. Just as rivers in great volumes of water pour into the sea, so Nama has followed Thee with singleness of devotion.

66. And so it falls to Thee to perform Thyself everything in Thy affection for him.' Hearing her say this, *Shrirang* (Krishna) smiled.

67. Rukmini added, ' O good Being, Nama's love is extraordinary. Brahmadev would not be able to describe it by His lips. It is always new and beyond comparison.

68. So Thou, O Holder of the disk, must now go taking Nama with Thee and after inviting the Brahmans come back quickly.

69. If all the *siddhis* are favourable, one will not have to worry; if Thou, Lord of Pandhari, hast the wish to do a thing, what canst Thou not do? 70. The calf of the wish-cow does not have to go into the mountains to feed. The sun never has to light a lamp to cause brightness.

71. The ocean does not have to worry as to whether it will rain or not. A person who drinks nectar continually, what does he have for digestible food? 72. Why should the moon make an effort to become cool? How can it be difficult for Sarasvati to compose poetic verses? 73. The elephant-faced (Ganesh) does not have to labour to put away hindrances. Why does one want a mirror to see the bracelet on one's hand? 74. So, O Life of the world, it will not take much effort to feast Brahmans for Nama.' Hearing her say this, the king of *Vaikunth* started on his way.

KRISHNA GOES TO INVITE BRAHMANS

75. Taking Nama's lotus-hand, Krishna walked along. He assembled and took along with Him with great ceremony

a crowd of *bhaktas*. 76. Among them were Nivritti and Dnyandev, Sopan, Visoba Khechar, Chokhamela, Narahari the goldsmith, and Vanka the woodcutter. 77. Sanaka and the others walked on each side, watching the wonderful sight. Behind Nama, the Lord of the Yadavas walked in His love. 78. I will tell you the reason why He walked behind Nama. It was because the Life of the world wished to take the dust of Nama's feet.

79. Hearing this remark, my listeners may raise a doubt: 'How is it that God could wish for the dust of the feet of a *bhakta*?' 80. Know then that in the book called *Tirthavali*, the Lord of the world said this very thing through His own lips. Taking that as my authority I have written the same thing. 81. The Life of the world said with His own lips that He was the object of the suppliant. What cannot the Ocean of mercy, the Cloud of compassion, do? 82. The Brother of the lowly, Helper of the humble, is known world-wide as to His reputation. Therefore you listeners should never have a doubt in your mind.

83. Why should I speak any more on this subject? The *bhaktas* of Vishnu understand its meaning. The Husband of Rukmini hastened to give invitations to the Brahmans. 84. In order that the Life of the world might carry to completion the ambition of His servant He acted as a householder, a merchant, a Brahman, and a host for His *bhaktas*. 85. The king of the Yadavas, along with the *Vaishnavas*, first circumambulated the sacred city, and as he saw the Brahmans, the king of *Vaikunth* arrived on the sands of the river. 86. As soon as he saw the Brahmans, He, the Helper of the helpless, the Husband of Rukmini, the merciful One to the lowly, the Ocean of compassion, reverently made them a *namaskar*. 87. The *Pandits*, the *Vedic* Brahmans, the good and expert listeners, seeing the Life of the world, were amazed. 88. The Life of

the world had taken the form of a citizen, and yet the marks of His six glorious elements [all-sovereignty, all-goodness, all-glory, all-opulence, all-knowledge, all-dispassionateness] were not hidden; just as when gold is mixed with brass, it can never be hidden. 89. Pure silver in the midst of tin a God-loving *bhakta* in the midst of a business life, or the touchstone among other stones, can never be hidden. 90. Just as the *tulsi* plant among other plants; or as the Ganges among other rivers; so among His *bhaktas*, the Dweller in the heaven *Vaikuṇṭh* could not possibly remain hidden. 91. As the diamond can be prominently seen in diamond dust, as nectar can be seen in a plate of delicious food, and as the moon appears brilliant in the midst of clusters of stars, 92. so in this assembly of *Vaiṣṇavas*, the Brahmans were astonished to see the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna). Then with a great joy they spoke very sweetly to Him. 93. 'In seeing Thy form, the three kinds of afflictions [that is, from deities, or from devils, or from fate] have departed. Tell us Thy name, and where hast Thou come from? 94. What is Thy occupation? What business dost Thou conduct? Whereabouts are Thy lodgings? Let us have an answer to these questions.' 95. Hearing these questions of the Brahmans, the Holder of the disk (Krishna) replied, 'Both my family and occupation are known to these *bhaktas*. 96. I am the unconquered One, and the Unassociated, but in all my infinite number of rebirths I have been associated with these in close acquaintance. 97. And now making your feet my witness, I am speaking the exact truth. I am the dear friend of Nama. 98. If you still have any doubts in your minds, then present your sacred thoughts to these saints. With your doubts removed you must come to the feast. 99. I have taken lodgings in the temple. If you ask me my name, it is *Ananta* (the infinite One). Perform the right of bathing and come quickly to the feast.' 100. Hearing

this nectar reply, the Brahmans rejoiced in mind. Replying that they would come at once, the cooking of the feast was completed.

GOD FAR AWAY FROM ALL PRIDE

101. The Life of the world, having heard their reply, returned to the temple, and told Rukmini of the things that had happened. 102. He said, 'O Beloved of my life, listen to me, I have returned after inviting the Brahmans, but some of the conservative and proud did not recognize Me. 103. They saw the glory of My form, and they felt so happy. They asked Me of my family and of My occupation and I told them everything. 104. I spoke to them with My own lips that I was accompanying the saints and that Nama was My dearest friend. 105. The Brahmans asked Me where I lodged and I told them that I lodged in the temple. They asked me my name, and I told them it was *Ananta* (the infinite One). 106. I told them the signs by which they could recognize Me. But they could not make Me out.' Thus speaking, the Life of the world smiled. 107. Rukmini said to Krishna, 'He who always has the idea of differences in his mind, together with pride in his own knowledge, will never meet with the Saviour of the world. 108. He who says his caste and family are pure, has no repentance in his heart; then how can he ever meet with the Holder of the disk (Krishna)? 109. To one who has jaundice, the colour of the moon seems yellow. He whose body is racked with fever says that food is bitter. 110. So those who have pride of their conservative opinions, the knowledge of *bhakti* will not be to their taste. Without reverence towards Thee Thou can never be seen by them. 111. Through their good fortune, O God of gods, Thou hast been found as the storehouse of *Vaikunth*. Today by the good fortune of Nama he is made prosperous.'

KRISHNA'S GIFTS TO NAMDEV

112. While the Mother of the universe was thus speaking, a very novel thing occurred at that moment. In order to prepare the feast, all the eight *siddhis* (accomplishments personified) arrived. 113. Merely by their own wish they came to the great door of the temple. They prepared all the materials for a feast and sprinkled the ground with water mixed with sandalwood paste. 114. Having sprinkled them all according to the rules of the *Bhagwat* they raised banners on the altar of *tulsi*. They planted flags of nine different designs as nine forms of *bhakti* [hearing, reading, calling to mind, washing, outward worship, adoration, service, cultivating friendship, consecration of one's self] in the heavens and made this miracle visible to the eye. 115. Having decorated the houses, they remarked, ' What holy deeds this servant of Vishnu (Nama) has done that by it he has made crazy with love the One without qualities.' Every one was astonished at the sight. 116. Squares of pearls were designed, and decorations of various coloured powders were drawn. Illuminations were made. In short, for the sake of the loving *bhakta* (Nama) an unforeseen ceremony was started. 117. There was a very loud cry of joy. Sweet musical instruments proclaimed their happiness. The *bhaktas* shouted out ' Victory, victory' full of joy. 118. Then they gave Nama a bath, and began to repeat the *mantras* according to religious rites, and commenced the day-blessing (*punyahavachan*) ceremony. 119. Satyabhama, Rai, and Rukmini came bringing their gifts, and they flashed with lightning in the home of the clouds. 120. Then Krishna with His own hands gave gifts to this servant of Vishnu. In His love He put on him garments and ornaments without limit. 121. With supreme joy men and women gazed at the beautiful and joyful sight, and with sincerity they waved the lights over the servant of Vishnu. 122. The One whose complexion is dark as a cloud

(Krishna) with His own hands honoured His servant. This Helper of the helpless, this supreme Being, this Ocean of mercy for all the lowly, did this. 123. And all said to Nama, 'Blessed is your *bhakti*. The happiness which you have attained is unattainable even by Brahmadev.' 124. In the meantime the feast had been cooked and all Brahmans were invited to it. As they came to the great door of the temple they were given seats.

CEREMONY AT COMPLETION OF PILGRIMAGES

125. In order to worship the Brahmans, Krishna Himself sat amongst them; just as when the gods coming together in the heavens said to one another, 126. 'We have been deceived; these *bhaktas* of Vishnu have robbed us of our joy; we drink good nectar, it is true, but we miss the nectar of love; 127. just as if one experienced the deliverance called *Salokta* [living in the same place as the Deity], but further on missed the deliverance called *Sayujyata* [absorption into the Deity]; or as through intimacy with a studied poetic composition, one may miss the blessing of it; 128. or as while doing one's regular religious duties, one may easily fail in doing the occasional ones; or as when one obtains the means of having a desire fulfilled, the means slips away for acquiring a desireless mind which had been attainable; 129. or as if one should visit all the sacred bathing places on the surface of the earth, but should fail in the service that should be rendered to his mother; or as one may serve the inferior deities and yet the possible worship of Vishnu ceases; 130. or as in giving a feast to invited Brahmans, the uninvited guests had to be turned away; so, sitting in the place of the gods we have lost the love of *bhakti*.' 131. Thus the gods in the sky conversed with one another. In the meantime Krishna seated the Brahmans at the great door of the temple for the purpose of worshipping them. 132. He placed broad seats on which were golden designs insaid

with jewels and seated the Brahmans on them. 133. Then with His own hands the Husband of Rukmini washed the feet of the Brahmans. The Life of the world wiped their feet with His yellow robe and in love drew them to His heart. 134. He touched His eyes with their great toes and seated the Brahmans in their proper line. In his love the Lord of the heaven *Vaikuntî* then drank the holy water in which their feet were washed and rejoiced in the act. 135. He rubbed on them a paste made of eight different perfumes. He put garlands of *tulsi* round their necks. The Lord of the world placed on their forehead the mark made with musk-paste. 136. The Lord of *Vaikunth* (Krishna) worshipped them with love. He waved before them incense made of ten different kinds. In His love He waved before them the lighted lamps in a plate inlaid with jewels. 137. Then arranging them in two lines he placed golden plates before them. In her undivided love the good Rukmini served them. 138. She served with four kinds of divine food. Then calling to Nama, the offerings to the gods were made through him. 139. The *bhaktas* shouted aloud, 'Victory, victory, the Husband of Rukmini is the enjoyer of this feast.' Thus remarking, they made offerings to the five vital airs (*pran, apan, vyan, udan, saman*). 140. The chief Actor, God Himself, became the Fulfiller, the Enjoyer, and the Causer of others to act, so there was nothing lacking in all that heart could wish. 141. In the feast of the sun from whence would darkness come ? When listening to the singing of Saraswati, drowsiness will not come to anyone. 142. If the ocean is married, need one be concerned about the water ? In the hot season what need has the moon of a fan ? 143. If a touchstone is placed on an iron anvil, it would not be necessary to guild the anvil. No one becomes afflicted with disease who lives in the heaven of Indra. 144. If one looks to find something that is doubtful in the perfect

book, the *Dnyaneshwari*, he will not find it there. So in the feast given by Nama there was nothing lacking. 145. The Husband of Rukmini frequently prayed, and as the Brahmans listened to His sweet voice they were made happy. 146. They said, 'With every morsel one should take the name of God, in that way a man's eating will result in happiness.' 147. Thus in the feast the minds of all became filled with joy. The Life of the world Himself gave to the Brahmans water for the washing of their hands. 148. Having seated the Brahmans in their places, He gave them *pansupari* made of thirteen ingredients. At that moment it seemed as if the loving desire itself assumed a concrete form. 149. Or one might say, 'By the good fortune of Vishnu, it became visible in form and came to visit Nama; so that in its love the joy with Intelligence (God Himself) was enticed.' 150. Then joining His hands palm to palm, the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) said to the Brahmans, 'I feel as though I wanted to take your blessing (in the form of dinner) in your presence. 151. This is what I would love to do. Therefore I request the *Swamis* to sit for a moment in quietness of mind. 152. After I have finished dining, I shall quickly make the gifts of money. Accept them with satisfied minds and then depart for your homes.' 153. Shri Krishna thought to himself, 'If I should place in their hands the gifts of money before the feast ends, they would not remain sitting here, but would depart without taking leave; 154. just as the relatives do not leave the marriage festival until the marriage gifts have been made; or just as the beggars are not satisfied in their minds until they have taken the charitable gifts.' 155. So thinking in His mind, Shri Krishna said to the Brahmans, 'Through Nama I have been able to serve you. 156. You are the *Vedas* incarnate, worthy of worship by Brahmadev and others, so look upon Me with the eye of mercy. Take care of Me, O

noble Brahmans.' 157. As Krishna thus spoke, it seemed to the Brahmans that it was a nectar voice. Then rejoicing in their minds, they were full of happiness. 158. The earth-gods (Brahmans) replied to Him, 'Thou hast worked very hard, and while Thou hast been worshipping the Brahmans, Thy own dinner has been delayed. 159. Thou didst everything Thyself, and it was very successful. Though we might look to see if anything was lacking, we would never see such a thing. 160. We have today seen a new thing; when we look at the *Swami's* novel reverence, his humility and the respect paid to us, they seem beyond all comparison.' 161. Then the Brahmans learned in the four *Vedas*, repeating the great *mantras* over the rice, threw it on His head as their blessing. 162. 'Mayest Thou be victorious for ever, and be our protector, and mayest Thou live until the end of the ages in the home of the universe.' 163. Then taking rice in His yellow garment, He sprinkled it on Nama's head saying, 'May this love remain for ever in your heart.'

JOYOUS INTERDINING OF GOD AND HIS BHAKTAS

164. (The Brahmans replied): ' Now take these *Vaishnavas* to Thy side and eat, O heap of good qualities. We will quiet our minds and sit beside Thee.' 165. To these words of the Brahmans Krishna replied, ' I will do so.' Just then Rukmini arrived with various kinds of food served on golden plates. 166. Then Satyabhama came quickly with a golden vessel in her hand, and having given them water to sip, a most extraordinary thing happened. 167. The Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna), then called to His side Uddhav and Akrur, Narad and Tumbur as companions in His line of guests.' 168. Nama who was standing at the great door of the temple was called also. But he had lost consciousness of body and his heart overflowed with love. 169. Pandharinath by His

inner light saw him filled with supreme Brahm-joy and rushed to his aid; just as a cow, seeing her young one, hastens towards it with her teats full of milk. 170. The Life of the world lifted Nama up with His four hands and gave him a loving embrace. He brought him back to consciousness and caressed him. 171. Then taking him by the hand, He seated him by His plate that he might eat. As Nama began to sob, the Lord of the world caressed him. 172. As he put each joyous morsel into his mouth, he saw him as the same Supreme Element as Himself, and at once in the form of intelligence He assumed the same form. 173. Then seizing a flag on the eagle-platform, He told Nama one of His secrets. Said He, ' My dearest friend, putting aside the shame of considering ourselves as different, speak to me. 174 When you turn to the secrets of the heart, it is as clear as the heavens without any back or front: so Nama, you are in the closest relation to Me. 175. This is what you recognize in Me, and I recognize the same in you. Recognize in your heart that we are of one essence, O Nama 176. Turn your attention to Me, and in your heart see that I am your dearest friend, I, who am the Unmanifested, am yourself, so I consider. 177. Open your eyes and see this extraordinary performance of the completion of pilgrimage rites on your account, O loving *bhakta*, for you have with you the lamp of knowledge. 178. The chief of *bhaktas* have come to visit you. Speaking to them nectar words, give them the feast of joy. 179. Nivritti is the personification of supreme joy, and here is Dnyandev the associate of all joy. 180. Over there yonder is Sopan, a ferry to take men into their Beyond. O fortunate one, pay him reverence in nectar words.' 181. Saying this, the Husband of Rukmini gave Nama His assuring hand, and he in reverence placed his head on His feet.

NAMDEV ASKS FOR THE BOON OF LOVE

182. Said he, ' In all my rebirths, give me the gift of love to Thee. ' Hearing him say this, the Life of the world smiled. 183. Thus this Lover of *bhaktas* placed morsels of food in Nama's mouth, and Gopal Krishna, the Merciful to the lowly, wiped away the perspiration of weariness of His servant. 184. The hand of assurance which Hari placed on the head of Sanak and the others, that very hand of the Enemy of Putana (Krishna) caressed Nama. 185. Vanamali (Krishna) said to Nama, ' Drop all your concern, I am near you to give you rest. I shall always care for you. 186. You laboured hard on your journey, and your body has become emaciated by separation from Me; your moon-face has lost its glow; your eyes lack lustre for want of sleep. 187. No one has paid attention to your thirst or hunger from the time that you went away from Me. Aside from you My eyes have seen nothing to please Me. 188. As I could not control Myself My eyes turned to the ten different directions. I said to Myself, " When will Nama the servant of Vishnu return to Me ?" 189. Becoming in My mind impatient I looked for you at the eagle-platform. Not seeing you there, I used to look for you at the great door of the temple on the banks of the Bhima. 190. If you were not at the sacred bathing place at Padmatirtha, then I looked for you at the Venunad, but not seeing you anywhere I was very sorrowful. 191. As I, the Life of the world, sat down to eat or as each day I took My drink of nectar, I remembered you, saying to Myself that you would hasten to come; 192. that in your impatience you would rush to meet Me ; that in your love you would give Me an embrace ; and that you would tell Me the secrets of your heart. This was the wish I kept in My heart.' 193. As the compassionate One said these things, there was a full tide of feelings of mercy, just as the mother rejoices, when she sees her loved child ; 194. in

the same way the king of the heaven *Vaikunth* rained down His love on Nama. Anyone who drinks that divine juice never finds it distasteful. 195. In this way, the Holder of the disk (Krishna) supplies the wish of His *bhaktas*. Then at that moment He performed a wonderful deed. Listen to it, you pious folk.

KRISHNA SHOCKS THE BRAHMANS

196. Krishna ate with a feeling of fondness what Nama had left on his plate. Seeing this, all the Brahmans were astonished, and feeling shocked they hung their heads down. 197. The Brahmans considered it a strange act, and discussed it among themselves: ' What are we to think about it ? He has truly violated the caste's religious rules. 198. His wives served the food, and we know not of what caste they are. They were neither *Kshatriyas* nor Brahmans, neither *Vaishnavas* nor *Shudras*. 199. His doings are unfathomable. He seemed different from the four castes. How is it that we forgot this when seeing His acts that are beyond comparison ? 200. Now we must regard this as certain that He is Nama's mother and father, and that He loves him in body, mind and speech. 201. He took the rice in His yellow garment and sprinkled it over Nama's head, and when the offering of food to the god was to be performed He made him the leader in it. 202. Disasters are continually being created, and such have happened now. Now let no one discuss with any other regarding this or ever speak of it. '

203. In the next chapter the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) will speak to Brahmans. You wise listeners, learned in the *sidhanta* (established facts), give your attention. 204. Just as when a diamond is sunk in an anvil it comes out at the sight of the diamond dust, so fortunate saints, through knowledge gained by experience, know the secrets of God. 205. Hunger is sweeter than

food, therefore it satisfies the desire for food. If there was no desire in the heart to listen to the stories of Hari, they would not seem sweet to anyone. 206. The relator of this version of the *Tirthavali* [see verse 80] is the Husband of Rukmini. Mahipati in his love speaks of himself as His slave and servant.

207. *Swasti* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the thirteenth deeply delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER XIV NAMDEV'S LIFE

(Continued)

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Gopal Krishna.

THE RITE COMPLETING NAMA'S PILGRIMAGES

1. My mind is very happy to-day in relating the rite connected with the completion of Nama's wanderings, and I have invited you, good people, to sit down in lines for the feast. 2. On the golden plates of joy, the delicious food composed of the nine juices has been served. The *Vaishnava bhaktas* partake of its sweetness and become eternal. 3. You may ask who are sitting at this feast. Nivriddhi, Dayandev, Sopan, Gora the potter, all *Vaishnavas*; also Savata and Narahari, 4. Uddhav, Akrur, Narad, Tumbar, and the limitless number of noble *Vaishnavas*, all of whom Krishna seated in lines. 5. As they tasted the delicious divine juices, all the saints were satisfied. That which they left on their plates has unexpectedly fallen into our mouths. 6. As soon as we had the great and wonderful favour an extraordinary thing occurred, inasmuch as the priceless stories of God's *bhaktas* out of love came to our lips. 7. Just as whatever seed is planted in the earth, it later yields fruit just like itself, so through the favour of the saints we have received the stories of their lives.

KRISHNA ACCUSED OF BREAKING CASTE

8. Now listen, you hearers. In the previous chapter there was described how the Life of the world ate with intense delight what remained on Nama's plate. 9. When the Brahmins saw him do this their minds were filled with astonishment and they said, 'We do not recognize who this violator of caste-rules may be. 10. In eating food at his house we have fallen from our religious duty.

Now let us never accuse one another. 11. When making a journey, if anyone eats what he has begged for, or if in time of famine one has eaten the food of a *Shudra*, or if in the age of ignorance one has performed some immoral deed, one should never tell of it. 12. If a friend tells you something in private, or if a miser sees a pile of wealth, or if one's domestic life is going on badly, one should never speak of it. 13. If while giving a feast to a thousand Brahmans a dog should accidentally touch the food, a wise person who sees this act should never speak of it.' 14. Then one of the good Brahmans spoke up and said, 'If we have not observed our religious duties, why should we perform another evil act, and hide our true duty?' 15. If ignorantly some fault attaches itself to us, some penance may be performed. After we have confessed our wrong deeds to men, our fault does not remain a single moment. 16. If we have any faults, we should tell them to others, but with repentance. If any one reviles us for doing so, that very act destroys our fault. 17. So now without any hesitation we should turn him out of caste and repeating the *Gayatri-mantra* we shall remain pure. 18. Things done in the confusion of ignorance are not called a sin. In the *Dharma Shastra* this remedy is open to every one.' 19. Thinking of it this way, the noble Brahmans went silently away and the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) then invited them to him. 20. The Husband of Rukmini said to them, 'Why is your heart in doubt? With sad faces you are all hurrying away. 21. What doubt have you in your heart? Kindly tell Me, and in telling Me the secrets of your heart do not hold them back in the least degree.' 22. The Life of the world said this, and then gave them gifts of diamonds, precious jewels and gold mixed with the leaves of *tulsi*, as a means of pacifying them. 23. He then lifted Nama up and put him at the feet of the Brahmans saying,

'Be favourable to him.' This is what the Enemy of Mura (Krishna) said, 24. and He added, 'If you have any other natural doubts, tell them to Me.' As the eagle-bannered One spoke these words, the Brahmans said to Him, 25. 'They say that Nama is a tailor. This has been plainly said to us. How is it that you sat down with him in the same line? 26. Putting aside your duty, you ate with him. You ate what was left on his plate without giving the matter a single thought. 27. What feelings of love have you held in your mind that you should have given your love to Nama? We certainly do not understand this extraordinary action of your compassion. 28. As we thought of the matter you seem to us one whose actions are merely outward, for your extraordinary and strange deeds seem to change moment by moment. 29. We do not see in you any observance of the law relating to the different castes. Although we have thought over the matter, we certainly do not understand it. 30. It would seem that in your eyes praiseworthy and unpraiseworthy seem to be alike. The idea of a difference never seems to have touched your mind. 31. You are acting on the understanding that the inhabitants of the world are just as you are; just as to the touchstone, iron and gold are alike. 32. To the ocean the water of the Ganges and that of a little streamlet are both alike. Water regards the tiger and a cow as equal. 33. Three seasons, the cold, the hot and the rainy seasons, are the same to the sky. To the cloud, a street gutter, a river and a streamlet are all the same. 34. To the wish-tree, a prince and a pauper are equal. The sandalwood of Mount Maila is cooling to everyone alike. 35. The sun shines alike on thieves, on immoral men and on good men. So also it would seem that praiseworthy men and those to be despised are the same to you. 36. Every one thinks that others are like themselves, just as when King Dharma searched for-

an evil person he could not find one. 37. You wore the appearance of a Brahman and we pinned our faith on that. But your inner purpose, O *Swami*, we do not clearly understand. 38. Every one should seek his own good and should raise the question in his mind regarding what is wrong and what is right; he should establish the truth of the *Vedas* by acting according to the prescribed rules. 39. You seem to be learned in all knowledge. You seem an expert in all the *Shastras*. Now pay respect to the commands of the *Vedas* and observe their prescribed forms. 40. You have cast aside the principles of the *Shastras* and shown great love for Nama. This we see now for a certainty.'

KRISHNA ANSWERS THE ACCUSATION

41. The Husband of Rukmini, after listening to the remarks of the noble Brahmans, said, 'Do not blame Me for having had Nama dine along with Me. 42. The Soul that is the Mover and the Pervader of all things, how can it be spoken of as either praiseworthy or worthy of being despised? Neither holiness nor sin is able to touch Me. 43. I am Pure Intelligence without spot, the All-Pervading Soul, the Internal Witnesser, undefiled by anything. 44. Nama's body is that of a tailor, and is made up of the five primary elements [earth, water, light, wind and space]; just as when the sky is covered with clouds there does not seem to be any separate clouds. 45. What member of Nama's body makes him Namdev? Give Me your careful opinion. 46. If in your eyes there are faults in light, water, earth, air or space, then it must be of your own creation. 47. You are Brahmans who repeat the *Vedas*; you are learned in all *Shastras*; but you have not yet reached the condition of divine knowledge. 48. Your illusion regarding essential distinctions has not yet left you, but the doubts have grown in your minds. When Nama made the offering of food to the gods, you did not take this into

consideration. 49. And you did not tell Me that you had no right to partake of the food of a tailor, therefore I pleaded with you again and again and told you the secret of action. 50. By means of this occasion with Nama, I have been able to serve you to-day. Although you heard Me say this, you have not understood Me. 51. The rice over which *mantras* were recited was given me as a favour, and I threw it on the head of Nama. I am independent of all, yet you have called Me dependent. I am desireless, yet you have attributed desires to Me. 52. Though I am really not a doer, yet you have made Me a doer. And though you have heard this explanation of Mine, you still do not recognize Me. 53. You partook of the feast without any doubts in your mind, and I accepted what remained on your plates. Now tell me what is the prescribed penalty for this in the scripture lawbooks? 54. I have this one purpose, to take on Me the dust from the feet of this servant of Hari (Nama), and to drink the water in which your feet are washed, that I may for ever be purified. 55. Aside from these means all religious rites, austerities and gifts seem to be in vain'. Thus spoke the Life of the world who continued thus: 56. 'Only these will I regard as true means. Nor shall I ever forget My *bhaktas* or men in their trouble; just as a mother never forgets her infant child; 57. and as a miser does not forget his wealth; and as a doe never forgets her young; and as the *lava* bird is always thinking of her little ones; 58. and as fishes never forget the water; so My *bhaktas* are always in My mind, O noble Brahmans. 59. *Bhaktas* are My very heart. In their good fortune they don the garment of knowledge and continually partake of the juice of love, namely, *bhakti* and indifference to worldly things. 60. Association with one another is to saints their life-giving nectar; wearing the steel armour of love they are ever without fear. 61. My true *bhaktas* do not bring to their sight the four chief ends of the existence of man

[namely, the acquisition of merit, the pursuit of fame, the enjoyment of the pleasures of sense, and the seeking and working out of final deliverance]; even the four kinds of deliverance are matters for their minds to despise. 62. To sing My name with joy, this is their eternal musical instrument. And the well-known platter of their aim has the lights lighted on them. 63. They regard the happiness of Indra's dignity as perishable; just as when the wise men see the shadow made by a cloud, they do not regard it as perpetual; 64. and just as one seeking lodgings and seeing a royal palace does not take refuge there; and just as when wise men see a flood in a mirage, they regard it as false; 65. so (My *bhaktas*), becoming indifferent to worldly passions, have no desire for the home of the immortals. For this reason I dwell for ever in their hearts. 66. In searching for such a *bhakta* I have seen only Nama the tailor; one who has experienced My love in his heart. 67. Therefore it was in My love for him that I ate what was left on his plate. In comparing it (My love), all comparison with divine juices is a faulty one.'

KRISHNA'S GLORIFICATION OF PANDHARI

68. (Krishna added): 'Pandharpur, the sacred city for deliverance, is the treasure-house of all the sacred bathing-places, and if one should look all over the world, another like it cannot be seen. 69. A *jivanmukta* (one free while living) and a wise man and chief among the *bhaktas* was the *Muni* Pundalik. He sat down for contemplation of the most supreme Krishna. 70. And this Bhima river flowing towards the south gives the nectar of immortality. She is the mistress of an abundant joy and shines with the water of that supreme joy. 71. Anyone who sees this Chandrabhaga river from a distance will not have to return to rebirths. When the Bhagirathi river looked at her (the Chandrabhaga) she

felt ashamed and hid away. 72. The Bhagirathi feeling a sense of fear joined with the ocean, and the Bhogavati hastened with extreme speed to the lower regions. 73. In such a sacred city my servants have lived continually day and night, and in the joy of their love they unceasingly shout my names. 74. With joy filling his heart Nama danced in the *kirtans* in the name of Hari. When one goes in search through the three worlds for such joy he will not see it anywhere else.' 75. The good Being also said to the Brahmans, 'He who with his lips repeats My name, whether with some desire in his heart or without a desire, such an one is my dearest friend and relative. 76. I love him more than I love Myself and I will not put him away. He is My family deity whom I worship in reverence. 77. I *Vanamali* (Krishna), *Sacchidanand* (truth, intelligence and joy), am attracted by the family of the servants of Hari. In this world My widespread reputation dwells in the assembly of *bhaktas*. 78. I am quite crazy over My *bhaktas*, and the remnants which are left on their plates I put into My mouth as I very gladly stand before the saints. 79. I think them exceedingly delicious and as I partake of them they seem tasty and sweet. By taking these remnants that remain on their plates My body becomes eternally plump. 80. The brilliant childlike lustre of My body, My eternal victory and wealth, My prosperity, plumpness and satisfaction, are the constant result of My partaking of the food of the *bhaktas*. 81. These saints visit Me like relatives and create for Me the joyous festival of *Divali* (the festival of lights); just as when the *chār* or bird sees the moon, it is full of happiness through the joy of love. 82. Therefore it was that with a very longing heart I had Nama dining along with Me. This is exactly as it happened. Now what is your next thought ?'

NECESSITY OF KRISHNA OBEYING VEDIC RULES

83. The Husband of Rukmini having said this, the Brahmans replied, ' We now understand perfectly that you are an ocean of goodness. 84. But the duties which have been prescribed in the *Vedas* should be performed by You. According to a man's condition should be a man's conduct. 85. The first duty is the observance of caste rules. The rule of constantly keeping himself clean and speaking the truth, is the rule applicable to a Brahman. 86. Forgiveness and control of one's sense are his austerities. He must have perfect compassion for all creatures. He should give thought unceasingly to the contemplation of Brahma. 87. In addition to his religious bath, his devotions, his worship of God and his constant sacrifices, he should study the *Vedas* with a satisfied mind. 88. He should perform well the worship of fire and of uninvited guests and the offering of food to God and he should give such an oblation to God, to *Rishis*, and to ancestors whereby God may be pleased. 89. In this way having performed the prescribed rules, he should then eat and in the third watch of the day he should listen with a satisfied mind to the *Puranas*. 90. With a mind full of joy he should put his trust in the words of the *Vedas*. You are equipped with all knowledge of goodness. Now think for yourself what is for your good. 91. If you throw aside what is your special duty, how can mankind be saved? If animals that live in the water leave it, then what way have they for remaining alive? 92. If an infant does not take its nourishment from its mother's breast, it can have no other way of obtaining food. If a bird discards the space where can it go? 93. If the lotus will not look at the sun, how will it flower? If the bee does not partake of honey, how can it be made happy? 94. If a fly leaves the heap of sugar, how can it meet with happiness? So if a

Brahman discards his own special duties, one sees disaster before him. 95. So putting aside your pride, make your mind pure through repentance. Perform those acts which your reputation will increase in both worlds. 96. Go to the Chandrabhaga river, and there bathe accompanied by the rites of repeating the *mantras*. Give gifts of gold to the Brahmins and perform the *punyahavachan* (day-blessing ceremony). 97. Listen, you wise and expert One, and circumambulate the sacred city. By doing so, your family will become holy. 98. Only by doing this will your fault of eating what was left on Nama's plate be put away.'

FOUR KINDS OF BATHING

Hearing these words of the Brahmins, the Soul of the universe replied, 'I certainly will do so.' 99. *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart, Krishna) then said to the Brahmins, 'Your command is My authority, but I have one request to make with my whole body and speech.' 100. The One who is dark as a cloud (Krishna) further said to the Brahmins, 'Take care of Nama. Though I have searched, I have found no God-loving *bhakta* equal to him. 101. You are righteous teachers of the *Vedas*. The stream of your words has the form of sacred waters. O *Swamis*, I have already well bathed in the water of your truthful words. 102. I am the Beginning, the Unconquered and the *Adhokshaja* (the Pervader of earth and sky). But I have faith in you. You are worthy of My supreme worship. Indeed, you are My supreme deity. 103. You tell me to perform a bath. Bathing is of four different kinds. I will explain this clearly to you. 104. Know that to hear and meditate on the *Puranas* and *Hari-kirtans* is superior to all forms of bathing. 105. No one has ever declared that any bathing was of more value than experience, than study, or than

the vision of the supreme Spirit. 106. The second form of bathing is that of making oneself clean within and without. Anyone who has the good fortune to accomplish this, does not require any other means. 107. The third form of bathing is to put all your organs of sense under control and to destroy all desire. If anyone performs this bathing, why should he need other rites? 108. The fourth form of bathing superior to all others, is to have compassion on all creatures. Seldom can there be found one good man out of a thousand who has performed this bath. 109. If anyone should ask Me regarding the fifth form of bathing it is the bathing with water. This bathing is spoken of as merely for the public eye. 110. Lust, anger, avarice, caste-feeling, seductions and hypocrisy are hereditary in one's body. They do not leave one by bathing in water. 111. So they must first be driven out by means of right thinking, and by a heart indifferent to earthly things. This purification of the heart must be obtained through association with saints. 112. The fact of the infinite number of rebirths is itself called a penance for the person who has the regular rule of repeating the names, Ram, Krishna, Govinda. 113. Exactly as your mental state is, so will you reap its fruit. To My mind Nama seems spotless.'

KRISHNA UNDERGOES A PENANCE

114. Having said this, the God of gods made the following request to the Brahmans, 'Put aside all your doubts in your feelings. 115. Let us, *bhaktas* of Vishnu, you and all of us, hasten to the Chandrabhaga river, and I will accept whatever penance you may prescribe for Me.' 116. The Husband of Rukmini, who enjoys the drama of His own *līlā* (acts), the loved Ornament of His *bhaktas*, accomplished before His *bhaktas* marvellous deeds of *Maya*. 117. Then *Vanamali* (Krishna), taking Nama's hand and pressing it against His lotus-heart, hastened

to the Chandrabhaga river with a crowd following. 118. Men and women came there to see the marvellous deed. Indra and Brahmadev and the other gods stood by looking on. 119. The Holder of the disk (Krishna) with a crowd of saints walked in front of the procession, and the noble Brahmans hastened along in the rear. 120. In this way the Lord of the heaven *Vaikunth* arrived at the Chandrabhaga and made a *namaskar* to Pundalik, and the servants of Vishnu shouted aloud God's name. 121. Krishna then walked around the noble Brahmans and began the bathing prescribed in the scriptures. He whom the Husband of Mridani (Shiva) is unable to contemplate, He took in his hand *til* seed, the sacred *darbha* grass and flowers. 122. As the Brahmans repeated the *mantras* prescribed in the *Vedas*, He rubbed on Himself cowdung and ashes. Then the Life of the world, Wearer of the yellow robe, showed a wonder to His servants. 123. He let down His curled hair on His back. With very wide and lotus-eyes, the Lover of Rukmini, the One dear to His *bhaktas*, showed them a marvel. 124. This Life of the world, the Dweller upon the sea of milk, for whose sake many forms of austerities and postures in *yoga* are practised, He lovingly took the penance. 125. He whose name alone destroys faults and delivers His *bhaktas* from rebirths, the Giver of the promise to Pundalik, the Lord of the world, even He gladly took the penance. 126. One might search through the *Vedas* and *Shastras* and yet not understand His power—even to that blameless One it was that the Brahmans gave the penance. 127. He from whose big toe the holy Ganges started, Him they stood in the water and gave Him the penance. 128. He who is the Immoveable, the Changeless, the Eternal, the perfect One, the Pervader of the Universe, the Mass of Intelligence, they gave Him the penance of being rubbed over with cowdung and ashes. 129. The Dweller in *Vaikunth*, *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of

the heart), the Ornament of His *bhaktas*, the Lord of the world, although blameless, was charged with sin and given penance. 130. After having properly bathed He clothed Himself with the yellow garment. He drank the water in which the Brahmans' feet were washed, and in love bowed His head to them. 131. The Lord of the world then worshipped His *bhaktas*, and having bathed and worshipped He thus finished the regular ceremonies. 132. After worshipping the Brahmans, he gave them gifts according to the prescribed rules, and then the Life of the world said to the Brahmans, 'You have now patronised Me. 133. I have accomplished your most cherished desire. From now on, never bring into your minds any doubtful thoughts regarding Me. 134. I have accomplished all you have asked Me to do. Now consider Me as yourselves.* Listen to what the eagle-bannered One did after thus speaking.

KRISHNA RETURNS TO HIS TEMPLE

135. He gave the Brahmans leave to depart and Him-

*Three different readings are found in the *Bhaktavijaya*, Ch. XIV 134, as follows:—

- (1) आतां अगत्यरूप माना मज. This is the reading in all printed editions, and would appear to be quite meaningless.
- (2) आतां आत्मरूप माना मज. This reading is found in the Taharabadkar and Naik Mss. and is translated as 'Now consider Me as yourselves.'
- (3) आतां अगत्यरूप नामा मज. This reading is adopted by Lakshman Babu Gokhale in the Induprakash Edition of 1888, and may be translated as 'Now Nama is the most essential thing to me.'
- (4) आतां आत्मरूप नामा मज. This is a fourth possible reading and it is tempting to regard it as correct in accordance with the widely accepted principle in dealing with ancient documents, viz., the unusual reading is often the correct one. This reading would be translated, 'Now Nama is My own Self.'

self returned to His temple, accompanied by all the *bhaktas* who in joy shouted aloud His name. 136. Then Satyabhama, Radha and Rukmini brought different kinds of food, and served it before them. Krishna lovingly sat down in the assembly of His *bhaktas* to eat. 137. Just as the moon is glorious with all the clusters of stars around it, so the Husband of Rukmini in His joy sat down in the assembly of *Vaishnavas*. 138. In His love the Life of the world put morsels of food in the mouths of each one, and on His yellow robe in His affection caught whatever food fell from their mouths. 139. Having completed His love-feast, He gave to the *bhaktas* the *pansupari*. Then the Husband of Rukmini laid down on His bed of ease. 140. The *Vaishnavas* took leave of Him and went to their homes. With joy and love they worshipped Him in their heart.

NARAD VISITS KRISHNA

141. Just then Narad arrived in haste with a *brahmana* in his hand. He was singing with his sweet voice in very delightful words. 142. The God-loving *bhakta* arrived singing of the pure and blessed name of God, then hastened to approach Pandurang, and bowed to Him. 143. The Husband of Rukmini suddenly saw Narad, the statue of indifference to earthly things, possessor of the joy of love. 144. Krishna lovingly gave him an embrace, and said to this son of Brahmadev, 'Your singing seems to Me beyond all comparison.' 145. Hearing Him say this, Narad was choked with emotion. Tears fell from his eyes. Then with joy he sang of Krishna's good deeds and name. 146.

Victory to Thee, who gavest the promise to Pundalik, Helper of the helpless, Dweller on the banks of the Bhima, Husband of Rukmini, Ocean of mercy, overflowing with joy, Thou didst personally protect Thy *bhaktas*. 147. Victory to Thee, lotus-eyed *Shrirang* (Krishna), Ornament of Thy *bhaktas*, eternally unchangeable, O Saviour of the universe,

Pandurang, associated with what has no associate, and for ever the same. 148. Victory to Thee, Enjoyer of the sea of milk, Father of Brahmadev, King of the Heaven *Vaikunth*. Through repeating Thy name alone, Thou drivest away illusory thought from Thy *bhaktas*. 149. Victory, victory to Thee, Ocean of compassion, Lord of the earth. Thou dost stand upon the banks of the Bhima, and when pious *bhaktas* come to visit Thee, Thou dost protect them with Thy look of mercy.' 150. Narad sang His praises in this way, and then performed over the Husband of Rukmini the waving ceremony. Having finished this song of praise, he prostrated himself before Him. 151. The god then hung around Narad's neck a garland made of *champak* flowers and the *tulsi*. The son of Brahmadev having worshipped God, departed.

RADHA PERPLEXED BY THE CHARGE AGAINST KRISHNA

152. Radha came to Rukmini and whispered to her, 'I am feeling exceedingly strange in my lotus-heart. 153. What fault has the Friend of the *bhaktas* committed today, that He had to take penance and purify Himself? 154. I have this doubt in my mind. Therefore I ask you. How can the Unmanifested One commit a fault as to what is duty and not duty? 155. The unusual has happened today, such as would be the confining of the sun in darkness, or of sinking the ocean in a pool of water, or of imprisoning the Ganges in a well, 156. or like the moon growing warm, or like the confining of the wind in a cage. How could Agasti tremble with fear seeing the ocean? 157. How could the sun be hidden by the light of the stars? How can nectar die with disease? 158. If all space could be confined in a jar, or a mountain make adamant tremble, then only could the Lord of the heart be in any bondage to duties, so I think. 159. If seed that had been roasted and then sown can grow luxuriously, then

only could the Lord of our life be entangled in the bondage of duties. 160. Tell me everything. Who has been troubling the dark-complexioned One? You are all knowing and my elder. Tell me, because I am ignorant.' 161. Rukmini replied, 'O noble One, the eagle-bannered One has put away all shame of lowering His greatness and has accepted the performance of penance for Nama's sake. 162. Listen, you intelligent One but ignorant of facts! This Krishna, Helper of the helpless, has been attracted through the *bhakti* rendered to Him and He cannot bear separation from Nama. 163. This *Sachchidananda* (Krishna) has become confused through His love for Nama, and so has accepted duties that are auspicious and non-auspicious. 164. Notice the power of affection. What will one not do through it? This is the universal experience. O mother, I will describe it to you. 165. A child might be blind, lame, dumb and of lisping speech, but its mother because of her love always has sympathy with it. 166. Crazy for her child through her love, she plays only with it. A child of another might be more beautiful, but she pays no attention to it. 167. She pays no attention to any malformation in her child, so she says to herself, 'Perhaps an evil eye will fall upon it.' So she takes that away (by waving her hands over it, and cracking her knuckles) and kisses it on the face. 168. Just so with love in his heart, the Holder of the disk (Krishna) cares for his *bhaktas*. He pays no respect to their caste or family. He loves them more than He does His own life. 169. This debt of love, through His love of body, mind and speech, has come down from the infinite rebirths of the past. 170. God loves him deeply. He has never been separated from Him. Keshav (God) has always held this love for His dearest Nama. ' 171. Hearing Rukmini say this, Radha was quite satisfied. In silence she bowed to her, and then went to her home.

NARAD VISITS SATYABHAMA

172. In the meantime, Narad arrived at the house of Satyabhama. The beautiful one paid him her respects and seated him on a couch of ease. 173. The wife of Shri Krishna (Satyabhama) said to him, ' I consider it very strange that the King of *Vaikunth* (heaven) should put aside His greatness and dance in the midst of the *kirtan*. 174. In what past birth did He become a debtor to Nama, so that now the One dark as a cloud carries out his many wishes? 175. Though His love for Pundalik, *Shrirany* (Krishna) stood on a brick. Twenty-eight ages have already passed since then, but He is not weary of it. 176. Although Pundalik made the Saviour of the world stand on the brick, He never turned his back on that position. The cruel one (Pundalik) does not even speak to Him, although the Saviour of the universe was made to suffer. 177. Although it was thus, the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) stood upon the brick, and without giving thought to it, continued to protect the door of Bali. 178. Seeing their love for Him, He protected the Pandavas in many ways. He felt no shame in His heart while carrying out the purposes of His *bhaktas*. 179. Thus Madhav (Krishna) personally performed very marvellous deeds, and to fulfil the purposes of His *bhaktas* He wearied His own body, without any necessity for doing so. 180. There must be in this age on the surface of the earth a great number of His *bhaktas*. How can I give you the whole list of their names? 181. Therefore I feel much troubled in my mind that His *bhaktas*, exciting His love, weary Him through acts expressing it.'

SATYABHAMA'S DOUBT ABOUT KRISHNA DISPELLED

182. As Satyabhama thus spoke, Narad replied, 'Listen, O mother, to what I am going to tell you. You must regard it as true. 183. This Being without form, this Life

of the world, had as His only reason for becoming an *avatar*, the purpose of protecting His *bhaktas* through many forms of activities. And for this reason He came in bodily form. 184. It was as if the earth took form in order to bear the weight of things animate and inanimate; or it was as if the sun descended to give light to men; 185. or as if the internal digestive fire descended to burn and digest the food; or as if grass was made to grow for the purpose of removing the hunger of the cow; 186. or as if *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) had created the space for birds to fly about in; or as if He had created the night in order to give mankind rest; 187. or as if divine jewels had been formed to provide the bodies of the beautiful ones with ornaments; or as if nectar had been created to save the life of those whose life has come to an end; 188. so *Adhokshaja* (the Pervader of earth and sky) became a Being with qualities that He might carry out the purpose of His *bhaktas*. In dropping His greatness He is not ashamed and he manifests His *līlā* (sports) with ease. 189. O you wise one, you know that this Helper of the helpless, Lover of the *bhaktas*, Ocean of compassion, Merciful to the lowly, this dark-complexioned One, preserves His reputation by so doing. 190. The Lord of the heart personally suffered births in Ambarishi's place and at the same time being indifferent to earthly things He guarded the door of Bali without feeling ashamed of doing so. 191. He became a slave, and with body, mind and speech this merciful Husband of yours protected the Pandavas. 192. Becoming the son of Nanda He protected the cows in Gokul, and taking the food left on the plates by the cowherds He tasted it in love. 193. Seeing a great danger approaching, He threw Himself into the midst of it and broke the bondage of His *bhaktas*. Such are His praiseworthy deeds. 194. All we His *bhaktas* are entirely portions of Him, but today He has become a complete *avatar* for

Nama's sake, in a visible form, with qualities.' 195. The *Muni Narad*, having explained these things to *Satyabhama*, quickly left.

KRISHNA'S SECRETS REVEALED TO RUKMINI

Just then *Rukmini* came to the bed on which the Holder of the disk (*Krishna*) was lying and worshipped Him. 196. With reverence she placed her head on His feet, and said to Him, 'O Lord of *Pandhari*, tell me what You like above everything else. 197. O Lover of His *bhaktas*, Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven), remove this anxious doubt from me. Your mind is not where the eight forms of *yoga** are through which the *Yogis* obtain their salvation. 198. Where the *Yogi* sits in contemplation, there Your mind does not take pleasure. You have no love for *Vaikunth* (heaven), This I clearly recognize. 199. Your mind has no fondness for the happiness and enjoyments of heaven. Your mind is always depressed. Tell me why this is so. 200. In giving final deliverance to the *Yogis*, You have absorbed them into that which is without qualities, and I know of no one closer to You than they. 201. Your four-faced son (*Brahmadev*) worships You in His wise way. And the four *Vedas* and the eighteen *Puranas* describe Your attributes. 202. But unable to express them fully, they say, "It is not this. It is not that." The question is discussed in the six *Shastras*, but your incomparable reputation is unknown to them.' 203. Hearing *Rukmini* say this, the Lord of the heart said to her, 'You call yourself a wise

*The eightfold *yoga*:—1. यम = Restraint or government of the senses. 2. नियम = A religious observance. 3. आसन = Posture or attitude. 4. प्राणायाम = Breathing. 5. प्रत्याहार = Withdrawing or restraining the organs from the objects of sense. 6. धारणा = Suspending the breath, abstracting the mind, and restraining all natural wants. 7. ध्यान = Profound and abstract contemplation. 8. समाधि = Deep and devout meditation; restraining the senses and confining the mind to contemplation; abstracted or absorbed state.

woman, but you do not know the secret of My heart. 204. Now I will tell you the secret of My heart, that in body, speech and mind, dear Nama is for ever in My thoughts. 205. I tell you these secrets of My heart today. It is they whom I love, these pious, dear *bhaktas*. 206. I am the formless One, One without attributes, and yet for the purpose of My *bhaktas* I have come, assuming form and name. 207. My soul loves My *bhaktas*. My *bhaktas* are the resting-places of the wise. Know this that the *bhaktas* are the storehouse of My love. 208. Know well that My *bhaktas* are the ornaments of My good fortune. The *bhaktas* are the treasure-house of My goodness. I am always subject to them. 209. The *bhaktas* are My victory and praiseworthy deeds. They are My happiness. When I meet them they provide all the desires of My heart. 210. Know this, that I and My *bhaktas* will never be separated to the end of time. The *bhaktas* alone know the joy of worshipping Me. 211. I repeat the names of My *bhaktas*. I contemplate their form in My imagination and it is My pleasure from time to time to look to the joy of My *bhaktas*. 212. It is My *bhaktas* alone who are always thinking of My feet. It is they who sing of My good qualities, and worship Me with desireless minds. 213. If I give them the four chief earthly gifts, including the four forms of deliverance, they will not so much as touch them with their hands. The *bhaktas* never put on Me the burden of supplying their domestic wants. 214. I am the heart of My *bhaktas*. They are My nearest relatives. Considered from every side, My *bhaktas* seem more generous than I am. 215. Therefore, I Keshav (Krishna) have no desire to go away from being near to Nama's heart.' 216. While the Husband of Rukmini was saying this, the sun arose. What then happened further, listen with reverence, you wise *bhaktas*.

MANY LANGUAGES BUT ONE MEANING

217. This delightful story of *bhakti* without comparison has been related in this fourteenth chapter, just as in the eleventh section of the *Bhagwat* Shri Krishna spoke to Uddhava. 218. In that book the delightful chapter is the twenty-ninth. In it are poured out nothing but divine juices. So in this *Bhaktavijaya*, it is the fourteenth that does this. 219. You may say, 'Your verses are in Marathi, and you yet compare them with that supreme *Gita*.' But that is not truly so. Listen to my observation on this point. 220. In the *Tirthavali*, Shri Dnyaneshwar has spoken with his own lips. I have taken his words as my authority and described things as he does. 221. When you turn to the meanings of words, the Marathi and Sanskrit are considered by men as conveying the same sense, just as the cow has two names, *gautami* (Sanskrit) and *gaya* (Marathi) but she gives only one kind of milk. 222. You use two words in speaking of the ocean, *payobdhi* and *sagar*, but there is no difference in their waters, therefore *pandits* must not speak of a Marathi book as being inferior.

223. In the next very delightful chapter the Holder of the disk (Krishna) will be the composer of the book. Mahipati having received His gift of assurance will always be without fear.

224. *Swasti* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. As the Lord of the world listens to it He will be pleased. Listen, you God-loving pious *bhaktas*. This is the fourteenth very delightful chapter.

CHAPTER XV NAMDEV'S LIFE

(Continued)

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Rukmini and Pandurang

BHAKTAVIJAYA IS FOR LOVERS OF SAINTS

1. Listen with reverence, you hearers. Today the Husband of Rukmini 'is especially pleased with you. Therefore He has made the stories of His *bhaktas* widely known and in detail over the whole of the earth. 2. When a cloud has rained for the sake of the *chatak* bird; or when the moon has arisen for the *chakor* bird; or as fishes rejoice when the ocean is stirred up for their sake; 3. or as the sandalwood descended in order to cool the body of good men; or as the sun arises to make the whole world happy; 4. or as if a limitless forest of *tulsi* should spring up in order to complete fully the worship of Vishnu; or as when the *bilva* tree grows up to make glad the Husband of Uma (Shiva); 5. or as when in the spring-time flowers appear in order to give pleasure to the nostrils; or as when a cloud rains upon the earth in order to make mankind happy; 6. or as when the Godavari river came down on the surface of the earth in order to wash away the sins of Gautam; or as if the nectar should appear in the ocean in order to satisfy the gods; 7. so, for you who listen with fondness, these stories of the saints have been composed. Listen with reverence, you pious folk, to a summary of the previous chapter. 8. The Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) had said to Rukmini, ' I intensely love all My *bhaktas*, but I always feel a limitless love for Nama more intense than for others.'

KRISHNA AND HIS BHAKTAS MEET

9. While the Holder of the disk (Krishna) was carrying on this conversation (with Rukmini) the sun

arose. Just then all the *bhaktas* arrived for worship. 10. They shouted aloud the names of Krishna, and with loud cries of 'Victory, victory', they prostrated themselves before Him. Just as the bee lovingly buzzes over the lotus flower; 11. or just as the little child, seeing its mother, comes to her; or just as when the doe sees her young, she cannot contain the joy in her heart; 12. or just as when a miser finds some hidden wealth, his mind rejoices in his love of it; so these *Vaishnavas* were made happy as they looked upon the form of this dark-complexioned One. 13. This form which they saw for their contemplation they fixed in their minds. By it they had waves of joy and tears flowed from their eyes. 14. In trying to describe the experience of their joy, words fail the poets, and in order to illustrate it how can they find the words, though they should hunt all over the world? 15. No one can describe the characteristics of sugar, unless he has tasted of its sweetness, so it is by experience alone that the *Vaishnavas* know of the joy of fellowship with Vishnu. 16. *Vamanā* (Krishna) then embraced His *bhaktas* and drew them to His heart, and with reverence for them He protected all His *bhaktas* by His look of mercy. 17. And these *bhaktas* of His, as they looked upon His lotus-eyes and His cloud-dark complexion, enjoyed an incomparable happiness that cannot be expressed in words.

KRISHNA THINKS OF FEEDING BRAHMHANS

18. Thus the God of gods in His generosity told Rukmini of His feelings, that with love and reverence He should invite the earth-gods (Brahmans) to a feast: 19. 'I went yesterday to the bank of the Chandrabhaga river, and there took penance. It was there that the thought came to Me of inviting the Brahmans to a feast. 20. The Brahmans who live in the sacred city and fulfil their religious duties, I wish to invite them all and bring

them here to My temple. 21. By merely looking at them, sin and affliction are burned up and all desires are fulfilled. They rain a very joy of soul. 22. Giving them delicious feast, I wish to take away all doubts from their minds, and showing them My four-armed form to perform marvellous deeds before them. 23. The influence of association with saints is very great, and the praise of it will greatly increase in the world.' Such was the Holder of the *Sharang* bow's (Krishna's) explanation to Rukmini in His love. 24. The Mother of the world assented: 'Why do you worry over the giving of the invitation to the Brahmans when all the *siddhis* (accomplishments personified) are favourable to you?' 25. The Lord of Pandhari smiled and then said to Nama, 'Listen to My words. It will be your duty to perform the marvel.'

KRISHNA AND NAMA CONVERSE

26. As the Life of the world said this, Nama replied, 'O Krishna, I alone know the secrets of Your heart.' 27. The Holder of the disk (Krishna) said to Nama, 'Embrace Me, dear friend, and from now on never go away from Me. 28. As I see your love, My mind is not too well satisfied. As I look at you with a full gaze, it is a comfort to My eye. 29. My mind is absorbed in you. This is a debt acquired during many rebirths. Therefore this bond of love cannot be broken. I Govinda, am filled with love. 30. I am not aware of what good deeds you have performed, what rites, austerities or religious ceremonies you have carried out, whether you have put your body to the saw, or visited sacred bathing places; 31. whether you have rejected all illusions, and held your mind in control. You have made Me, however, subject to you, and you hold Me in your heart. 32. Although I might search through the three worlds, I see nothing which I could give to you in return. 33. Dear *bhakta*,

you have made a sacrifice of your body and mind and have done many unselfish acts for Me. 34. I *Shrirang*, call Myself your slave, but you have no need of anything.' 35. Nama replied, 'Thou art the Helper of the helpless, the Advocate of Thy *bhaktas*, therefore, O God, it is Thy good pleasure to bestow Thy love upon me.'

KRISHNA CONFORMS TO CEREMONIAL RITES

36. Then the lover of His *bhaktas*, *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart), with His own mind free from fear, took His *bhaktas* with Him and started to give the invitations. 37. This object of contemplation by the *Yogis*, the object of worship for all gods, arrived at the *kundal* bathing pool. 38. All the earth-gods (Brahmans) had assembled there, great and small. They said among themselves, 'Our host does not come quickly to see us. 39. When taking the penance yesterday, he promised to give the Brahmans a feast, but even the invitation has not yet arrived.' 40. Just then *Vanumali* (Krishna), along with the assembly of *bhaktas*, arrived, and seeing the Brahmans with His lotus-eyes, He prostrated Himself on the ground before them. 41. The Life of the world said to them, 'Discarding all doubts and without hesitation you must come to the feast. 42. You gave Me your assurance that I should not fear. You must fulfil My wish. Complete your bathing and devotions and quickly come.' 43. Hearing this kindly worded invitation, the Brahmans were pleased. Listen now with reverence to the reply they made: 44. 'Regarding it as perfectly true that we live under Thy protection, in living in this sacred city we give Thee our blessings. 45. Thou art always protecting cows and Brahmans. Every one speaks of Thee that Thou, O *Swami*, art merciful to the lowly. 46. Thou art King of kings; we Brahmans are Thy priests, and with Thy look of mercy Thou constantly carest for us. 47. In describing with Thy lips Thy rever-

ence for us, we can truly make no comparison. It is Thy good pleasure always to show respect for the commands of the *Vedas*. 48. Thou, O God, in all good faith, must keep Thy promise. Thou must grant love to Nama's mind through Thy favour.' 49. Hearing this, the Brother of the helpless, the Root of every life, the Ocean of happiness for all His *bhaktas*, the Joy of *Yogis*, 50. with a mind overflowing with joy, quickly returned to His temple, and with exceeding love told Rukmini of all that happened. 51. 'This day is a blessed one, a golden day has arisen. I have therefore arranged it as a festival to My *bhaktas*, which will truly be without comparison.'

BRAHMANS FEASTED BY KRISHNA

52. The Life of the world said to Rukmini, 'I have invited all the Brahmans. As soon as they perform their bathings and devotions, they will come quickly to the feast. 53. Today's novel and incomparable marvel is the glorification of humility.' Thus speaking, the God of gods smiled. 54. *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) said to Rukmini, 'Their good deeds have come to their fruitage. Therefore without effort on their part you will be seen by the noble Brahmans.' 55. The noble Brahmans, having completed their regular ceremonial duties, came to the temple. The Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) made them a *namaskar* and gave them seats. 56. Then Krishna took the lead in worshipping the Brahmans. With His own hands He washed their feet and bowed His head to the water in which their feet were washed. 57. The dark-complexioned One lovingly gave the Brahmans sandalwood paste and the black paste, the garlands of flowers, incense and lights, the fragrant black powder, the *tulsi* and many kinds of perfumes. 58. *Shrirang* (Krishna) having put plates before them, served

them with solid and liquid foods. Taking water, He made the offering of food to God. 59. He gave to the noble Brahmans water to sip and then praying to them, the Dweller in *Vaikuntha* (Heaven) said to them, 'As you eat, remember Govinda (God) at every morsel. 60. He who remembers God with every morsel that he takes into his mouth, although he has dined yet he will be regarded as having fasted.' So said the Husband of Rukmini to the Brahmans. 61. All the Brahmans were full of joy and all were satisfied. Water to wash their hands and the *pansupari* were given to all by Krishna. 62. Then *Shripati* (Krishna) waved over the Brahmans lights in a platter inlaid with jewels as they sat in lines on their own seats. 63. The Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) then joined both His hands together and said to them, 'The event of today will never occur again. 64. Through the millions of good deeds belonging to My credit I have met you here today, and the universe is filled with supreme joy.' Thus spoke the Lord of the world. 65. 'Now I Myself and the saints will sit down in one line and eat. Put your minds at rest, and sit quietly for a moment.' 66. Thus speaking, the Performer of the marvellous deeds called to Him the assembly of the *bhaktas*, and the Brahmans saw at that time a remarkable wonder. 67. Brahmadev and other gods sitting in their chariots of light, and Indra with many other gods, also arrived. 68. The *Yogis* were disturbed in their minds saying, 'We have not the joy of *bhakti* which the Husband of Rukmini, pleased with Nama, has given him with love.'

KRISHNA WORSHIPS HIS BHAKTAS

69. The Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) then invited to His own line Nivriddhi, Dnyaneshwar, Sopan, the great *bhakta* Savata, Jagmitra who was (Krishna's) very dear friend, 70. the great *bhaktas* Asand, and Sudama, the

God-loving *Vaishnav* Visoba Khechar, also Savata and Narahari the goldsmith, all of whom came to the feast; 71. Chokhamela and Vanka and Janaka who is as dear to Him as His life, and for whom the Lord of the *Yadhavas* had never-ending love. 72. Then there was the potter Gora, who was a veritable Mount Meru of indifference to every form of earthly things, whom the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) used to call His dearest child. 73. So the Lord of the *bhaktas*, having invited all of them, great and small, worshipped them in His love. 74. He who is the Life of the world, superior to everything, even He worshipped His *bhaktas*. Nama was amazed at this and lovingly questioned Him: 75. 'O God, my mind feels surprised at this. It is as if the ocean worshipped the river; or as if the moon circumambulated the stars; 76. or as if the Eagle (Vishnu's vehicle) should sit down to worship other birds; or as if the Husband of Parvati (Shiva) should pray to the *Nandi* (the bull, Shiva's vehicle); 77. or as if a king should worship his subjects; or as if Indra should pray to the gods; in that very same way, Thou, O Life of the world, dost pay respect to Thy servants.' 78. The Husband of Rukmini smiled and said, ' It is you who have ascribed greatness to Me. If rivers were not created, how would the ocean have grown to its present size ? 79. If there were no stars around the moon it would not have its present beauty. If the birds had not been created, no one would have called the Eagle the noblest of birds. 80. If *Nandi* had not been created, who would have been Shiva's vehicle ? If there had not been three hundred and thirty million gods, from whom would Indra have received reverence ? 81. It is the subjects who make the king great. So it is you who have given Me My name and form.' Hearing Him say this, the hearts of His *bhaktas* were overcome with amazement.

KRISHNA DINES WITH HIS *BHAKTAS*

82. Just then Satyabhama, Rahi and Rukmini brought many kinds of food and served it before them. You may ask in what way Krishna shone in the midst of His *bhaktas*. 83. It was like the ocean of milk in the midst of the seven oceans, or as the moon among the stars, or as the *Kaustubh* jewel stands chief in all ornaments; so He was effulgent through His own form and brilliance. 84. Just as gold among the eight chief metals, or as a jewel in the midst of a lime heap, so the Life of the world appeared in the assembly of His *bhaktas*, glorious in His six great characteristics [see ch. 13 verse 88, p. 211]. 85. The Husband of Rukmini put morsels of food into the mouths of all, and whatever fragments of food fell from their mouths He caught them on His robe. 86. As Brahmadev saw that happiness He licked His chops and said, 'The Lord of the world is pleased with Nama and does not even look at us.' 87. In this friendly way the feast was soon over, and all the saints were satisfied with the divine juices. 88. The gods then sitting in their chariots of lights shouted 'Victory, victory' in their joy, and rained down an abundance of flowers.

BRAHMANS CONVERSE ABOUT KRISHNA

89. The whole sky was unable to contain their perfume. The Brahmans were astonished and said, 'Injury to life (from the abundance of perfume) seems to have come. 90. Extraordinary enthusiasm has arisen. This is not the way of knowledge. This is not an evil indifference to earthly things. It is the goodness of *bhakti* that has taken form.' 91. One of them said to the other, 'What you say is true. This is truly Pandurang Himself. How can a human being possess great and seemingly impossible good fortune? 92. He is absolutely free from the three qualities. He is free from actions. How

can He be given penance? 93. An outcaste and a Brahman both bathe in the Ganges, but one must never say that the Ganges has been defiled thereby. 94. There are various castes in the world and they have voluntary relations with one another. They have no division of inferior and superior. The Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) is like that. 95. He is like the sun when it arises. It gives equal light to all. So this Life of the world is the same. 96. When the rain falls upon the earth, the land and the mountains are the same to it; just so, this noble Yadav is alike to all creatures. 97. So this Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) in His quality-less form has no recognition of "mine" and "thine." He has no thought whatever of caste or family. 98. When considering His relation to the six enemies of the soul [lust, anger, covetousness, affection, pride, envy], they never apply to Him. Even the very words " Wrong thinking " have no relation to Him. 99. In body, mind and speech He is the dearest relative of the lowly. With His generous mind He loves His *bhaktas* without limit. 100. If anyone follows Him He breaks his net of illusions, and he does not allow His God-Loving *bhaktas* to get entangled in the net of worldly affairs. 101. The mother of Nama in our very presence entered into much discussion and became greatly troubled in her mind. 102. The *Hrishikeshi* (Lord of the heart), the Performer of wonders, held Nama to His heart and embraced him. 103. As one looks upon His beautiful form, one forgets one's own body. As one remembers His feet, the mind becomes fully absorbed in Him. 104. He who goes to Him as a suppliant with an undivided heart, has his rebirths ended.' The Life of the world, hearing these words of noble Brahmins, smiled.

GOD IN HIS *SAGUN* FORM

105. Then He changed His form from that of a

citizen, and showed the form in which His attributes are manifested. He gave Nama an embrace and lovingly held him to His heart. 106. *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) gave the Brahmans His blessing and showed them also His true form. Even Sharada (the goddess of learning) finds it impossible to describe the beauty of that form. 107. The noble Brahmans looked upon Him with a crown of jewels on His head, with a mark of the musk-paste on His forehead, dark-complexioned, and beautiful to look at. 108. He wore a head-dress of peacock feathers, and beautiful earrings shaped like crocodiles hung from His ears. This Husband of Rukmini looked with compassion on all His saints. 109. He who having seen the abundance of Pundalik's good deeds, took a *sagun* form. This Enjoyer of the ocean of milk, this Dweller in the heaven *Vaikunth*, God supreme, 110. His pure face was smiling. His teeth sent forth a lustre like that of jewels. This dark-complexioned Form gives peace to the eyes of those who look at it. 111. The God-loving *bhaktas* alone have authority to possess that joy. As they bring into their imagination the Lord of the Yadus, they acquire many forms of joyous love. 112. This Merciful to the lowly wore the *Kaustubh* jewel and the *Vaijayanti* garland. 113. On His breast was the *Shri Vatsa* mark which was his ornament of love. His dark-skinned body had been rubbed over with sandalwood paste. His lotus-eyes were beautiful. 114. He had in His hand the conch-shell and the disk. His hands were placed on His hips. His dark-complexioned body was clothed in a yellow robe. It is this appearance which rests in the hearts of His *bhaktas*. 115. Shri Hari along with His wife Lakshmi had His feet placed parallel on the bricket. The limitless number of foot-ornaments were, so to speak, so many demons (named *daityas* and *danavas*). 116. When this divine light manifested itself, it lighted up the whole universe. Even the sun, seeing that light

hid itself. 117. The saints and all the Brahmans quietly stood and looked upon that four-armed *sayun* form.

KRISHNA IN HIS UNIVERSAL FORM

118. The noble twice-born (Brahmans) looked about and saw birds, insects, animals, men, rocks and trees, and all seemed to them in the form of Vitthal. 119. As the Brahmans looked on water, light, the heavens, the earth, the air, in all these five elements they saw the form of Vitthal. 120. The many kinds of animal life, the sun, the moon, all the stars, the many and wonderful deities, all appeared in the form of Vitthal. 121. The hall of assembly, the slab before the god, the door-keepers, Jaya and Vijaya, the pillar with the Eagle, and the great door of the temple, all these appeared in the form of Vitthal. 122. The Eagle-banners, the dome of the temple, the cymbals, the drums, the shouting aloud of God's name, the steps, and the pilgrims' outhouses, appeared in the form of Vitthal to the noble Brahmans. 123. As they brought to their minds (the three *gunas* : *raja*, *tama*, *sata* [life, intelligence and mind], they all appeared in the form of Vitthal. 124. It was as if a single seed of the banyan tree was sown, and then taking root it spread out into an infinite number of forms, just as the light of the sun alone spreads over the whole of the earth; 125. and just as there is water in every juice; and just as there is but one air that pervades the universe; or as in all living bodies the digestive fire fills them. 126. There are infinite numbers of eyes, but sight is one; one tune, but many notes; the mind pervades the ten organs of sense as it appears to one's sight; 127. likewise the one Being, the Husband of Rukmini, appeared in many forms. And as the noble twice-born (Brahmans) looked at Him, they were overwhelmed with astonishment. 128. The Life of the world took the form of the universe. Who else can be

found out to give an illustration of this except Krishna, the Lover of the heart who was encircled by the *Gopis*? 129. When they came (to complain) to Yashoda, they saw Krishna in an infinite number of forms. Just so the Brahmins saw Him in the form of the universe. 130. The Lord Keshav (Krishna) alone pervaded the universe and no other was to be seen. They naturally lost the consciousness of body, and any shame of being so left them. 131. The knowledge of supreme joy manifested itself. Every one felt the joy. The whole idea of duality was put aside, and every one had his heart filled with gladness. 132. Looking from outside, He pervaded the three worlds. But looking into the heart, the form of Shri Krishna had hidden itself there.

BHAKTI ALL-POWERFUL

The Brahmins looked with love at Him who is the *Yogi's* happiness and rest. 133. With feelings of love the saints and good men embraced one another. They were full of love and shouted out 'Victory, victory.' 134. Every one, seeing this limitless joy and rest, became absorbed in it. *Shripati* (Krishna) made His servants experience the divine joy in His love for them. 135. The Life of the world brought to consciousness those twice-born (Brahmins) who had lost consciousness of body. He raised Name up and placed him at their feet. 136. This Lover of His *bhaktas*, this Lord of the world, looked with compassion on every one. And sitting closer to the Brahmins, He whispered to them His secret thoughts. 137. *Keshavraj* (Krishna) said to the Brahmins, 'Listen to the secrets of My heart. My *bhaktas* have put aside their earthly concerns and have followed Me. 138. Becoming their debtor through their service rendered Me, I am fully bound to them. Being subject to My *bhaktas*, I have no independence of My own. 139. Nivriddhi, Dnyandev

and Sopan worship Me in every creature. Paying very little regard to their bodies, they have made Me subject to them. 140. This *Jagamitra* (Friend of the world) here, giving up all worldly things, has become my supreme friend. Hiding Me in the temple of his heart, the consciousness of body does not come any more to him. 141. This servant of mine, *Savata*, the gardener, putting his faith in My worship, in his love sees Me alone in every creature. 142. When this *Vasara*, was twelve days old his mother threw him in *Venunad*, and the child realizing the non-identity of his nature began to worship Me. 143. These My *bhaktas*, *Visoba Khechar*, the goldsmith *Narahari* and *Gora* the potter, have worshipped Me without interruption. 144. Leaving home, wife and everything else, each has torn away from him the net of illusions. And so this God-loving *bhakta*, *Sudama*, is the object of my compassion. 145. *Chokhamela*, *Vanka* and *Janaka*, are My loving *bhaktas*. They have no close friends aside from Me. 146. They have put aside every other association, and with a feeling of unity with Me have followed Me. Aside from Me, they have no love for any other deity. 147. To what extent can I recount the kindness of each one?' Thus remarked the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (*Krishna*) to the Brahmins in describing the joy of His love.

BRAHMANS REPENT

148. The twice-born (Brahmins), hearing that the God-loving and chief of all *bhaktas*, *Nama*, was the dust of the feet of all the *bhaktas*, were astonished. 149. They, a full ocean of good fortune, said very sweetly, 'O *Vitthal*, Thou hast become our real mother-home. 150. And now O Lord of *Pandhari*, we have only this to ask of Thee, that Thou break from us the desire of earthly things, and so help us, that we may never be separated from Thy feet. 151. We

do not need any earthly enjoyments or the different forms of final deliverance. We want neither money nor property, but give us, O *Shripati* (Krishna), association with the good during all our re-births. 152. Even while studying the *Vedas* and *Shastras*, our minds have turned to the objects of sense, and pride has unsteadied our hearts. 153. Should one not understand Thy secret of love, down, down with such knowledge. If it were not for Thy mercy, public honour deserves to be set on fire. 154. We are Brahmans of the highest caste. We have been seized by that illusion. Thereby we have been separated from the sweetness of Thy love. The bondage of pride is very great. 155. O Lord of Pandhari, all this illusion is of Thy creation which has deceived us. We have needlessly been swept along by it, but now, O Lord God, Thou hast delivered us. 156. We have committed very many millions of transgressions, but Thou, O Lord of Pandhari, merciful One, hast become our Protector. 157. Thou hast been called the Helper of the lowly, and Thou hast made true that reputation today. Thou hast given us a sight of Thyself, and hast saved us sinners. 158. Because of our good deeds stored in our numberless rebirths, Thou hast given this sight of Thyself, and has spoken to us in Thy love. 159. These accumulated seeds of deeds were sown and on them was sprinkled the water of association with saints, so that now, O Lord God, these seeds have grown to maturity, and have produced an infinite number of fruits. 160. Thou hast torn the exceedingly strong net of seduction and made us conform to Thy beautiful essential form. In attempting to describe Thy *lila* (sports) the *Vedas* and *Shastras* have found it beyond their power. 161. The three forms of affliction were burning us up like a forest fire, but Thou didst quickly put it out. O *Swami*, Thou didst forcibly feed us needy ones with the nectar of Thy love. 162. Now, O Lord of the world, we have only

this to ask of Thee, that we may always see Thy form as it is now, and that we may constantly meet with the saints. It is this desire that we hold in our hearts. 163. May Thy love be continually in our hearts. May we love to worship Thee, then we shall never grow weary of our rebirths. 164. Thou alone, Lord of the infinite universe, art the Doer, and the One who causes others to act. The *Vedas* and *Shastras* wearied themselves in describing properly Thy goodness. 165. So now, O *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the Heart), do not keep in mind our faults. Call us Thy own, and give us into the care of the saints, O merciful One. 166. May we become the servants of Thy servants. We have no other wish in our hearts. So make it that the dust of their feet shall rest upon us. 167. This in itself will take the place of our austerities, religious ceremonies and deeds. May we love Thy worship and repeat Thy names with affection.'

BHAKTI THE SUPREME SECRET

168. Hearing this reply of the twice-born (Brahmins), the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) was pleased. He showed His limitless compassion and embraced all of them. 169. After embracing the Brahmins, the Dweller in *Vaikunth* (heaven) said, ' Whatever Dnyandev may tell you, keep his thoughts in your mind. 170. This Dnyandev is My very soul, O chief of all knowing ones. Whatever he may tell you of the experience of his heart, hold to it with reverence. 171. If you trust to him, those thoughts will naturally be easier for you. So, hold tightly in your heart what he tells you, and carefully preserve it. 172. If that knowledge is kept close to you, you will not have to wander to sacred bathing places; you will never have to study the *Vedas* and *Shastras*. 173. You will not need the austerities of the *Yogis*. You will not have to torture your body, if you

pin your faith on association with saints. Your faults will be destroyed in a moment. 174. You will not have to sit on iron spikes. Such efforts are in vain. You will not have to live in the caves of the mountains. 175. Why perform cruel austerities? The repeating of *mantras* is not at all necessary. Through association with the saints the three forms of affliction will all disappear in a moment. 176. You will not have to cover your body with ashes. You will not have to grow long matted hair. You will never have to act as hypocrites before men. 177. One should be filled with kindness towards all creatures. One's tongue should have the nectar of God's name; in less than a moment's time the mind will come back to its true state. 178. One may make the effort of performing one's duties, but without love in one's heart one becomes disgusted with them. This is not the way to the knowledge of the soul. That is a needless effort for those who cling to the old way. 179. This is a very easy way, without having to use the various means. Praise God with love and repeat 'Ram, Krishna, Govinda.' 180. What are sacred bathing places, religious rites and severe austerities? Poor things compared with the singing of God's praise. Putting aside their pride of greatness, all of them have to hide their heads in shame. 181. This well-known and royal road is superior to all. One should therefore, without ceasing, hold to the association with saints and keep the name of God on his lips. 182. Do not let a course of wrong thinking come into your minds. With all your heart and reverence go as suppliants to the saints.' 183. Thus the Lord of the earth whispered His secret to the Brahmans. The Brahmans assented, and worshipped the feet of God. 184. The Husband of Rukmini said to Dnyandev, 'I have left these twice-born (Brahmans) in your care. Place your hands upon their heads, and give them the everlasting blessing.' 185. Dnyaneshwar replied, 'I will do so,' and in reverence he

bowed to the Husband of Rukmini. I am truthfully telling you of the experience which the chief of *rishis* possessed.

NAMDEV'S LIFE THE CREAM OF *BHAKTI*

186. This supreme secret should be considered as the secret knowledge of the *Vedas*, the life of indifference to earthly things, and as the characteristic of the sphere of intelligence. 187. It is the mystic power of pure knowledge, the seed of final deliverance, the king of all *mantras*, the treasure-house of joy manifested in the world. 188. Nama's extraordinary love was for a time hidden in his heart, but his story has made it known world-wide. 189. This story of Nama's is the height of hearing the highest contemplation for the mind, and the loved object of meditation. 190. It is the summing up of thought, the centre of one's intelligence, the revelation of one's essence to the world. 191. It is the marvellous doing of *bhakti*, the soul of reverence, the glorification of honour manifested in the world. 192. It is the noble light of victory, it is life beyond the beyond, the extending of God's praise coming to stand before us. 193. It is the life of all religious duties, it is the purifier of the pure, or the store-house of joy. 194. It is the nectar of *yoga* accomplishment, the joy of *bhaktas* and the full life of desirelessness. 195. It is the festival of God and His *bhaktas*. It is nectar brought to its perfection. He who will drink of it with fondness will without effort go to everlasting life. 196. Those who listen to this story of the *Tirthavali* [Nama's wanderings to sacred bathing places] will not have to be born again. Therefore, you should listen to its description. 197. One must not speak of it as a common story. It is not memorized poetry. In it the substance of the *Upanishads* and the manifestation of the divine sweetness appear. 198. Here is not the place where that knowledge is to be recognized which none should claim for themselves. One should

leave the desire for pedantry and listen with reverence. 199. This is the method adopted by the good. The enjoyers of it are the saints. Such is the substance of the words Dnyandev has written in the *Tirthavali*. 200. Bringing his verses to my mind, I have written in my own uncouth way; so the wise should not find fault with it.

201. In the next chapter there will be the exceeding delightful and significant story of the life of Kurmadas. Listeners must keep their minds in a quiet state and listen with attention. 202. The Pervader of the universe, the Husband of Rukmini, the Life of the world, is the One who relates the story and the One who causes it to be related. This holy book the *Bhaktavijaya* is being composed at His desire. 203. When oil and a wick are placed in a lamp, a brilliant light appears; so the eagle-bannered One, giving light to the mind causes this book to be composed by His love. 204. He who is the Purifier of the sinner, the Helper of the helpless, He has saved an innumerable number of the dull-minded. Mahipati is His stamp and he worships Him with love.

205. *Swasti* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the earth is pleased. Listen, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the fifteenth deeply delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER XVI

KURMADAS THE CRIPPLE

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Krishna.

STORIES OF *BHAKTAS* THE CREAM OF GOOD DEEDS

1. Today is a happy day of blessing. For if anyone reads the love-inspiring stories of God's *bhaktas* he reaps without special effort the blessing which can be had by visiting the sacred bathing places and by observing the festival days. 2. That is equal to three hundred and sixty performances of ceremonial rites, according to the prescribed rules; or as if one hundred horse-sacrifices had been made with hearts free from desires and full of devotion; 3. or as if many rigorous austerities had been performed; or as if all the deities had been prayed to; or as if in time of famine gifts of food had been made without effort on their part to the hungry; 4. or as if one had adopted the life of a *sannyasi* according to the prescribed rules; or as if one had given water to drink to those suffering from thirst; or as if one had given full service with an abundance of love to one's mother and father. 5. All the good deeds mentioned above have been received today by hearers of the stories of God's *bhaktas* without effort on their part, and *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the Heart) being pleased thereby gives them eternal life. 6. Therefore all wise men must give their attention to me and in their love wag [or nod] their heads; just as serpents do when they hear the piping of the juggler; 7. or as when a deer absorbed in listening to a song, forgets all thought of its body; thus the Life of the world is Himself pleased in listening to the stories of the *bhaktas*.

KURMADAS LONGS FOR PANDHARI

8. There was a Brahman by name of Kurmadas, a man of supreme piety. He had neither hands nor feet.

He lived at Pratishtan (Paithan). 9. He was the *avatar* of the charioteer of the sun, who in order to worship Hari became a full *avatar* in a Brahman family. 10. He was born without hands or feet. Gradually he grew up to manhood. One day hearing the *kirtan* he hastened there to listen. 11. Hearing there the cymbals, the *vina* and the drum giving out their music, the *Vaishnavas* singing with love, his own heart had great feeling of great joy and he sat down with love to listen. 12. The *Haridas* (preacher) was describing in his love the delightful glory of Pandhari, and as Kurmadas listened his mind was filled with happiness. 13. Then joining together both hands he spoke sweetly to the singers, 'If I should go to Shri Pandhari, I should see the Husband of Rukmini.' 14. Hearing him say this all the people began to laugh. 'You have neither hands nor feet. We cannot understand how you could go. 15. If a bird has no wings, how can it fly through the air? If a man has no eyes, how can he climb a mountain? 16. If a man cannot hear, how can he perform a *Hari-kirtan*? If one's voice becomes hoarse, how can he sing? 17. If one possesses no money, those who beg of him cannot be made happy. If one has not acquired knowledge, how can he receive the respect of men? 18. If the mind is not under self-control, how can it perform the *yogic* practices? If one does not have the entire favour of his *sadguru*, he cannot attain self-knowledge. 19. So, you have no hands nor feet, and yet you talk of going to Pandhari. Hearing you say this, our minds become somewhat perplexed. 20. We had sufficient wealth, our bodies were in good health, and yet we have never been on pilgrimage even up to our old age. 21. And yet you have conceived this desire, which we do not feel confident you can carry out. How will you be able to go? As you have no hands or feet we do not understand.'

22. Kurmadas replied to them, 'Without any effort on my

part I have obtained this human body. Now if I do not go to Pandhari, I cannot escape the eighty-four million rebirths.'

KURMADAS CRAWLS FOR FOUR MONTHS TO PANDHARI

23. Therefore with a penitent mind, he at once set off and crept along for two miles beyond his village. 24. He went first into the temple of Maruti and there lodged for the night. He became very hungry and thirsty and his mind was full of concern. 25. He then prayed, 'O Lord of Pandhari, Husband of Rukmini, care for me, the helpless one. Aside from Thee, I can see no one to be a brother or uncle, a mother or father. 26. Thou art the life of my heart. Who can provide for me in my hunger and thirst?' Hearing the pitiful cry of Kurmadas, the Life of the world approached him. 27. The Lord of Pandhari in the form of a merchant suddenly approached him. The Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) then spoke to Kurmadas. 28. 'You have neither hands nor feet. Where are you journeying to? Tell me what your name is.' 29. Kurmadas replied, 'I have the desire to go to Pandhari. You ask me my name. It is Kurmadas.' 30. Hearing this, Shripati (Krishna) was highly pleased and said, 'Without any effort on your part your good fortune has brought me into your company.' 31. Kurmadas replied, 'I am without hands and feet, how can my company be of any use to You? 32. Tell me where You are going. And tell me Your name.' Hearing him say this, the Lover of the heart replied, 33. 'The whole world speaks of Me as the merchant Vithoba. My shop is at Pandhari, and I must go there.' 34. Kurmadas said to him, 'You will be able to go rapidly. I cannot quite understand how I can keep in company with You.' 35. The Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) said to him, 'We are going slowly. We do business on the way in buying and selling. 36. After going a mile or two, we

lodge quietly for the night. I will not allow myself to be separated from your company.' 37. At this reply of the Holder of the disk (Krishna), Kurmadas was made very happy. Preparing the evening meal, He (the merchant) gave him to eat. 38. The lotus-eyed One gave Kurmadas a garment to wear and said, 'Holy *bhaktas* live in the sacred city of Pandhari.' 39. During the night the Lord of the universe whispered His secret thoughts to Kurmadas: 'You have become tired by walking a long way and you cannot start at once. 40. Wherever you go tomorrow, we also shall come there. Do not be at all troubled about food and drink. 41. We wander about for this very reason, to remove the weariness of the helpless and lowly who are going on pilgrimage, and to enquire regarding their hunger and thirst.' 42. Thus replied the Husband of Rukmini. The sun now arose. He lovingly awakened Kurmadas and said to him, 43. 'I will point out to you the path. Hasten your going. We shall certainly come to your lodgings at eventide.' 44. The Husband of Rukmini having said this, He suddenly became invisible and Kurmadas started on his way. 45. Kurmadas crept along until sunset, and having come near a village he waited there for the Brahman. 46. Quickly the cloud-dark complexioned One arrived and began to care for him as usual. In this way the Merciful to the lowly cared for him. 47. If there was no town near by, He created a new village. God would not allow His *bhakta* to become weary. 48. In this way Kurmadas crept along for four months. Finally in the month of *Kartik* (November) he arrived at Lahul. 49. It was on the tenth of *Kartik* and the pilgrims were going on to Pandhari. Kurmadas seeing this band of pilgrims, he was greatly troubled in his mind. 50. 'I shall not be able to arrive in time for the festival on account of my being without hands and feet. He who is the Merciful to the lowly is now lost to me.

51. Tomorrow is *ekadashi* (the eleventh of the month). The *Vaishnavas* will move along rapidly. I am lame and am alone in this foreign land. 52. Had I but hands and feet, I would have gone along with this pilgrim band.' Such was the deep anxiety of his mind. 53. A lame man cannot walk along with those who are able to walk quickly. A miser is never able to give with the lavishness of one who is generous. 54. How can a sick man eat with the same appetite as a hungry man? How can the moon equal the sun in brilliance? 55. How can any other metal equal gold in value? How can badly cooked food seem to the taste like daintily prepared food? 56. The ordinary animal cannot possess the glory of the wishcow. How can an ordinary tree equal the wish-tree?

KURMADAS SENDS A MESSAGE BY PILGRIMS

57. It was because Kurmadas was unable to walk along with the same rapidity as the band of pilgrims that his mind became troubled. 58. Thinking over the matter he decided to send a message. 'Tell the Husband of Rukmini that I send to Him my reverential *namaskar*. 59. I am a lowly, helpless man without a protector. I am without hands and feet. I see no possibility whatever of seeing You on the eleventh. 60. From Lahul, Pandhari is fourteen miles. I shall have to travel seven days in order to reach Pandhari. 61. O Lord of the world, protect me by Thy look of compassion. My heart is indeed troubled that I cannot meet Thee (on the eleventh). 62. Just as the *chatak* bird wishes for a cloud, or just as the *chakor* bird looks towards the moon, so I without ceasing look to meet Thee. 63. Just as the calf seeks for the mother cow, and just as the little fledging looks towards the mother bird; so I, Kurmadas, am thinking of Thee in my heart. 64. I have not the support of a family or of any wealth. Aside from Thee, I have no one, O Vitthal. I see no wealth of money or

property except in Thee. 65. O Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna), Thou callest Thyself the Helper of the helpless; O Sea of compassion, come as far as this and save Thy lowly one.' 66. So he sent a piteous message, requesting the band of pilgrims to convey it to the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) and to send Him back there as soon as possible. 67. The *Warkaris* [pilgrims of a special order] replied that they would carry the message, and started to walk along rapidly to Pandhari. As they walked they shouted aloud the names of Vitthal.

NAMDEV'S KIRTAN AT PANDHARI

68. At that time Namdev happened to be performing a *kirtan* at the great door of Pandhari. With cymbals in his hand and love in his heart and accompanied by a band of singers he danced and shouted aloud in his joy. 69. Using the beloved names of Ram and Krishna, and becoming unconscious in body, he sang of the goodness of Shri Hari. 70. He laid aside every thought of pride and holding his ears he danced. He kept in his heart the appearance of the image of Vitthal. 71. Lovingly he brought to his mind the noble qualities of Shri Hari, His birth, His name and His deeds, and sang them in joy. 72. He who is naturally the resting-place of His *bhaktas*, He who is the secret of the wise and the root of final deliverance, and who is called the Giver of deliverance; 73. Krishna, the cloud-dark complexioned One, Mukunda, Murari, the good Being, Achyuta, Narahari, the cloud-dark complexioned One, O victorious Ram, O Raghupati. 74. Victory, victory to Thee, Saviour of Mount Govardhan, Victory, victory, to Thee who takest compassion upon the *bhaktas*, Saviour of the lowly, Pandurang. 75. Victory, victory to Thee who hast in Thy hand the giving of every blessing, Breaker of the bonds of sin, O *Hrishikesah* (Lord of the heart), Lord of the gods, Lord of all,

Possessor of eternal guise, Thou whom destruction cannot reach. 76. Thou who art Supreme Joy, O Shripati, Thou art the beginning and the middle and the end, Thou art the joy and the wealth of goodness unattainable except through Thee. 77. O Brother of the lowly, O Lord of Pandhari, Thou art my hearer as well as the speaker, Thou art the giver of joy founded on love, given to me a helpless one.' 78. Thus Nama at that time brought to his mind Shri Hari and said, 'O Shri Hari, O Govinda, quickly remove me from the sorrows of this earth'y life.' 79. Then the Husband of Rukmini was pleased. With His four arms He embraced Nama with His lotus-hands. He caressed Nama's face and thus the Life of the world addressed Nama.

KRISHNA'S BHAKTAS

80. The cloud-dark complexioned One said to the saints, 'He has been given the name of Namdev. He has experienced my love and according to the laws of the heart he has obtained peace. 81. Moreover I love the saints and the *Vaishnavas* more than I love my own life. They have plunged into my form and become united with me. 82. Nama, I see that your good qualities are superior to those of all the others, and the joyful cloud of the nectar of love is seen more and more in you. 83. This Dnyandev here also is my very life. He is the ornament of theoretical and experimental knowledge. Nivritti my servant is a mountain of *vairagya*. 84. This noble *bhakta* Sopan is the full sea of soul-knowledge. My *bhaktas* also are Rohidas, Visoba Khechar, and Gora the potter. 85. My *bhaktas* are also Paramanand Joga and this Jagamitra Naga Vinatarama, Vateshvar Changa. I, Krishna, am very fond of the saints. 86. I am especially fond of Asand, Sudama, Keshavdas, the goldmith Narahari, and Bhanudas. Still there is no limit to my love for you. 87. Bhishma, Rukmangad, Akkur, Uddhav, Arjun, Pralhad, the noble Druva, Narad

and Tumber, know my heart. 88. They are for ever indifferent to every earthly thing, and without effort will become *Jivanmuktas* (free while living); but O Nama, I see your most unusual and fortune-blest glory. 89. All these love me dearly. They have accompanied me all through their infinite rebirths. But your devotion appears to my heart as superior to that of all others.'

90. While Hari was carrying on this conversation, suddenly the bands of *Warkari* pilgrims arrived. There were musical instruments and banners in their hands, and they were shouting out 'Victory, victory.' 91. With them were a great number of banners, with the design of an eagle upon them. Innumerable drums were being sounded, and loud shouting of God's name, making the banks of the Bhima reverberate. 92. The God-loving *bhakta* Pundalik understood the pure joy of such an occasion. Just as the *chakor* bird alone enjoys the nectar of the moon; 93. or just as it is the infant alone that understands the joy of taking the nourishment from its mother's breast; or just as no one aside from Upamanyu can understand the glory of the sea of milk; 94. or just as the royal swan is able to separate the milk that has become mixed with water; or just as the wise understand by experience the praise of *bhaktas* who are God-loving; 95. or as it is the bee alone that understands how to drink the honey in the lotus-flower; so it was the *bhakta* Pundalik who enjoyed the supreme joy of the sacred city of Pandhari.

PILGRIMS CONVEY THE MESSAGE OF KURMADAS

96. With feelings of love the *Warkari* pilgrims prostrated themselves at the great door of the temple. In their love they embraced one another. 97. Then as they gazed, they saw the idol of the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna). Both His hands were on His hips and He was clothed in a yellow robe. 98. As the Life of the world

was thus standing, these *bhaktas* rejoiced. They embraced one another in their love and then worshipped at His feet; 99. just as a little girl in the home of her mother-in-law, rejoices when she sees her own mother; so these *bhaktas* became full of joy as they saw His glorious face. 100. They then bowed their heads to the two feet that were placed on the brick. They lost all sense of themselves and became absorbed in Him. 101. They said to themselves, 'Seeing Thy glorious face, we have forgotten all the sorrows of our infinite number of rebirths. Thou art the giver of all joy, and there is no other.' 102. Then one who remembered it gave to the Lord God the message that had been given to them by Kurmadas. He said, 'Kurmadas has asked You to come to Lahul to him. 103. He has neither hands nor feet, so he cannot come here rapidly. With a great desire to see You, he is waiting for You to come.' 104. As the Lord of Pandhari heard this message, He prepared Himself in a hurry to go, saying, 'When shall I see My *bhakta* Kurmadas? 105. In the meeting of saints are fulfilled My heart's longings. Aside from them I cannot see any dearest friend or close relative.' 106. God then called Namdev and Dnyandev to come close to Him, and told them of His heart's feelings. 107. 'With an intense desire Kurmadas wishes to meet Me. Let you and Me go at once to that place.' 108. The Lord of *Vaikuntha* (heaven) then took both by the hand and walked rapidly along. 109. He whom the *Vedas* and *Puranas* describe as reclining upon the serpent Shesha on the sea of milk, the Husband of Lakshmi, and the Life of the world, walked on foot. 110. He, the dust of whose feet Brahmadev and the *munis* naturally long after, the Husband of Lakshmi, whose banner is the eagle, walked along on foot. 111. He whose form does not easily come into the imagination of *Yogis* who are sitting on iron spikes, He, seeing the devotion of Kurmadas, walked on foot.

SAVATA HIDES KRISHNA IN HIS STOMACH

112. As the Lord of the world walked along the path, He noticed the village of Aranbhendi. He suddenly had a great desire to meet Savata the gardener. 113. So the Holder of the disk (Krishna) hurried to meet him, thinking, ' I must this day show a marvel to Nama. ' 114. Krishna said to Nama, ' I am exceedingly thirsty. ' Saying this, *Adhokshaja* (the Pervader of earth and sky) entered into the garden. 115. He left Dnyandev and Nama outside: ' I will come out quickly after drinking some water. ' After saying this, Shri Hari met with Savata. 116. The latter was sitting with his eyes closed and was contemplating in his heart the form of Shri Vitthal, and singing with his lips the praises of God's name unconscious of his body. 117. When the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) saw him thus, He placed His hand of assurance on his head, and awakening him He embraced him. 118. When he saw the Holder of the disk (Krishna), he embraced His feet. Tears of love flowed from his eyes and he felt a joy that his heart could not contain. 119. He exclaimed, ' Blessed is this day. I have seen with my eyes my mother and father. Thou beautiful, cloud-dark complexioned One, Thou hast come here walking. ' 120. Then the *bhakta* Savata again placing his head at His feet spoke thus: ' O Lord of Pandhari, in caring for Thy lowly ones Thou hast greatly wearied Thyself. 121. Now sit here quietly resting, while I worship Thee. ' When the Life of the world heard this, 122. the Husband of Rukmini said with an appearance of fear, ' There are two thieves following me. They will arrive here very soon. 123. Out of fear of them, I have come in here to hide myself. I think it is very strange that you should wish to worship Me. 124. When the sun is in eclipse it does not care to be given oblation (worship). When an enemy is besieging a city, the king takes no delight in his throne. 125. When

a man's mind is full of concern, he does not care for enjoyment. When Agasti was near the sea the tide would not come in. 126. You say you will worship Me, but My mind is not at ease. Now protect My life somehow or other, O chief of My *bhaktas*.' 127. Savata said to Him, 'There is no place in all the three worlds, even if searched for, that would contain Thee. 128. One cannot confine air in a cage; space cannot be confined in a jar; and how can one confine the sun in the darkness, O Govinda? 129. As the Lord of *Kailas* (heaven) among the *Yogis*, as the eagle among the birds, as Indra among the other gods, can never be hidden; 130. as musk in earth, or the sandalwood tree among other trees, or as the lion amongst other animals, cannot be hidden; 131. O God of gods, how can the *Uchchaishrava* (Indra's horse) be hidden among other ordinary horses? How can the touchstone be hidden in an iron box, O Madhav? 132. So also, O Shri Hari, Thou art supreme. In Thy womb there are infinite worlds, and on the earth Thou canst not be concealed anywhere.' 133. The Life of the world replied, 'This is no occasion for philosophic knowledge. Hide Me somewhere at this time.' 134. As *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the Heart) said this, Savata thought to himself, 'The Dweller in *Vaikunth* (heaven) can in His love dwell in my heart.' 135. He then took his sickle and ripped open his own stomach. The Enemy of Mura (Krishna) immediately entered into the chamber of his heart. 136. Savata thought to himself, 'The thieves may see the cloud-dark complexioned One even here.' So he wrapped his blanket around his stomach. 137. The Lord of the Universe spoke His secret thoughts to Savata from the temple of his (Savata's) heart: 'I see nothing in all this universe with which to repay you for your kindness.'

THE HUMAN HEART AS GOD'S TEMPLE

138. Hearers will remark on this strange event, 'How

can God be contained in the human heart? We have this doubt at this time.' 139. Hearing the listeners' question, the Speaker replied giving illustrations. 'The Holder of the disk (Krishna) who assumes any form that He wishes, is able to do the seemingly impossible. 140. At the time when Krishna was an *avatar*, the beautiful Yashoda was once in her house churning. Shri Hari entered into the churning-can and ate the butter quickly. 141. A certain *gopi* said absent-mindedly in her love, "I have brought some Krishna to sell." Then in order to make her assertion true, God entered into the milk-jar. 142. The Holder of the disk (Krishna) seeing the love of Savata, made his heart contain Him. So my listeners should not harbour any doubts in their minds.'

143. That was what the Lord of the Earth said, when He told Savata of His secret thoughts, 'I see nothing in all the world with which to repay you for your kindness. 144. Now become My very form, or become everything to Me, for I do not see anything aside from this to give to you.' 145. The *bhakta* Savata replied, 'Merciful One, now I will not separate Thee from myself for eternity.' 146. After this, God and His *bhakta* became one in heart, just as the Bhagirathi and Yamuna rivers became one in their love; 147. or just as water mingles with milk; or as the life pervades the body; so the lotus-eyed One sat with great pleasure in the heart of His *bhakta*; 148. or just as an immense amount of the wonderful nectar is stored up in the moon; so the Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) sat in the heart of His *bhakta*, having become one with him; 149. or just as the honey lies lovingly hidden in the bud of a flower; so the Husband of Rukmini in this state of unity had hidden Himself in the heart of His *bhakta*.

NAMDEV'S ANXIETY ABOUT KRISHNA

150. In the meantime the *bhakta* Nama outside the

garden became greatly concerned. He said to himself, 'Why does not the Lord of Pandhari come outside? He is delaying a very long time. 151. I have been impatiently waiting for Him for very long. Where is it that my *Swami* has become entangled and has abandoned me in this forest? 152. Thus Pandurang is my life. I do not know now who will let me see this storehouse of every joy.' 153. With his voice filled with emotion he sobbed in his love. He could not support himself so as to hunt for the footsteps of Vithoba; 154. just as when one overcome with thirst hunts for water in the forest; or just as the child when overcome with hunger waits for the coming of its mother: 155. or just as the little deer that has missed its mother-deer hunts for her in the forest; or just as the miser, having lost his money, makes a diligent search for it with his mind full of concern; 156. so with his voice full of emotion, and tears flowing from his eyes, Nama began to beat his breast with his two hands and threw himself on the ground. 157. He exclaimed, 'O Vithoba, if Thou dost not come immediately, I shall be quite overcome with concern. Do not go away leaving me here. It would not be proper for Thee to do so.' 158. Holding on to the hem of Thy yellow robe, I will forthwith come along with Thee, O Pandurang; but O Husband of Rukmini, I have not known the intention of Thy mind. 159. While Nama was thus expressing his sorrow, he caught sight of the *bhakta* Savata who was full of joy and in his love was repeating God's names. 160. He embraced his feet and said to him, 'Where has the Lord of the World gone? I am anxiously waiting to see Him, and I am greatly troubled.'

NAMA FINDS GOD IN SAVATA

161. Then Savata came to be without bodily consciousness, and being absorbed in the form of Hari He had no

sense of distinction left to distinguish between 'me' and 'mine.' 162. As he noticed certain indications he said to himself, 'Vithoba must be with him. I see him just as I have previously experienced His form.' 163. Just as when the adulterer and an adulteress see one another, they understand the signs that they make; or when a thief sees another thief, he understands the other's mind; 164. or as a clever and wise person understands the loving heart of a speaker; or as when a treasure is invisible to others it is seen by one who is born with his feet foremost; 165. or as the *Yogi* alone understands the customary practice of the *Yogis*; so it was that Nama understood that the Lord of the Universe was within the heart of Savata. 166. He said, 'How is it, O Savata, that you have swallowed the treasure of one so helpless as myself? My soul loves that place of rest with all its joy. 167. Show Him to me only once and I will hold His form in my heart. My soul has become overcome with grief. Save me, O you merciful one. 168. Look on me with an eye of kindness and tell me something which will benefit me, and cause me to meet with the Lord of the world. I shall then accept it as an auspicious event.' 169. The Life of the world hearing Nama's pity-arousing words, said to Savata, 'Cause Me to meet Nama, My dearest friend.' 170. The Husband of Rukmini thought to Himself, 'I have got Myself caught here in Savata's heart. Now I am not able soon to get out of here. 171. Just as an insect in the cocoon makes its own bondage, and then it cannot come out, so it has now happened to Me; 172. or as the parrot sits upon a perch and is not able to fly away, so it has happened to Me; I have got Myself caught in Savata's heart. 173. Because of its love for the lotus flower, the bee stops there, but when the sun sets, it gets itself caught in it; 174. so I, *Vanamali* [wearer of a garland of wild flowers] have got Myself caught in the heart of Savata. Standing outside,

Nama is overcome with concern, just like the fish when outside the water.' 175. *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) then said, 'Nama seems as though he were helpless, so he has become overcome with grief for Me. Meet Me with him for a moment.'

WHY KRISHNA WAS CHARMED WITH NAMDEV

176. The *bhakta* Savata then said, 'O *bhakta* of Vishnu, awake. A feeling of pity has come to the Lord of Pandhari. He will now meet with you. 177. The Husband of Kamala has become impatient to meet you. He will meet you and give you peace. In His love for you, you will see Him very near to you. Let your heart sorrow no longer. 178. What heaps of good deeds you have done! It is that you have worshipped God in all things. And so *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) who is merciful is pleased with you without effort on your part. 179. By the force of *bhakti*, you have made the Lord of Pandhari your debtor. Seeing this strange thing, I am overcome with amazement, O chief of *bhaktas*. 180. Is it that with a banner upon your shoulder, and with its design of an eagle, you went on pilgrimage to Pandhari? Or is it that you took upon your head the dust from the feet of saints, and therefore Shri Hari is pleased with you? 181. Or is it that on the tenth of the month you led a band of singers, and imitating the cowherds and taking Hari's name, you described Him in your services of praise? 182. Did Govinda become pleased with you on seeing your joy, and so the infinite ocean of compassion, the Brother of the lowly, felt gratified? 183. Or was it that you felt a sense of repentance during your infinite rebirths when you may have put your body to the saw? Or did you practise painful austerities? Or did you visit a great bathing place? 184. Or was it that you spent your life in benevolent deeds? Or when you performed services of praise on the *Ekdashi*

(the eleventh day) was the Life of the world standing there and so became pleased with you? 185. The Lord of Pandhari is the only one who understands your extraordinary good fortune.' Thus speaking, the *bhakta* Savata prostrated himself at the feet of Nama. 186. Nama replied to him, 'You are partner in my joy, O noble *Vaishnava*. Giver of my life, I see no one your equal. 187. You told me of the auspicious event (of meeting with Krishna). At once make it true. Enable me at once to meet my Vitthal. 188. Listen to me, O you God-loving chief of the *bhaktas*. I cannot hold in my impatience. Seeing my unhappy condition, why does not compassion enter into your heart?' 189. Then seizing a sickle he (Savata) ripped open his stomach. The moment Pandurang came outside, Nama grasped His feet. 190. The cloud-dark Krishna filled with compassion and emotion embraced Nama, and with the hem of His yellow robe He wiped the forehead of Nama. 191. Then the Lord of Pandhari smilingly said to Nama, 'Why have you made your heart so sorrowful? Tell Me at once.' 192. Nama grasped the feet of the god, and spoke in a sweet voice, 'Thou art my father and mother. Thou wilt be my Helper through all eternity. 193. O Thou Supreme *Brahm*, the cloud-dark complexioned One, by what allurements dost Thou preserve Thy love? I do not understand. O merciful to the lowly, O Pandurang!'

KRISHNA GOES AND MEETS KURMADAS

194. Then the Life of the world, smiling, said in soft words to Dnyandev, 'Let us hasten to meet Kurmadas. 195. If I do not meet him, My heart will not be satisfied. The day that I meet My *bhaktas*, that day is a happy one and My eyes experience a sense of peace.' 196. Then the four walking together, namely, Dnyandev, Nama, Savata and the Lord of Pandhari, they joyfully journeyed along the road. 197. Hearing all this you may feel some

doubt, because there is mention of so many names, but the King of Pandhari himself mentioned them and recorded them as they really occurred. 198. You wise *bhaktas* must not blame me. Hari proclaims Himself to be the Saviour of the sinner and Advocate of His *bhaktas*. 199. In the compound word 'Sinner-Purifier,' the word 'Sinner' comes first to the lips, and is followed by the word 'Purifier,' the Ocean of compassion. Therefore it is that in verses the names of his *Bhaktas* appear first. 200. Thus along with His *Bhaktas* the Life of the world joyfully walked.

In the meanwhile Kurmadas experienced some very good omens. 201. Just as when a cloud rains upon the earth, the lightning flashes in the East, and from the north a gentle wind blows, 202. so, because the Cloud of joy (Krishna) was coming to meet him, his right eye began to droop, and every now and then his arm twitched. Such were the omens that Kurmadas experienced. 203. Just as the mother cow with her udders full of milk rushes to her calf, so the Lord of Pandhari came to him and He could not contain his joy in His heart. 204. As Kurmadas saw the Life of the world, he reverently prostrated himself on the ground and God embraced him, holding him by His four arms. 205. After the *bhaktas* had met one another, the Husband of Rukmini said to Kurmadas, 'Whatever gifts you may ask of Me I shall give to you.' 206. Hearing Him say this, Kurmadas replied, 'I have only this to ask of You, that You give me Your blessing, and never depart from this place.' 207. The dark-complexioned One replied, 'I will do so,' and He has remained there always. The God-loving *bhaktas* know Lahul as the sacred place equal to that of Pandhari. 208. In the months of *Ashadh* (July) and *Kartik* (November) pilgrims gather here, and sincere *bhaktas* come here to see God.

209. In the next chapter there are interesting stories. Hearers must give close attention. Just as a miser when he sees a store of wealth, lovingly becomes absorbed in it, 210. so give attention to this story and reverently listen. Mahipati, who is the dust of your feet, lovingly worships at your feet.

211. *Swasti* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. As the Lord of the earth hears it He will be pleased. Listen then, you God-loving pious *bhaktas*. This is the sixteenth very delightful chapter.

CHAPTER XVII

RAKA AND GORA THE POTTERS

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Krishna.

BHAKTAVIJAYA IS LIKE SPRING

1. A very extraordinary thing happened today. The *Bhaktavijaya* has come in the form of Spring, and its glories can be seen in the forest of good men. 2. The meaning of *Bhaktavijaya* is the spreading of the glory of Spring. Its enlightenment brings a flow of the cool breezes. The first thing to appear on the trees are the buds, consisting of those who desire knowledge. 3. The meaning of *Bhaktavijaya* is that new leaves and branches and flowers of knowledge have appeared. The priceless and eternal fruit of experimental knowledge has appeared. 4. The forest thus adorned seems exceedingly beautiful. Men who feel the heat of the three forms of affliction come here, and sit in the shade. 5. The royal swans (the superior *Yogis*) who are *Jivanmuktas* (free while living) come here to enjoy themselves, and satisfy themselves by the exceedingly interesting stories of the *bhaktas*. 6. There are ignorant people who look at the forest from afar and as they see the beautiful flowers and fruit their minds feel a sense of peace.

RAKA, BANKA AND VANKA

7. In the previous chapter there was the beautiful story of how the Lord of the universe met Kurmadas, protecting him with His eye of compassion. In His love He spoke to him of things that brought him joy. 8. Now among the chief of those who were indifferent to worldly things was Raka the potter, a wise *Vaishnava*. Listen, you pious hearers, to his delightful story. 9. His wife's name was Banka. She was an exceedingly pious and dutiful wife. They had a beautiful daughter named Vanka. 10. He (Raka) was a

Gujarati potter. He was living in Pandhari. He used to sell his baked clay jars and at the same time he worshipped Shri Hari. 11. Many days passed in this way and then a wonderful thing happened. He had dried the freshly made clay jars and had piled them up in the central apartment of his house. 12. In the meantime a cat had a litter of kittens and she brought her little ones and placed them in one of the jars. By day and night she used to visit the litter and feed them. 13. One day she had wandered away to catch some rats. The potter not knowing of the litter of kittens carried away the clay jars (in order to be baked). 14. Among the jars which were to be burned was the one holding the little kittens. He placed wood around the jars and set it on fire. 15. When the fire began to blaze, the cat returned from her wandering. At first she looked about in the house, but she could not find her kittens. 16. Coming outside she rushed around the furnace.

RAKA'S CONCERN OVER THE BURNING KITTENS

The potter understood what it meant, and with his hand he beat his forehead. 17. 'Alas, Alas,' he cried to his wife 'I have committed a great wrong.' She hurried to the scene and asked him what had happened. 18. Overcome with emotion-Raka said to his wife, 'There were kittens in the jars and without knowing it I have burned them. 19. The mother-cat mews loudly, and rushes back and forth to the house. What shall I do in this time of distress?' Saying this he threw himself to the ground. 20. Both Raka and Banka cried out, 'O Lord of Pandhari, rush to our help. Just as Thou didst preserve the sons of Pandu in the lacquer-house, so protect us. 21. A little frog once fell in a frying-pan and underneath was kindled a hot fire; realising its danger the frog thought of Thee. 22. Thou, the Husband of Rukmini, didst come to its help and the water refused to be heated. In the same way, O Lord of

Pandhari, come here at this time of distress. 23. O Mother (God), we have put Thee into an extraordinary difficulty, but what is there Thou canst not do? Thou didst protect Pralhad when thrown into the fire as he remembered Thy feet. 24. The cat species has an evil propensity and it will never think of Thee. But Thou art an Ocean of mercy and a Cloud of intelligence. Preserve the life of these kittens.' 25. The wife said to her husband, 'Make some vow to God and by doing so, *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) will quickly come to our help.' 26. Raka said in reply, 'If Thou wilt preserve these kittens from the fire, I shall never again engage myself in worldly affairs.' 27. Thus thinking in their minds, both prostrated themselves upon the ground and cried out, 'O Shri Hari, rush to our help and remove the distress of Thy lowly ones.' 28. Gopious tears flowed from their eyes, all their limbs lost strength, their bodies became covered with dust, and just then a strong wind blew. 29. The fire blazed in the furnace which made both cry out. In thinking of Hari they lost all their self-consciousness. 30. (Their condition was) like a woman who is determined to immolate herself on the funeral pyre of her dead husband; she loses all bodily consciousness and accompanies her husband. 31. For two days the fire of the furnace continued. In the meantime the the potter lay lifeless on the ground. 32. With the hope that Shri Hari would come to their help because of their vow, Banka too continued weeping and crying out, 'O Vitthal, rush to our aid.'

RAKA'S PRAYER HEARD AND KITTENS SAVED

33. On the third day the fire burnt out, and when all the jars were visible, the cat, loudly mewing, walked around the furnace. 34. The Husband of Rukmini did what was seemingly impossible. Listen, you fortunate hearers. Hearing the voice of their mother,

mother, the kittens mewd from the midst of the furnace. 35. The potter and his wife looked in, and among the pile of jars in the furnace they happened to see one that had not been baked. 36. There were in this jar three little kittens which they saw alive. They exclaimed, 'The Husband of Rukmini has come to our help, the Ornament of His *bhaktas*, the merciful One.' 37. As they had taken no food for three days their faces were wan, but now they became bright with joy; 38. just as a lamp seems like a mass of light when it receives oil and a wick; or as grass grows when a great cloud rains upon the earth; 39. or as the tortoise will not feed her young, but destroys their hunger by her mere looks; or as when a miser finds some hidden wealth, his mind is full of joy; 40. or as when the sun rises in the East and the lotus-flowers lie open on the lake; so the heart of Raka rejoiced. 41. All the people of Pandhari said, 'Blessed is this loving *bhakta*, for the Husband of Rukmini has come to him in his distress. A seemingly impossible thing has taken place.' 42. Raka said to his wife, 'I had made a vow to the Lord of Pandhari, that if He saved the kittens from the fire, I would no longer engage myself in worldly pursuits. 43. The Life of the world did come to me in my distress, so why should I now think of any worldly affairs?' With contrition in his mind he called together the Brahmans of the town.

RAKA AND HIS WIFE BANKA AS FORESTERS

44. With pure feelings in his heart he had the Brahmans plunder his house. He dressed himself in a loin-cloth and gave one to his wife. 45. For his stomach's sake he gathered faggots in the forest, and with these buying their food they also gave food to uninvited guests. 46. Whatever was left over, the three, including the daughter, ate together. Continually in their love they remembered Pandurang in their heart.

47. They collected the rags from off the roads and wound these around their body. If anyone gave them any other clothing, they would not even look at it. 48. While he was gathering rags one day in front of a tailor's house the tailor said to him, 'What has brought about such indifference to worldly things? 49. We want these rags for the purpose of making wicks.' So said that miser in his ignorance. 50. Raka said to his wife, 'Pick up a rag which is uselessly lying upon the ground, and use it for covering your body.' 51. After the Brahmans had eaten they threw outside the plates of leaves on which they had eaten. These they (Raka and Banka) fastened around their hips. 52. There are very many *Vairagis*, but none has lived as these two did. Poets in trying to find illustrations, find themselves unable to do so. 53. Just as there is no balance great enough to weigh the earth, so in singing the praise of God's *bhaktas* the mind becomes crazy. 54. One may be able to hold the sun in his fist, or the wind in a cage, but the extraordinary condition of God's *bhaktas* is such that speech cannot describe it. 55. Who has given up his worldly life in order to save the life of others? Some pray to the inferior deity for a son and for wealth; 56. 'I will distribute at least a quarter of a seer of sweetmeats, O Bhavani, if you give me so much wealth as would enable me to maintain elephants;' another vows to give to the Brahmans sweet carrots equal to his own weight, and at the end of life he wishes to sit in a chariot of light. 57. Raka was not thus worldly-minded. He made a seemingly impossible vow which perplexed the Lord of *Vaikuntha* (heaven), yet He came to the help of His *bhakta*. 58. Their repentance was very strong, the equal of which no one has ever had. In the meantime their beautiful daughter Vanka went to bathe

DAUGHTERS OF RAKA AND OF NAMDEV QUARREL

59. Just at that moment the daughter of Nama was washing clothes on the bank of the Bhima. She was beat-

ing the clothes upon a stone slab and the sprays flew about. 60. Vanka said to her, 'Beat the clothes gently on the slab, O friend; I have just bathed, and have seated myself for mental worship (*manas-puja*).' 61. The latter replied, 'You are of the potter caste, and yet you seem very particular. You have all abandoned the happy domestic life, and now you are wandering from house to house begging.' 62. Your father is a *bhakta* because of some desire in his heart. He made a vow to the Lord of Pandhari. He has placed the Husband of Rukmini in a difficult position in becoming disentangled from his domestic life.' 63. Vanka said to her, 'The sobbing Nama is well known amongst men. Although the Holder of the disk (Krishna), is in the form of Buddha [mute] he forced Him to speak by breaking his own head.' 64. Thus talking to one another they returned to their homes. Meanwhile Nama returned home after pleasing the Husband of Rukmini by his service of song. 65. The quarrel that had taken place on the bank of the Bhima, his daughter reported to Nama, saying that Vanka had blamed him. 66. She said, 'Though in the *Kali Yuga*, God has assumed the *avatar* of Buddha (mute) yet Nama the *bhakta* went to the temple and by breaking his head he forced the Husband of Rukmini to speak. 67. But my father (Raka) is one who truly has no desires in what he does. He gathers a load of dry faggots and by selling them in the bazaar he earns his living.' 68. When Namdev heard the report given by his daughter, he was very much perplexed. He went to the great door of the temple and prayed to the Holder of the disk (Krishna). 69. He said, 'O God, listen to me. Tell me whether Raka the potter, Thy *bhakta*, is with or without selfish desires.' 70. Listening to this question of His loving *bhakta*, the cloud-dark Krishna smiled and said, 'In all the world I see no one so indifferent to worldly things.' 71. Nama replied,

'O Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven), show me the condition of his mind.' Saying that He would do so, He lovingly took the hand of the servant of Vishnu. 72. Rukmini, Nama, and the dark-complexioned One walked together. The sun was now overhead, and its twelve phases gave out intense heat. 73. They saw Raka in the jungle gathering faggots with his own hands. The Husband of Rukmini, unseen, viewed the novel sight. 74. Banka his wife, supremely pious and dutiful, took her daughter with her and the two walked in the jungle. 75. There they suddenly saw two sticks lying together. Thinking someone might have left them there they would not touch them. 76. If the wood was still connected with a tree, they would not break the branch and take it away with them; but if it fell of itself they would carefully gather it. 77. Lest he should step on an ant and kill it, Raka the potter walked very carefully. 78. Seeing this novel sight, *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) was astonished. Motioning to Rukmini He said to Nama, 79. 'See how indifferent to all earthly things is this *bhakta* of mine, Raka the potter. He is truly without hypocrisy and worships Me without any selfish motive.' 80. Nama replied, 'O Mother Rukmini, give him something and then watch him.' Rukmini then took off her bracelet from her arm and gave it to Nama. 81. It was a bracelet that not even Brahmadev could have made, being set with priceless jewels. Even if the three worlds were given as equivalent, still they could not equal it. 82. Such was the bracelet that Rukmini took off her arm and threw in the jungle. The mother of the universe lifted up some dry sticks and placed them over it. 83. Krishna, Rukmini and His *bhakta* Nama, the noble *Vaishnava* being invisible to Raka, watched the scene as it happened. 84. Raka and his wife went on gathering faggots and accidentally lifted up the sticks which covered the gold bracelet. 85. They gazed at the bracelet with its jewel setting in gold, and as they

gazed at this priceless ornament they knew of nothing in all the three worlds equal to it. 86. Raka the potter, absolutely indifferent to worldly things, pushed the sticks aside and said to his wife, 'Look at this, the root of disaster.' 87. She replied, 'This brings a hindrance in our worship of God. I wonder what *siddhi* (accomplishment personified) has come across our worship, and given us this bracelet. 88. We cast aside all worldly things and came as suppliants to the Lord of Pandhari. What do we want with a useless gold bracelet?' 89. So they not only left the bracelet but also the wood that was placed upon it; just as a Brahman will never take food that a dog has touched; 90. and as the *Chatak* bird will not drink water which is on the ground, regarding it as defiling; and as a fly will not touch the body after oil is rubbed upon it; 91. so Mother Rukmini being pleased with her *bhaktas* had given them this bracelet, but the two left both it and the stick which covered it, and went on their way. 92. Nama then said, 'O Life of the world, O Pervader of the universe, O Ornament of His *bhaktas*, Raka the potter is truly absorbed in Thy worship with feelings of love. 93. Give him a direct vision of Thyself.' The Husband of Rukmini hearing him say this smiled; 94. and said, 'You have now had experience of Raka's mental condition. It is just as I told you. If you still have any doubts let me know.' 95. Nama replied, 'Raka the God-loving *bhakta* is evidently without selfish desires. Even my mind cannot be equal to his.' 96. Nama, Hari and Rukmini then directly appeared to him. They called Raka the potter to them and gave him this direct manifestation. 97. Raka saw with his own eyes the four-armed Hari, the dark-complexioned One, beautiful in His yellow robe, with his crown and earrings, and garlands of wild flowers. 98. Raka and Banka then embraced the god, grasping tightly His feet, and bowed to the Holder of the disk (Krishna).

GORA THE POTTER TRAMPLES HIS CHILD TO DEATH

99. Among the *Vaishnavas*, those who are completely indifferent to worldly things, was the God-loving *bhakta*, Gora the potter. You *bhaktas* listen with love to his extraordinary history. 100. His property lay in the town of Tardhoki by name [near Pandharpur]. Here he had his house, his wife and his domestic life, and at the same time he worshipped Shri Hari. 101. As he ate, as he walked about, as he rose up, as he rested, as he carried on his occupation as a potter, he was all the time repeating the names of the Lord of Pandhari. 102. While listening with his ears to the stories of ordinary life, while looking at things animate and inanimate, and while realizing the working of his ten senses, he had at the same time the thought of the Lord of the world continually. 103. Of good and evil, of joy and sorrow, of praise and criticism, he thought nothing. The prince and the pauper he regarded as equal. 104. One day while his wife had gone for water she left her child to play in the front yard. 105. Gora had raised a border of earth and within it had made the clay. With his eyes closed, Gora trod the clay in his ecstatic mood. 106. Now thinking in his heart of the form of Vitthal, tears of love flowed from his eyes. He had no recollection of his body and became so utterly absorbed as to be identified with the Invisible. 107. While the child was playing about the yard it came creeping along near the clay, and (the ecstatic) Gora trod on it with the clay. 108. When his wife came back bringing the water, she thought of her child as her breast filled with milk. She looked about in the yard for her child but could not see it. 109. She then came near to her husband and asked him about it: 'I went to bring water, leaving the child with you. 110. I see the child nowhere. Tell me at once, Oh lord of my heart, where is it?' Looking about her, she suddenly discovered some blood. 111. Then she noticed in the mud

a collection of bones and flesh. Beating her breast she cried out in her agony. 112. She cried out to her husband. 'You have trodden on the child in the clay. You seem to have lost all self-consciousness. What is this awful thing you have committed?' 113. You have discarded your worldly affairs, and have devoted yourself to the finding of God. I mean to go at once from here and commit suicide.' 114. Listening to her harsh rebuke, he slightly regained consciousness and said to his wife, 'You have interrupted my contemplation without thinking what you are doing. 115. The Husband of Rukmini was sitting in my lotus-heart. You confused my mind and you drove away the Lord of Pandhari.' 116. With his heart full of anger, he seized with his hands the handle of the wheel and came near to his wife in order to beat her. 117. Full of fear she said to her husband, 'For Vithoba's sake, mind if you as much as touch me with your finger.' 118. Hearing her utter this oath, Gora sat down quietly and with peace and forgiveness in his heart he began to repeat the names of God. 119. Men and women assembled in the yard, and began to talk to one another about the event. 'The child has been trodden into the clay; we have seen this great wrong done.' 120. One said, 'He is utterly crazy. How did your husband become such?' A second one said, 'That is always the effect when one gives himself up to the worship of Hari.' 121. Thus different people reviled him in many ways with scornful words. But he would not listen to what they said and continued his worship of Hari; 122. just as when an elephant walks on the royal road, many dogs begin to bark, but he gives no attention and keeps on walking at his pleasure; 123. or just as in the assembly of *pandits*, fools make their impudent remarks, but without listening to them the *pandits* continue their discussion on the meaning of the *Shastras*; 124. or as when the ocean saw the *Rishi* Agasti it began to roar in mockery, but the *Rishi*

paid no attention to it and continued his religious ceremonies; 125. or as a serpent hisses in the presence of an eagle, yet the eagle feels not the slightest fear; 126. so, although the men and women who were gathered there reviled him, Gora paid no attention to them, and steadying his mind he repeated the names of the Husband of Rukmini. 127. It did not even enter into his thought that he had trodden his child into the clay. Bringing Shri Vitthal to mind he paid no attention to the sorrows of this world.

GORA AND HIS CHILDLESS WIFE

128 After some days had passed, Gora's wife began thinking to herself, 'Though I continue refusing to speak to my husband, it will not mean the end of this affair. 129. If a king commits a wrong what can the subjects do? I have no authority to punish my husband.' 130. So one day she came near him to wash his feet. Pushing her away he said to her, 131. 'You have laid me under an oath in the name of Vitthal that I should not touch you with my fingers. Know that such an oath in the name of my Vithoba I will not break.' 132. The wife said to her husband, 'I spoke to you as I should not have done. Please forgive me. You must accept my service. 133. Busy in my daily duties, I may have said what is good or bad. But if you sit there obstinately refusing me, what will the end be? 134. When jars are placed in the furnace, they naturally touch one another, so when I am busy with my domestic life I say sometimes what I ought not.' 135. Gora said to her, 'The sun may rise in the West, but I have made a fixed determination which I shall never give up. 136. One might fasten the air in a cage, or one might confine space in a jar, but my determination will never be broken. 137. One might hide fire in a load of hay, or the wind in fear might run away from the clouds, but I will never break the oath that has been made in the name of the Husband of Rukmini. 138. A pumpkin might sink in the ocean; the

god of death might fear the ghost; but my determination is immovable, it will endure for ever.' 139. As the *Vaishnava bhakta* continued thus talking, his wife remained quiet. But as she now had no child, her mind was full of concern. 140. As she thought of this by day and night she said to herself, 'I must bring about a second marriage for him. In that way he will be pleased and my family will grow.' She then went to her own mother's house. 141. She told her mother and father all that had happened. She said, 'My husband has discarded me, and our family line will now disappear. 142. Relatives were looking for some fault, and that is just what God has done. Evil ones among our relatives are laughing at us. "His family line has ceased," they say. 143. He has already discarded me, and I must bring about a second marriage for him. But who would give him another wife, since the first one is living? 144. Now give to my husband as a wife your youngest virgin daughter.' Saying this she grasped the feet of her mother. 145. Begging this from her mother, tears flowed from her eyes. 'I am asking for only a jacket as it were, and you must meet my request.' 146. As she spoke so piteously, her father and mother replied, 'We grant your request.' Then having called a Brahman they decided upon the marriage.

GORA MARRIES HIS LIVING WIFE'S SISTER

147. Returning to her home she made all necessary garments, adornments and ornaments. 148. She sent invitations and collected all the relatives in her family line. The marriage procession then started, and the bands were playing loudly. 149. The wedding guests thought with concern amongst themselves on the way. They said, 'O gentlemen, we cannot approve of the strange fact that he should abandon his wife for the sake of God. 150. Muhammedans do not like the worship of the *Gayatri*

Mantra. Donkeys would not enjoy having the sandalwood paste put upon them. So men who are *Vaishnavas* are not liked by those who revile them. 151. A sinful man does not like good conduct. An out-caste does not like to fix his thoughts on the *Shastras*. Ghosts do not enjoy the music of the *kirtan*, nor does a fool give thought to reason. 152. The sick do not like milk. Thieves do not like the bright moonlight. Misers do not like giving away of wealth. The deaf do not enjoy hearing singing. 153. Those who eat flesh have no kindness. Those who kill are not fond of compassion. The poor through their fate do not care for the shade of the wish-tree. 154. So those who are not *bhaktas* do not like the devotion of those who are *bhaktas*. Well in this way they went on quickly to the marriage. 155. The wedding deities were installed; all were feasted and holding the marriage curtain the Brahmans repeated the eight verses of blessing. 156. Thinking of the Husband of Lakshmi, the (officiating) Brahman said, 'Beware, Beware.' Just as they dropped the marriage curtain, the loud music from the instruments began. 157. The marriage ceremonies continued for four days. The procession marched through the town. The mother-in-law and father-in-law then thought to themselves, 158. 'He has been given the eldest and the youngest of the daughters. He has taken a dislike to one of them, and men will now laugh at us. 159. "Just as both your eyes are alike to you; in the same way consider both of them your wives"—in this way putting our son-in-law under oath, we must make him accept her hand.' 160. They then said to Gora, 'Both these wives now belong to you. Care for them and treat them alike in your domestic life. 161. If you do not treat them kindly, Vithoba will be your witness.' Hearing them say this, he told them that he assented. 162. Said he, 'If the Lord of the world is merciful, the bondage of this life will break of itself. He will not allow His *bhaktas* to be influenced by worldly passions.'

163. Thus happy in his mind, he quickly returned to his home, and gave exactly the same garments and ornaments to his two wives. 164. Just exactly as he regarded his elder wife, so he regarded his younger wife. Seeing him so regard her, the elder wife began to feel concerned. 165. She asked Gora, 'Why does not the younger wife please you?' He replied, 'Your father placed me under an oath, 166. namely, that I would not treat you two partially. He put me under an oath to Vithoba, and this is the oath under which my father-in-law placed me. And I have his words firmly fixed in my mind.' 167. Hearing her husband say this, the younger wife began to cry. Said she, 'O sister, why did you get me entangled in this? 168. Then the elder sister said to her younger sister, 'O my dear sister, do not be troubled about this. When night comes we shall test his heart.' 169. When it was night, seeing the *bhakti* of Vishnu asleep, his two wives came near him, and slept at his side. 170. Each of them took one of his hands, and placed it on her breast. When he awoke he began to wonder. 171. Said he, 'Although my mind was not thinking of any sensual pleasure, it was my hand that broke the vow.' Thus repenting in his heart, listen to what he did. 172. He took a sword and fastened it to a post, and with a firm heart he cut both hands off. 173. As he sat there worshipping, the sun now arose. The wives seeing him now without hands, began to cry out loudly. 174. Said they, 'A great disaster has happened. Who will now carry on our domestic life? Everywhere the evil-minded will laugh at us, seeing what our conduct has been. 175. We had him perform a second marriage in order to increase our family line. But what can we do before the wrath of God?' 176. Gora then said to both his wives, 'You mourn needlessly. If the Husband of Rukmini is your Protector, why should you sorrow? 177. No one who receives the wish-cow need be troubled as to how he

is to get his livelihood. 178. If one is sitting under the wish-tree, how can there be any lack of food or ornaments to him? So if the Husband of Rukmini is bestowing His favour, why should there be bondage to things of this life? 179. If anyone gets a touchstone in his hand, what can he lack of money and property? So if one's love is given to the repeating of names of Vitthal, he cannot be injured by entanglement in worldly affairs. 180. Just as all diseases clear away when one drinks all he can of nectar, so no diseases of this earthly life can injure anyone who is repeating with his lips the names of Ram, Krishna, Hari.' 181. Thus explaining things to his wives, he continued happy in mind. He was continually repeating the names of God, and never stopped for a single moment. 182. Then came the tenth day of the month of *Ashodh* (July), and Gora with joy in his heart came to the sacred city of Pandhari together with his two wives. 183. They bathed in the Chandrabhaga river and paid their respects to Pundalik. They circumambulated the sacred town and then arrived at the great door of the temple. 184. Along with him his two wives reverently prostrated themselves on the ground. They embraced the god and with reverence worshipped His feet. 185. Nama was standing at this time by the eagle-platform. With cymbals and a band of singers and with love and joy he was performing a *kirtan*, and with enthusiasm was repeating the names of God. 186. With the sound of the *vinu* and the drum, there was great enthusiasm in the *kirtan*. He danced before Pandurang, Destroyer of the earthly bondage, the merciful One. 187. Nivritti, Dnyandev, Savata, Sopan, Jagamitra the beloved sat listening to the stories related by Nama. 188. There were also present many saints, *Mahants*, and good men. Many *Vaishnavas* had gathered there. With the joy of love they worshipped, and in their love listened to the *kirtan*. 189. Then Namdev lifted up his hands and motioned them like

banners, and with his lips he told everyone to raise his hands like banners in a similar manner. [190. With the joy of love clapping their hands, they shouted aloud the names of Hari. Tears now flowed from the lotus-eyes of Gora.

GORA'S HANDS AND CHILD RESTORED AGAIN

191. Gora said, 'O God, Husband of Rukmini, why hast Thou deserted me now? As I put my armless hands up, I feel ashamed. 192. O lotus-eyed One, O Husband of Kamala, Thou alone art my wealth and my property. Aside from Thee I see no one in all the three worlds. 193. I have put all my burden upon Thee, and I have no other support but Thee.' Thus Gora the potter pleaded piteously before God. 194. Hearing his piteous cry, the Husband of Rukmi ni came to his help. Hands like his former ones sprang from (the stumps of) his arms. 195. With great joy he now clapped his hands while repeating aloud the names of God. All the *bhaktas* cried aloud, 'Victory, victory,' as they saw the wonderful sight. 196. They said, 'Among all the *bhaktas*, the noble *Vaishnavas*, Gora the potter is the noblest *bhakta*. The Husband of Rukmini is pleased with him, and in the *kirtan* of Hari his hands sprang from (the stumps of) his arms.' 197. Seeing the wonderful sight, Gora's elder wife arose and joining her hands palm to palm before the Lord of Pandhari, 198. she said, 'Lord of the world, Thou hast looked with favour upon Thy servant. I have been very sorrowful without a child. Why dost not Thou have any pity for me? 199. Thy *bhaktas* describe Thee as the Ocean of mercy and the Life of the world. We are sorrowful without the sight of an infant child. 200. Taking Thy name, O Lord of Rukmini, my husband became unconscious of body and trod our child in the clay. Thou surely dost remember this.' 201. Hearing this piteous cry the Holder of the disk (Krishna) showed His favour. Out of the assembly a little child came creeping suddenly. 202. See-

ing the child, everyone was filled with astonishment. The mother rushing towards it in her love, held it to her heart. 203. Then the Mother Rukmini said (to Gora), 'From today you are free from the oath. Do not now abandon your wives. Our command is your authority.' 204. As the daughter of (king) Bhimak (Rukmini) thus spoke, all in the assembly of the *bhaktas* rejoiced. They clapped their hands crying 'Victory, Victory,' and wagged their heads in the *kirtan*. 205. Then repeating the hymns of praise, they waved lights over the Lord of Rukmini.

In the next chapter hearers are asked to listen with reverence to an interesting story. 206. The Husband of Rukmini will Himself relate the beautiful stories of His *bhaktas*. Mahipati is merely His servant, as he calls himself in his love.

207. *Swasti* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen to it, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the seventeenth very delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER XVIII LIFE OF NAMDEV

(Continued)

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Krishna.

BHAKTAVIJAYA DEPICTS NINEFOLD BHAKTI

1. The darkness of ignorance has disappeared. The *Bhaktavijaya* has arisen like the sun, and the clusters of stars in the form of duality are hidden because of the sun's brilliancy. 2. By the light of its knowledge the (following) nine forms of *bhakti* have become available. Those seeking salvation should therefore give due thought to the subject and (i) walk on the path provided by the hearing of the *Bhaktavijaya*. 3. (ii) Some walk along the path of *kirtans*. (iii) Some associate themselves with the God-loving *bhaktas*; in that case the dull-minded and the fools are saved, and they make *Stripati* (Krishna) subject to them. 4. (iv) Some look to the path of contemplation yet they mix with the world. (v) Some sit with concentrated mind in the cave of thinking. 5. (vi) Some prefer service at God's feet, and they walk along that path. (vii) Some observing the city of worship walk thitherward. 6. (viii) Some pick the path of supplication and walk rapidly on that. (ix) Others in their love pick out the paths of self-consecration. 7. So the seekers of salvation have made these nine possible ways exceedingly clear. Other God-loving *bhaktas* also have walked the same paths.

GORA TESTS NAMA

8. In the previous chapter there was the extraordinary story of how hands sprang from Gora's arms and how the Husband of Rukmini brought back the dead child to life and gave it back to its parents. 9. Gora then joined his hands palm to palm, and said to the saints, ' Come to my home and purify my abode. ' 10. Seeing his great desire

the saints replied that they would come and they at once set off. 11. The *Vaishnavas* walked along to the home of Gora, and were filled with joy, while with love in his heart he (Gora) bowed to them with love. 12. Gora gave them grass mats to sit upon and began to wash their feet. And as he drank the water in which their feet were washed his mind felt satisfaction. 13. Worshipping them and using the sixteen materials, he gave them all a meal of six juices, and the *tulsi* leaf for the purification of their mouths. 14. Nivritti, Dnyandev, Sopan, Nama, Savata and other *Vaishnavas*, also Muktabai the store-house of all goodness, all sat in their appointed places. 15. Dnyandev now said to Gora, 'You have placed the jars (the saints) on their seats. Now separate those that are unbaked from those that are baked, and tell me your experience.' 16. Dnyaneshwar having said this, by his own reason Gora understood what he meant. Gora then took in his hand the potter's paddle, 17. and with it he rapped the skull of all the saints who were present. All accepted it in silence. 18. But when he reached Nama, he (Nama) cried out, 'Why do you strike me needlessly?' Gora replied, 'This vessel is as yet raw and unbaked.' 19. Muktabai said to him, 'O Gora, how did you know this? You are good, and an expert examiner. I have without a doubt discovered that. 20. Jewellers are expert in their examination of jewels, so also a potter by a mere glance recognizes a jar (as baked or unbaked). 21. A person sick with disease is easily recognized by a doctor, so you by a mere glance know what is baked and what is not baked.' 22. Listening to what she said, all the saints broke out into a hearty laugh. But Nama was sorry at heart and was much troubled. 23. Therefore rising from the assembly, Namdev came to Pandharpur, and there meeting the Husband of Rukmini he began to tell Him the secrets of his heart. 24. His throat choked and tears flowed from his eyes and he said

to the god, 'I have been greatly insulted. My heart is full of ang r.' 25. The Life of the world laughed and gave Nama an embrace. Said He, 'Who insulted you? Please tell me without hesitation.' 26. Nama replied, 'O *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart), one should tell others of the praise he receives, but the criticism he receives should be kept to himself.' 27. The Husband of Rukmini replied, 'I know the feelings of your heart. But I see no one so good and dear to me, aside from you. 28. Do not be ashamed to tell your secrets to your dearest friend.' Thus spoke Adhokshaja (Krishna) to Nama in love. 29. Nama replied, 'Listen to my story, O God. Gora the potter, Thy *bhakta*, took all the saints to his house, and he did a very astonishing thing. 30. He seated them upon grass mats and lovingly worshipped them. Then Dnyandev motioning to him said something to him. 31. Gora then took his potter's paddle in his hand and rapped everyone on the head. All received it silently, and no one replied to him. 32. But when he came to rap me I was afraid, O Lord God. I said to him, after remembering Thy feet, "Go away." 33. Hearing me say this, all the saints laughed, and Dnyandev together with Muktabai began to make fun of me. 34. Gora then said about me, "He is still raw and unbaked," and all the saints still laughing I became ashamed. 35. I then arose quickly and came to tell Thee.' As Nama said this, *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) replied.

NEED OF A GURU

36. The Life of the world said to Nama, 'What he has said about you is quite true. He who does not go as a suppliant to a *guru* is spoken of as one who is not ripe.' 37. As the Holder of the disk (Krishna) said this to him, Nama's spirit gave way. Just as salt dissolves in a moment when water is poured upon it; 38. or as when water is poured upon sugar it at once dissolves away; so at

the words of the cloud-dark One (Krishna), the God-loving *bhakti* became very troubled in thought. 39. When a storm comes from the South, the clouds melt away; so at the teaching of the Lord of the world Nama became sad. 40. He then replied to God, ' I came here to tell Thee my complaint, because I thought Thou wouldst take away my pain. 41. But Thou hast shown me disfavour, and hast talked to me as they did. Now O Lord of the world, I know of no place to go to. 42. If the earth feels troubled, where should the trees go? If a mother casts away her child, who will care for it? 43. If a tortoise will not look at its young, in what way will their lives be preserved? If a king does not act rightly and justly, how can his subjects be happy? 44. But Thou, O Holder of the disk (Krishna), hast made me very sad to-day. In all the three worlds I see no one aside from Thee to help me'. 45. The Lord of Pandhari then said to Nama, ' Your heart and mine are one. Just as honey is stored in a flower, there is no duality between them, 46. so you are My very life. Do not say that you are sad. Go now as a suppliant to a good *guru* and put an end to your thoughts on duality.' 47. Nama said, ' O God supreme, why do I need a *Sadguru*? When Thou, O (Krishna) Keshav, art so near to me, how can there be any bondage to my soul? 48. To engage in religious ceremonies, austerities, sacrifices and offer gifts and go as a suppliant to a *Sadguru* in order to gain Thy love, seem so unnecessary. 49. If one suddenly happens to obtain sugar, why go to the bazaar for any? If nectar should fall in one's mouth, why go to the mountain to graze? 50. If without effort one gets some tasty food, why do any cooking? If at home one has a pile of money, then why wander about for it? 51. So Thou, the *Guru* of the world, art so near to me. Then why do I need a *Sadguru*? ' Listening to Nama's talk the Holder of the *Sharang* Bow (Krishna) replied, 52. ' Nama, listen to Me. When I was

the *avatar* Ram, I went as a suppliant to Vashishtha in order to question him on self-knowledge. 53. When I was the Krishna *avatar*, I went with reverence to Sandipani and from him I obtained self-knowledge. 54. So if you will listen to Me, you will be acceptable to all the saints.' As the Life of the world said this, Nama grasped His feet.

GOD CHOOSES VISOBA KHECHAR AS NAMA'S GURU

55. Nama said to Krishna, 'To whom shall I go as suppliant?' *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) hearing him say this, replied to him, 56. 'Visoba Khechar is now asleep in the temple of Shiva. In all the three worlds I know of no one who is so wise or so indifferent to earthly things. 57. So go at once there and become a suppliant to that chief of *Shadgurus*.' Nama then embraced His feet, and tears flowed from his eyes. 58. Nama replied, 'O God, I cannot for a moment be without Thee. If Thou desirest any proof of this, I will swear to it by Thy name.' 59. The Holder of the *Sarany* Bow (Krishna) then said to him, 'Protect public custom. If you do not go to a *Sadguru*, how can ignorant men be saved? 60. The Holder of the disk (Krishna) having said this, Nama arose at once, very sad in heart. How sad he was, listen. 61. Just as Shri Krishna gave knowledge to Uddhava in the eleventh chapter, when he sent him to Badrikashram and made him sad, 62. so in the *Kali Yuga* Nama the *bhakta* became his *avatar*. Therefore so using his illustration I have applied it exactly to himself. 63. It is like the eleventh day among religious observances, or like *Hri-hikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) among the gods, or as there is no other river that can be compared with the Chandrabhaga. 64. Those who wander to an endless number of sacred bathing places find their pride growing. But when they see the Chandrabhaga, even at a distance, they become prideless. 65. How can I fully dis-

cribe the greatness of the Chandrabhaga ? *Warkari* pilgrims who come to Pandhari recognize the greatness of the Bhimarathi, a greatness which does not belong to any other sacred bathing place. 66. Such a sacred bathing place as the Chandrabhaga, and such a sacred city as Pandhari, and such a holy *bhakta* as Nama, cannot be found in all the three worlds. 67. Though going to meet with his *Sadguru*, he could not bear separation from God. Then bringing into his heart the Lord of the world, he suddenly arose and went along. 68. Nama came quickly into the temple of Mallikarjun and looked about him. Here he saw Visoba Khechar asleep. 69. He had put on his shoes and had placed both his feet upon the emblem of Shiva. When Nama saw this, he was filled with astonishment. 70. 'How is it that the Husband of Rukmini has given me such a *Sadguru* as this one? He has arrogantly placed his feet on the emblem of Shiva, and has fallen into sleep.' 71. Coming as he (Nama) did to find a *Sadguru*, the first thing he found in him was a fault; just as when one takes the first mouthful of food and then finds a fly in it; 72. or as one setting out on a journey (to make a fortune) should come across (a woman carrying) an empty jar (of water, a bad omen); or as if at the beginning of a book, the first letter should not be written; 73. or as when one comes to look at the sun and finds it in eclipse; or as when one comes to examine the horoscope of a bride and a bridegroom and discovers that both of them were born in the same course of the star; 74. or as when looking for the moon on the second of the bright half of the month, the sky is covered with clouds; so when looking for a *guru*, he (Nama) saw at first his fault. 75. The servant of Vishnu came near and said to Visoba, 'You call yourself a *sadhu* and a saint. But what is this improper thing you are doing? 76. You have placed your feet upon the emblem of Shiva, the Husband of Parvati. Now I know

what your knowledge of *Brahm* is worth.' 77. Visoba replied to Nama, 'I have indeed made a great mistake. So place my feet where *Sadashiv* (God) is not. 78. My body is weak and I have no strength to rise. You, a servant of *Vishnu*, came as a friend to meet me and to tell me what is right. 79. Place my feet where the Husband of *Parvati* (*Shiva*) is not.' Nama hearing what he said, came near to him. 80. Then as *Namdev* himself lifted up *Visoba's* feet, the whole place seemed to take the form of the emblem of *Shiva*. 81. Whichever way he turned his feet, there he seemed to see the emblem, he found no place empty of God whatever and his mind became perplexed. 82. The bell, the drum, all took the form of *Shiva*. The men and women who were there to visit God, they all seemed like (*Shiva*) the Husband of *Parvati*. 83. As he looked at his *Sadguru's* feet they also seemed to be *Shiva*; and after some consideration as he looked at himself he found that he himself appeared like *Shiva*. 84. In his love he looked all about him. The temple and all that belonged to it seemed like *Shiva* the Lord of *Kailas* (Heaven). *Nama* was overcome with astonishment and placed his head on the *Sadguru's* feet. 85. The *Sadguru* replied to him, 'I feel very much troubled. O *bhakta* of *Vishnu*, quickly place my feet on the earth.' 86. Hearing this *Nama* replied, 'You are an ocean of knowledge, a cloud of intelligence. As I was serving your feet, O *Swami*, everything seemed to be in the form of *Shiva*. 87. Every where I saw (*Shiva*) the Lord of *Kailas* (Heaven). There seems to be no place whatever without Him. Amazed at this, I have placed my head at your feet.' 88. *Visoba* replied to *Nama*, 'Listen to the forms in which *Shiva* appears.' Then speaking in the *Nanda* [Kanarese] language he removed all his doubts. 89. 'His five faces, His three brilliant eyes and His ten adorable hands: I will describe to you His form. 90. As you look at His head it reaches up to heaven

and His feet touch the bottom of the seventh hell. 91. The six *Shishyas* in attempting to describe His power felt ashamed at their inability. The four *Vedas* in describing the full meaning, became crazy in their vain attempts. 92. The eighteen *Purans* were not able to describe Him, and so the thousand-hooded One (the Serpent *Shesha*) came to describe His qualities. And each of his tongues was divided in two. 93. Thus His limit cannot be defined. Then he (Visoba) joined his two hands palm to palm, and said, 'I am the servant of Dnyaneshwar. I am devoted to his feet.' 94. As Nama listened to the words of his *Sadguru*, they made a deep impression on his mind; just as when God showed Himself in the form of the whole universe to Arjun, the whole scene entered into his experience. 95. Nama then said, 'O mother *Sadguru*, your feet are the means of my salvation. In bowing to your feet, all seems to me to be as but one in form.' 96. Visoba then arose and placed upon Nama's head his hand of blessing. Nama then recognized in his lotus-heart that Visoba was the Husband of Rukmini.

97. It happened on a certain day that all the saints gathered together at the eagle-platform and saw the Lord of Pandhari embracing Nama. 98. They said to Nama, 'Since you have adopted a *Sadguru* you never seem to care for us. How is it that you have hardened your heart and continually remain with him?' 99. Nama replied to them, 'Thy form, O *Sadguru*, my Lord, is in my heart. No longer do I see a difference between Thyself and myself.' 100. Hearing the words of Nama, the Husband of Rukmini was pleased. The Life of the world then spoke to all the saints as follows:- 101. 'No longer should you call Nama raw and unbaked.' As the Life of the world said this, Dayandev became aware of what he really meant,

PARISA BHAGAVAT THE BRAHMAN

102. Now listeners, hearken with reverence to another.

most interesting story. Parisa Bhagavat in performing austerities prayed to Mother Rukmini. 103. The Primal Mother being pleased, with her eyes of compassion she showed him her full mercy, and placed over him the shadow of that mercy. 104 She met him in the visible form and held him to her heart. She said to Parisa, 'Whatever good desire you hold in your heart, tell me what it is.' 105. Parisa Bhagavat thought for a while in his heart and then replied, 'Mother, I wish my heart to be uninterruptedly steady in my worship of Thee 106. May no thought of fear come into my heart. Such is my thought. O Mother, gratify my longings.' 107. She immediately brought a *parisa* (touchstone) and placed it in his hand. She then said to him, ' O Parisa Bhagavat, never let this touchstone be separated from you. 108 Whatever pieces of iron you touch with this stone, you will have that amount of gold. ' Hearing these words of the Mother he had a feeling of satisfaction. 109. Just as when one has performed a hundred sacrifices he enjoys the dignity of Indra; or a when the ten-headed One (Ravana) having performed his austerities found himself the Lord of the golden city (Lanka). 110. With a mind comforted, Parisa made an obeisance to the Primal Mother. He gave the touchstone to Kamalaja his wife. 111. She then brought some pieces of iron and applied to them the touchstone, and they immediately turned into the highest kind of gold. 112. Kamalaja was very much pleased and said, 'One cannot know the limit of Thy power, O Mother of the world. Aside from Thee who is there who will come and help us weak ones in our necessities? 113. We have often fallen into the sufferings of poverty but today Thou hast supplied all our needs. ' Thus both husband and wife felt great satisfaction. 114. Parisa then took his wife aside and said to her, ' Tell no one of this. If the saints should hear of it they would laugh at me. ' 115. Being of one mind in this matter they both

enjoyed the very best food but in outward appearance they showed poverty. 116. They placed all their wealth in the cellar and dined every day on the daintiest food. To people, however, they showed themselves as indifferent to earthly things; 117. just as deceivers shave off their hair and then rob the unwary pilgrims on the road; or like actors who assume a variety of forms and act like the *sannyasi* Shripad; 118. or just as a gilt coin seems very brilliant on the outside; or as when an adulterer seeks to give people the impression that he is of a specially high moral standard; 119. or just as the flowers of the *Pungala* Vine (a bad smelling shrub) seem very beautiful to the eye from a distance; or as one recognizes the moral character of a miserly friend from what he shows in his outer life; 120. or as in the case of one who is not possessed by a deity, on the outside to the eye he pretends to be possessed by a god; or as a peacock which has feathers with eyes all over but has no sight; 121. so Parisa Bhagavat appeared to people as one indifferent to earthly things, but in his home he had a vast amount of wealth as any observant person could recognize. 122. Just as by looking at anyone's face, we recognise whether he has dined or fasted; and from their language we judge whether men are sincere or irritable; 123. and whether a lamp has a wick and oil in it can be recognized from the light the lamp gives; and by insight one can recognize whether a man is wise or foolish; 124. and whether a person has done a thing successfully or not is recognized by the wise from the way he acts; or as a speaker can easily recognize whether his hearer has a troubled or a quiet mind; 125. in the same way clever and wise people recognized what the indifference of earthly things of Parisa Bhagavat really was; for good qualities and bad qualities can never be completely hidden.

KAMALAJA AND RAJABAI

126. Parisa's wife Kamalaja was one day going for water. She filled her vessel from the water in the Chandra-bhaga river and was returning to her home: 127. Kamalaja accidentally met on the way Rajabai the dutiful wife of Namdev. 128. Rajabai said to her, 'I am going to fill my vessel with water, and will return at once. Until then remain in this place, dear friend.' 129. Saying this she hastened and filled her vessel and returned and then the two persons again met each other. 130. As she saw Rajabai was full of concern because she (Rajabai) was without food and raiments, she said to her, 'Tell me at once your personal secrets. 131. One should never be ashamed to tell one's secrets to a friend, but should put away all thoughts of difference between them and treat each other as one.' 132. Rajabai then said to her friend, 'Listen to my secrets. The lord of my home has put away all shame and has devoted himself to the God of the eagle banner. 133. He has no idea either of the honour paid to him or of criticisms. He has not the slightest concern regarding public affairs. He brings into his mind the Husband of Rukmini and is worshipping all the time. 134. At home we have the very least of food and raiments and yet we have a very large family. Tell me at once what I am to do.' 135. After listening to her Kamalaja replied, 'Has not He Whom Namdev worships become pleased with him and given him everything? 136. If a tree does not bear flowers or fruit, why give it water? If the Lord of the heart (*Hrishikeshi*) does not give him anything to eat why does Nama give himself to His worship? 137. Why labour in vain digging when no water is reached in the well? So if the Husband of Rukmini is not pleased with one why give oneself to His worship? 138. If anyone is determined to give no gifts at a wedding, why invite such a relative there?

So, if the Husband of Rukmini is unwilling to show His favour, why be His worshipper? 139. If a medicine gives no good results, why trouble the tongue with taking it? So, if the Husband of Rukmini is not pleased, why should one worship Him? 140. Or if a field produces no crop why labour in vain there? So if the Husband of Rukmini is not pleased, why spend time in describing His good qualities?'

SECRET OF THE TOUCHSTONE DISCLOSED

141. 'Dear friend, my husband made Mother Rukmini pleased with him, and She gave us a touchstone in Her kindness to us. 142. By bringing it in contact with iron we have created an immense amount of gold at our home. Because of this, we dine every day upon the choicest food.' 143. Rajabai replied to her, 'How does a touchstone look?' Kamalaja replied, 'Come to my home and I will show it to you there.' 144. Thus after conversing with one another the two women went to their homes. It happened now one day that Rajabai came to Kamalaja's home. 145. She quickly brought the touchstone and showed it to her friend. 'Take it away for a very short time, and with your own hands apply it to pieces of iron. 146. Create a heap of gold at your home and drive away the sorrows of poverty. Then bring it back to me. 147. Do not let your husband or mine know of this matter.' Rajabai having heard this was greatly gratified. 148. She returned to her home for pieces of iron and quickly applied the touchstone to her needles, her scissors and her spinning wheel. 149. She took the gold into the bazaar and exchanged it for money which she gave to the merchants and brought home all the materials she needed. 150. She bought garments and ornaments and the best of cooking vessels, also a great quantity of food materials. Full of joy she began her cooking. 151. About noon Namdev returned and asked the news of his wife. 'Tell me,' he said, 'where did you bring all these things

from ?' 152. She replied, ' Eat your meal. What is the use of asking me such questions ? From today your mind must have no worries about your domestic affairs. ' 153. Namdev then said to her, ' Not until you tell me will I eat.' Rajabai saw there would be trouble ahead, so she told him. 154. She said, ' A Brahman by name of Parisa Bhagavat made Rukmini pleased with him, and being so pleased She gave him a touchstone. 155. You are constantly repeating the names of Pandurang, but here at our home we have not a scrap to eat, and our children are always suffering from lack of food. 156. Kamalaja, Parisa's wife, gave me the touchstone for a short time; I touched it to iron and have stored some gold in our home. 157. As she and I are naturally friends, she lent me the touchstone. I have now accomplished what I want and now I am going to take it back and give it to her.' 158. Nama said to his wife, Show me what a touchstone is.' She went into the house and brought it and showed it to him.

NAMDEV THROWS A TOUCHSTONE INTO THE RIVER

159. Nama took the stone from her hand, took it to the Chandrabhaga river and threw it into one of its deep pools. While doing so he kept repeating the names of Vitthal. 160. Without any concern about what he had done, he sat down repeating the names of God. But Rajabai was greatly troubled and sat down weeping. 161. Just then Parisa Bhagavat returned to his home. He had kept the touchstone in his box but he did not see it there now. 162. He said to his wife, ' You have become a fool, for you have lost what it takes a whole lifetime to obtain. Though men might make the most stupendous efforts, they could never acquire such an opportunity. 163. She said to him, ' Rajabai asked for it, and took it for a moment to her home. I lent it to her because of her poverty.' 164. Parisa said to his wife, ' That is just what

I was afraid of. Hurry now to her home and bring it back here immediately.' 165. Kamalaja at once set off to the house of Namdev and said to Rajabai, 'Where have you put that thing of mine?' 166. The other replied, 'O my friend, I have committed a great fault. My husband returned home and then took it away. 167. He will soon come back from his bath and then I will give it back to you.' But Kamalaja said to her, 'Give it to me at once.' 168. Rajabai now became greatly troubled and said, 'Let us go to where he is.' Hastening to the Bhima river, they arrived where Namdev was. 169. His eyes were shut. He was thinking of the form of the Holder of the disk (Krishna) and in his love he kept repeating the names of Vitthal. 170. Nama's wife said to him, 'Where have you put the touchstone? Kamalaja has come to ask for it. You must give it to her.' 171. The *bhaktas* of Vishnu listened and then said, 'I have thrown it into the water.' Hearing him say this, both women became furious with anger, 172. and in grief they beat their breasts. Men and women came to see what the matter was and asked what had happened. 173. Rajabai told them everything. Parisa Bhagavat learning what was taking place, and beating his breast, he also came where Nama was. 174. He told the people, 'Nama had wished for the touchstone, and now he tells us that he has thrown it away into a deep hole in the Chandrabhaga river.' 175. The different classes of people now began to revile both of them, yet the pious *bhaktas* continued to praise Nama. 176. They said, 'Gold and clay seem the same in value to this servant of Vishnu. He could never have desired to possess this touchstone.' 177. The crooked-minded, however, remarked, 'A deceiver puts on a garland made of *tulsi*. If he desired the touchstone belonging to the Brahman, how can you call him a good man?' 178. Parisa full of emotion, said openly to Nama, 'God and His *bhaktas* are both deceivers. Why have you ruined my

home? 179. You call yourself one who is indifferent to earthly things. And yet you had a longing for this touchstone. Think it over in your mind whether the saints will approve of this.' 180. To this the servant of Vishnu replied, 'Why should you want this touchstone? Outwardly you call yourself indifferent to these worldly things. 181. So I threw the touchstone away in one of the deep holes of the Chandrabhaga river. If you regard this as untrue go into the water and look for it.' 182. Hearing Nama's words, all the people broke out into a laugh. 'We cannot think of any expert who would be able to recognize it in the sand.'

NAMDEV TURNS PEBBLES INTO TOUCHSTONES

183. Nama then leaped into the water and did a remarkable thing. He took a handful of sand in his hand and said, 'I have here many touchstones. 184. Choose the one that belongs to you.' Hearing the words of Nama, all the people began to laugh and said, 185. 'To his sight pebbles and touchstones look alike.' Others remarked, 'Let us prove what he says.' 186. Some of them therefore took a handful of needles and applied them to the pebbles, and all the pebbles turned out to be touchstones. All the people were astonished. 187. They now remarked, 'The hand of Nama, as it touched the pebbles, turned them all into touchstones.' Everyone now rejoiced and cried out, 'Blessed is Nama.' 188. In the joy of love the assembly of *bhaktas* now cried out, 'Victory, Victory.' Those crooked people who had reviled him now had to look on the ground in shame. 189. Seeing such a miracle as this, Parisa Bhagavat began to repent. He said to Nama, 'There is no one in the world who is as blessed as you. 190. I had prayed to Rukmini, and asked her for a touchstone. I was ready to give my very life for it, not knowing your power. 191. Wherever your feet touch, there all power is to be found. I

have no desire now for this touchstone. I desire only your hand of blessing.' 192. He then threw back into the water the touchstone which Namdev had brought out, and Parisa Bhagavat became a suppliant of Nama's as one attached to him. 193. In listening to the teachings of the servant of Vishnu, one acquires divine knowledge.

The interesting stories which will be related hereafter will give great joy to the listeners. 194. This special book of the *Bhaktavijaya* is really nectar. Those who drink of it with pleasure will never be harmed by the diseases of this earthly life. 195. Or you might think of the *Bhaktavijaya* as the full moon and in the mind of the *Vaishnava Chakor* there is supreme joy. 196. Revilers who are not *bhaktas*, and who are haters, have no love for its divine light. Therefore, having no trust in their hearts, they revile this book. 197. In describing them the goddess of speech in vain becomes needlessly wearied. So now, you good and noble-minded *bhaktas*, give attention in your love. 198. The Husband of Rukmini abides by the Bhima river, and pervades and overflows the three worlds. It is by His favour that Mahipati is writing this descriptive book.

199. *Swasti.* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen to it, you God-loving pious *bhaktas*. This is the eighteenth very delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER XIX

JAGAMITRA NAGA : GOD PROTECTS HIS OWN

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Radha Krishna

A DESCRIPTION OF PANDHARI

1. Today is the festival of the eleventh day in the month of *Kartik* (November). A crowd of saints has gathered at Pandhari. *Vanamali* (Krishna) Himself has also arrived in company with His *bhaktas*. 2. The Chandrabhaga and Bhimarathi rivers are, as it were, peace and forgiveness; and the Pushpavati, the river that flows by Gopalpur, is, as it were, compassion. 3. Venunad is joy itself where the Root of joy (Krishna) played. Pure devotion is in the form of Pundalik, that very well-known saint, whose deeds are beyond one's ken. 4. This book, the *Bhaktavijaya*, so interesting and delightful, is the temple of Pandurang. Having seen this beautiful spot, Krishna, the cloud-dark complexioned One, remained in it. 5. The altars of *tulsi* plants are, as it were, the noblest of good qualities. On them are raised banners proclaiming His good fame which produce a beautiful appearance. 6. Mother Rukmini is, as it were, seen in skill, wisdom and noble qualities. It is through Her favour that the mind rejoices in love. 7. Pious people come here to visit this holy sacred city, so absolutely pure. And putting aside all thoughts of honour or pride they act as *jivanmuktas* (free while living).

JAGAMITRA NAGA'S REVILERS

8. There was a Brahman at Parali Vaijanath by the name of Jagamitra Naga. He was a man of supreme piety and a *Vaishnava*. He lived there with his family. 9. He made his daily begging trips to the town and brought back to his home whatever food he collected. Thus he provided the food necessary for his family. 10. He

put aside the snares of desires and every night he performed a *kirtan* with enthusiasm. People of the town, being fond of his *kirtans*, were accustomed to attend and listen. 11. Seeing his indifference to earthly things, every one felt very kindly towards him. They remarked, 'Pandurang has in him descended as an *avatar*, so he is indifferent to earthly things.' 12. But while gaining this high reputation revilers were greatly disturbed in mind, and so they planned many things in order that he might be dishonoured. 13. They were like fireflies that are needlessly irritated when they see the sun with their eyes; or as the vessels of the laundry-man feel when they hear the roar of the Ganges; 14. or as when the *tulsi* plant is being properly worshipped the *bhang* plant seeing it becomes angry; or as the *sindi* plant becomes angry at the constant power of the wish-tree; 15. so, when the revilers listened to the praises of Jagamitra, they became very angry. They said, 'We must devise some plan which will bring about the loss of his reputation.' 16. Thus with many evil thoughts in their mind, they indulged in reviling him. Although Jagamitra heard what they said, still he had not the slightest evil thought in his mind.

HIS HOME BURNT UP

17. One day after the performance of his *kirtan*, Jagamitra Naga was asleep in his home. These evil men came suddenly and set his hut on fire. 18. All his children were asleep in the house. In the midst of this disaster he thought of the Lord of Pandhari, 19. and cried out, 'O Husband of Rukmini, rush to my help. O Brother of the lowly, O Helper of the helpless, who is there to protect us apart from Thee?' 20. The Holder of the disk (Krishna), hearing his piteous cry, quickly arrived on the spot. He had in His hand His *Sudarshan* disk and protected them. 21. The house blazed furiously and the townspeople watched

it. Pious *bhaktas* came near and wept aloud in their sorrow. 22. They said, 'O the *bhakta* of Vishnu, Jagamitra! Someone has burned up this *bhakta*. Although seeing this distress, the Lord of Pandhari has not come to help him.' 23. After all the woodwork of the house was burnt up, the fire was extinguished, and just then the sun suddenly arose in the East. 24. Rumour spread through the town that Jagamitra had been burnt up in the fire. So very early in the morning people came to see what had happened. 25. They saw that the hut had been burnt up and that the fire had now been extinguished; and yet not the slightest ashes or coal had fallen down. 26. There was Jagamitra with his family, worshipping Shri Hari. Seeing this wonder, all were greatly astonished. 27. (They said), 'When an attempt was made to burn the Pandavs in the house that was lacquered, Hari came there to protect them. So also the Enemy of Mura (Krishna) now came to protect Jagamitra; 28. just as when Prahlad was thrown into the fire he was not burnt; so the Lord of Pandhari came at this time to protect Jagamitra; 29. or as when forest fires suddenly blazed about the cows and the cowherds, Shri Krishna protected His *bhaktas* at this time.' 30. Thus remarking to one another they made their *namaskar* to Jagamitra and said to him, 'You are an *avatar* of God. Now we know this for a certainty.' 31. The people of the town now assembled together and planned among themselves, 'Let us give Jagamitra a written deed of land as a gift. 32. In this way he will be able to carry on his worldly affairs and we shall have performed a very great religious deed, and thus being pleased the Good Being will remove perplexities of our earthly life.' 33. Thus thinking of the matter they came to tell Jagamitra.

JAGAMITRA REFUSES A GIFT OF LAND

He replied to them, 'What need have I of this

bondage? 34. In my begging trips into town I am able to provide for my family. I have no need that you should give me a deed of land. 35. When the *chatak* bird is thirsty, a cloud immediately appears. So the Lord of the heart (*Hrishikeshi*) gives to His servants food and raiment. 36. When birds are hungry they find grains of food in all sorts of places. In the same way He protects His servants. 37. And so, when one is under the protection of the Life of the world, Whose family is the universe, what need have I of the gift of land? 38. If anyone has a boat to sit in, why should he have to grasp the side of a swimmer? Why leave the light of the sun and depend upon that of a light? 39. If at one's home one has a wish-cow, why have a goat there? If one has the water of the Ganges, why dig a well? 40. What need have I of your land when I would have the sacred food from begging?' 41. Hearing him say this, all the citizens pleaded with him as follows: 'The land will be deeded in your name and anyone may live on it, and whatever grain the earth will bring forth will be used in charity.' 42. They therefore wrote in the deed, 'That one acre of land is hereby given as a gift to Jagamitra of the town of Parali Vaijanath.' 43. All the farmers then joined together and worked in the field and raised the crops. They brought all the grain that was produced by the land and applied it to charitable purposes.

PERSECUTED BY THE HAWALDAR

44. Many days passed in this way and then there came a hindrance to these religious acts. A new official (*Hawaldar*) was appointed to the town. 45. All the inhabitants of the town came at once to meet him because he had confiscated the land given to Jagamitra. 46. They pleaded with the official saying, 'We gave this land to him of our own free choice. You evil fellow, why have you

placed yourself in opposition to this religious deed?' 47. Although they thus pleaded with him, his mind was not moved, for Muhammadans are a very obstinate class and will not listen to anyone. 48. The official came to the house of Jagamitra and said to him, 'You call yourself a friend of the world. Now for the installation of a god I desire a tiger as divinity. 49. If you will give such a tiger to-day before the setting of the sun, your name Jagamitra (friend of the world) will have its true meaning.' 50. If you are not able to do this, I shall take back that acre of land the value of which you have eaten.' Such were the words used by that evil-doer in his talk to the *bhakta* of Hari. 51. Assenting to this demand he at once went into the jungle. He brought to his imagination the Lord of Rukmini and in his love began to sing His praises. 52. He said, 'Victory, Victory, Brother of the helpless, Giver of mercy, Lover of His *bhaktas*, Ocean of compassion, Purifier of the sinner, Pervader of the universe, Saviour of the lowly, Ram, Krishna. 53. Victory to Thee, Lord of Pandhari, Husband of Rukmini, Mover of the universe, the Image of life, listen to my heart's plea. O Shripati (Krishna), hasten to my help. 54. The daughter of my friend, the Muhammadan Hawaldar, is about to be married. He truly desires the tiger deity for installation. 55. O God supreme, hasten to come for the wedding. If Thou dost not do so, I will give up my life at Thy feet.'

GOD APPEARS AS A TIGER

56. Hearing this earnest plea the Holder of the disk (Krishna) immediately arrived there. Taking the form of a great tiger, 57. He said to Jagamitra, 'Who indeed has been troubling you? Show him to me, and I shall certainly devour him.' 58. Hearing him say this, the *bhakta* replied, 'My intimate friend, the Muhammadan Hawaldar, has invited you to come at once to the marriage of his daughter. 59. So dear Keshava, be patient, and let us go

together to fulfil his purpose. You are my most intimate friend. I have no one to trust aside from you.' 60. After listening, the Holder of the disk (Krishna) replied, ' Take hold of me and let us go together to his house. Go into the village, and I shall show before your eyes something marvellous.' 61. Jagamitra then tied his upper garment around the neck of the tiger and taking hold of him there they went together into the town. 62. When they were seen by the cowherds they immediately rushed into the village. As they ran their courage gave out, and they were unable to say anything. 63. Rushing into the city, they gave the news to the people that Jagamitra, holding a tiger by the neck, was coming to the official's home. 64. Hearing what they said, everyone was astonished and asked, ' Where could he have brought a tiger from ? You are telling us what is false.' 65. One said, ' What is there to be wondered at ? God is his Debtor. Remember that when his hut was set afire, he was saved.' 66. While they were thus talking to one another, another report reached them, ' Jagamitra is bringing a large tiger into the town.' 67. All the men and women were frightened and closed the gate of the village as the people looked down from the walls of the town. 68. When men and women saw the tiger they were full of fear and every door of their dwellings they closed, they remaining inside through fear of the tiger. 69. Some of them on the roof looked at the tiger from afar, and remarked, ' How is it that Jagamitra has no fear at all ?' 70. Listening to this remark the wise one said to them, ' How is it that you do not understand matters ?' 71. We see the tiger with our eyes, but he may be the Holder of the disk (Krishna) Himself. Perhaps when he heard of the distress of His *bhakta* He rushed to his help.' 72. Another one remarked, ' Your suggestion cannot be true. It looks like a real tiger. He has come to devour the Hawaldar.' 73. Still another remarked, ' That

could not be so ; he may eat us all ; the Hawaldar in committing a wrong has brought death upon us all.' 74. Then calling to the wicked one, the people of the town said to him, ' By persecuting Jagamitra, you have brought destruction to our town. 75. When Sahasrarjun troubled Renuka, disaster came to all Kshatriyas. So by our association with you, death has come upon us all. 76. When Ravan kidnapped Sita all the giant monsters met with death. So by troubling this *Vaishnava* you have brought this disaster to the town. 77. When Duryodhan persecuted Draupadi, that noble woman, all the kings suffered destruction. The same is happening to us today because of our association with you. 78. Just as by association with a bee-hive a tree is set on fire, so, O evil one, through you we are all suffering disaster.' 79. Hearing what all the people said, this evil one became frightened and with all his children he hid himself in a hut ; 80. just as a scorpion after stinging hides underneath a clod of earth ; so that mine of sin became frightened in his mind. 81. Very soon Jagamitra arrived with the tiger. Seeing the gates of the town closed, he was greatly troubled. 82. He said to the tiger, ' How are we to go into the city ?' Hearing him say this, the Advocate of His *bhaktas* performed a miracle. 83. He gave one great roar and the gates of the city fell down. They entered the city and the men and women looked at them from a distance. 84. One began to cry out aloud and another began to beat his mouth. All exclaimed, ' The Lord of *Kailas* (Heaven) is angry because we have been associated with this evil man.' 85. Hearing this outcry, Jagamitra gave the people an assurance: ' Let your minds be at rest, and watch the marvel that is now to take place. 86. A man reaps according to his deeds, why then should any of you be concerned? Let your minds be without fear, and worship the Husband of Rukmini.' 87. Hearing him say this all the people were pleased and remarked, 'He

has brought the tiger in order to take the life of the Hawaldar.'

THE PANIC-STRICKEN HAWALDAR

88. Jagamitra and the tiger now quickly arrived at the house of the Hawaldar. The evil one seeing this began to tremble. 89. Seeing the big tiger he closed the door of his hut, and placing his wife and children behind him he felt fear and concern. 90. Then Jagamitra said, 'I have come bringing your deity. Why do you hide yourself in your hut? Tell me quickly. 91. Seeing the deity in person why have you closed the door in your confusion? Tell me what you intend to do further. 92. You perform various visits to the sacred bathing-places, religious ceremonies and severe austerities, still you cannot obtain the sight of God. But when actually seen, you foolish one, you close your door. 93. He who cannot be attained even by the eightfold *yoga* rites, when that deity comes to your home, why do you hide yourself away? 94. The *rishis* perform many forms of *yoga*, still He cannot be easily attained. When that very deity comes to your home why is it that you are afraid? 95. That which is very much cooler than the moon and is like nectar itself, when you see such a deity why do you let fear come into your heart?' 96. The tiger now roared and beat his tail upon the ground and when the evil one heard it he was terribly frightened. 97. The tiger forcibly sprang up and started as if to devour the reviler. Jagamitra seized hold of him just as showmen seize their monkeys. 98. In that same way the Life of the world became subservient to His *bhakta*. Failing to bring to His mind His own divinity He showed His deeds to men. 99. Showing great anger, the tiger jumped about as if saying, 'Let me devour this evil one.' The Hawaldar was in his house with his children. 100. His wife said to him, 'Go at once outside, otherwise your children will die together with you. 101. Naturally your end must soon

come through age. So go outside, and let our lives be saved.' 102. As this conversation fell upon the ears of the people, all marvelled. They clapped their hands and began to laugh. 103. The Hawaldar joined both his hands together and began to ask for mercy, 'O merciful One, have compassion on me and save me. 104. I am now receiving the fruit of my evil heart. My bad reputation is spreading all over the earth and cannot at all be described. 105. You call yourself the friend of the world (Jagamitra). My mind recognizes it now as true. And so in humility I ask your compassion and give me the gift of life.' 106. Hearing his piteous cry, Jagamitra took the tiger with him and hastened to go back into the forest. 107. When all alone, the Life of the world took His form of four arms, and with qualities He embraced Jagamitra in His love.

108. The next chapter is full of extraordinary interest. Let the hearers make their minds attentive. Just as when misers counting out their money, their minds become absorbed in it, 109. in the same way give attention and listen to the book. The Husband of Rukmini who abides by the Bhima river will be pleased with you. 110. This Being of ancient days (*purana purusha*, Vishnu), the Life of the world, is the relator of this book. Mahipati comes as a suppliant and in love worships His feet.

111. *Swasti* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijya*. In hearing it, the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen to it you God-loving, pious *bhakts*. This is the nineteenth deeply delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER XX
JOGA PARAMANAND,
NARAHARI THE GOLDSMITH AND NAMDEV
Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Gopal Krishna
THE STORIES OF THE SAINTS AND THEIR
INFLUENCE FOR GOOD

1. Listening to the interesting stories of the saints, all sorrows automatically depart. The Pervader of the universe is pleased with the hearers and gives them the highest form of deliverance. 2. Peace and forgiveness come and live for ever in the heart. Pure moral goodness comes at once in love. 3. Lust and anger run away from the body and all sins are burnt up, if one without a sense of shame and pride describes Hari's qualities in a *kirtan*. 4. Even if *riddhi siddhi* (the accomplishments) and the place of Indra may come to him through deeds in a former birth, he does not regard these as of any value. Pure indifference to earthly things will come to his mind without effort. 5. The Good Being becomes pleased at seeing the regular worship given Him, and gives him love for his praise service and puts away the illusion of this earthly life. 6. The enemy of Tripur (Shiva) told Parvati all the supreme sweetness of these stories of the saints. So wise *bhaktas*, give attention with all your devotion.

JOGA PARAMANAND OF BARSÍ

7. The *bhakta* Joga Paramanand lived in the town of Barsi. He was always without concern and possessed of indifference to earthly things. 8. He was all the time worshipping Ram Krishna and Narayan. He daily made his begging trips into the town and thus provided for his family. 9. He found peace in his continual worship, paid no attention to honour or dishonour when rendered to him,

and destroyed the snares of desire by worshipping Shri Hari. 10. He would perform his baths and then worship by using the sixteen materials. He daily made to God seven hundred *namaskars*. 11. He would repeat a verse of the *Bhugavadgita*, and then bow prostrate on the ground. After completing his devotions in this way he would sit down to his meal. 12. It is said in the religious law books that anyone who eats a meal without having performed his daily devotions, that man is like a hog. 13. Birds and animals, as they wander here and there, perform neither sinful nor good deeds. There is no law given in the *Shastras* for insects, ants or animals. 14. But when one suddenly acquires a human body, one should make full use of it. Without association with the good, there is no obtaining of knowledge with this human body. 15. You may perhaps ask how can one find leisure for these regular acts of devotion while one carries on one's daily occupation? I will tell you one way of solving the problem. Listen. 16. There is one means which is superior to all bathings in sacred waters, religious ceremonies, austerities, making of gifts, religious observances and bodily torture : it is the worship of Shri Hari. 17. In this *Kali Yuga* no means have been specially designated, aside from the repeating of God's names. Just as at the time of death, nectar can bring back life to every one, 18. so anyone who is carrying on his daily business and at the same time is constant in his thoughts of Hari, the Life of the world comes and sits beside him in his love. 19. But what is the use of saying more about this? Every one knows the power of God's name; and no one is over impressed by that love which is outside of experience. 20. Thus Joga Paramanand indulged in his habits of worshipping Hari. Thinking of Govind in his heart, he was always full of joy.

JOGA AND THE SILK GARMENT

21. On a certain day a merchant came on business at

the great door of the temple. A cloud had rained upon the earth and the ground was exceedingly muddy. 22. But in the mud Paramanand was making his *namaskar* to Pandurang. In his heart he was thinking of the delight of Rukmini, and the destroyer of the earthly hindrances of his *bhaktas*. 23. When he saw such devotion on the part of Joga, the merchant's heart was deeply moved. He exclaimed, 'Who is this *bhakta* of Vishnu? I see in him indifference to earthly things.' 24. He then took out from among his goods a silk raiment, and giving it at once to Joga made him a *namaskar*. 25. He said, 'O *Swami*, ocean of compassion, first put on this raiment. I come to you as suppliant, a dull-minded person to plead with you.' 26. Joga replied to him, 'What need have I for a silk garment? If you have some old clothes, you may give them at once to me. 27. Putting on some old raiments, going to beg and bringing back some food, enables me to carry on my worship without hindrance. 28. You have brought a silk raiment for me, but dress the god in it instead, and by doing so, the Husband of Rukmini will show an unlimited kindness.' 29. Although he thus spoke to him, still that ignorant man would not listen. He was not able to realize what was an especially suitable gift. 30. One should give water and grain to birds. One should give grass to animals as a religious act. Those who are wise give money to those who are worthy of it. 31. If water is placed at the roots of a tree, it gives joy to the tree. Food and raiment should be given privately to one who does not ask for it. 32. But the merchant did not understand this, and used force in fitting Joga with the silk raiment. From there the merchant went to another part of the *bazaar*. 33. Joga put on the brilliant clothing and tucked up its lower part. In order that the garment might not be soiled by the mud he made his prostrate *namaskar* (*dandavat*)

very carefully. 34. Before he began to wear this garment he had made his prostrate *namaskar* without any concern. But now he had lost all his aspirations and his usual practice was hindered by his desire to keep this garment unsoiled. 35. By noon time it had become exceedingly hot, and Joga had become overcome with hunger. So on that day he was unable to make the complete number of *namaskars*. 36. Seeing the drops of perspiration on his body, he became very unhappy, and said to himself, 'Why is it that I find it so hard to make my *namaskars* today? I do not understand it.' 37. Then letting reason work in his heart, he thought, 'I see my enemy in this silk raiment. By having to look after this raiment, I have failed in my worship. 38. Just as the full moon is swallowed up by the monster Rahu, so it would seem that it is because of this silk raiment that I have lost my aspiration. 39. It is as if one should serve a plate of dainty food, and then suddenly a dog should come and lick it. So this putting on of a silk raiment has brought a great hindrance to my worship of Hari. 40. As if a *pimpal* tree planted on the bank of the Ganges should be uprooted by a great gust of wind, so it seems to me that it is this silk raiment that has become my enemy. 41. Or as if a farmer should raise a crop on his land, then suddenly there should fall upon it a swarm of locusts, so this silk raiment has become a hindrance to my good deeds. 42. Or as while a *sannyasi* is performing his austerities there is suddenly sent to him some food from the king; so this silk raiment has become an enemy to my devotion. 43. I wonder how this wrong was committed by me. What shall I do to punish my body? I will at once go into the forest and surround myself with five fires 44. Or I will burn myself with fire. Or I will go and sit alone in the mountains. Or I will go at once and perform the eightfold *yoga*. 45. Or I will go to the junction of the three

great rivers [Ganges, Jumna and Saraswati] and there put my body to the saw. By doing so, at least the Husband of Rukmini will come and meet me there. 46. Or begging for food just sufficient to cover the palm of my hand go and visit all the sacred bathing places; by doing so, at least the Life of the world will have mercy upon me. 47. Or I will hasten and go to the Himalaya mountains and there I will spend my life. By that means at least the Lord of Pandhari will surely meet me. 48. Or discarding food and drink, sit on my mat and fast; by that good deed at least the Holder of the disk (Krishna) will come at once and meet me. 49. Or getting myself devoured by fire, perform the penance of death; by that means the Lord of Pandhari will have mercy upon me.' 50. With repentance in his heart he thus thought over the matter. Then he went outside the temple and sat down.

JOGA'S SELF-INFLICTED SUFFERING

51. Just then a farmer was passing by driving two fiery oxen. There was a yoke on their necks and the farmer was taking them into the forest. 52. Joga seeing him, called him to come near him. Because of his repentance, tears were flowing from his lotus-eyes. 53. He then said to the farmer, 'Give me these two oxen. I will give you in exchange this brilliant silk robe.' 54. The farmer thought to himself, 'The silk garment will bring me twice the value of these oxen.' So he replied, 'I accept your offer.' And he gave Joga the oxen. 55. In a humble voice Joga said to the farmer, 'Take a rope and fasten my feet to the yoke. 56. Then pretending to be furious with anger lash the oxen. You go to your home and have no more concern about me.' 57. The farmer then consented and fastened Joga's feet to the yoke. As the farmer lashed the oxen with his whip the oxen began to run towards the forest. 58. Pebbles, thorns and stones hurt Joga's body in-

tensely. All his skin was torn away from him. 59. The frightened oxen ran rapidly ; just as a deer runs when seeing a hunter, in the same way the oxen ran hither and thither in the great forest. 60. Joga with repentance in his heart paid no attention to his bodily sufferings. He said to himself, 'This bodily torture is a proper ending for the wrong I have committed to-day.' 61. Comforting his mind with this thought he continued repeating the names of God: 'O Shri Hari, Ram Krishna, Narayan, Purifier of the sinner, and Ocean of compassion, 62. Victory to Thee, delight of the heart of Rukmini, Dweller upon the sea of milk, Recliner on the serpent (Shesha), Advocate of Thy *bhaktas*, Treasure-house of all goodness, Life of the world, Pandurang.' 63. Taking God's names this way, his throat choked with emotion. In the meantime the oxen were running about in the forest and dragging him along. 64. All his skin was torn off ; bones alone remained upon his body and his suffering went to such extremes that he was at the point of death. 65. But full of joy even at such a time, Joga continued his worship full of love. Then the Lord of Pandhari, hearing his piteous cries, rushed to his aid. 66. When (the elephant) Gajendra cried out piteously for help, Krishna rushed to his aid. When Draupadi was troubled by Dusshasan, the Holder of the disk (Krishna) rushed to her help. 67. So seeing Joga's extremities the Holder of the disk (Krishna) came rushing to help him. He took off the yoke from the oxen and let them go free. 68. Then unbinding Joga's feet with his own hands, He gave him an embrace and as He gazed at him with His look of compassion, Joga's body assumed a divine form. 69. When the sun arises no darkness is to be seen ; so when the Lord of the universe shows His favour, all fear of bodily sufferings passes away. 70. The Husband of Rukmini said now to Joga, ' Why did you attempt such great sufferings ? You have punished your body when you have done no wrong

71. When you eat or drink it all goes into my mouth. When you go and come that is circumambulating Me. 72. If you speak to anyone that becomes My praise. When you lie down in peace and happiness that is a prostrate *namaskar* made to Me.* 73. That being so, My dear *bhakta*, why did you go to such extremes?' Joga placed his head at the god's feet, and said, 'Place me in the shadow of Thy compassion.'

74. On a certain day God assembled together all his *bhaktas* in Pandhari and told them all that had happened to Joga. 75. As the Lord of *Vaikunth* (Heaven) told them in detail, all were greatly astonished. Dnyandev said to *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart), 'There is no end to Thy wonderful deeds. 76. One excelling the other Thou hast created Thy *bhaktas*. Thou alone, O cloud-dark One (*Krishna*), canst experience the delight arising from their love and happiness.'

NARAHARI THE GOLDSMITH

77. Now you clever hearers, listen to the story of Narahari the goldsmith, a *bhakta* of Shiva who prayed to Shiva and made the god Shiva pleased with him. 78. He would arise early in the morning and go to bathe in the Bhimarathi river. After that in his love he would worship Mallikarjun (Shiva). 79. Although he lived in the holy city of Pandhari he never went to the temple of Vithoba. He placed his trust in one deity alone and worshipped Him with joy. 80. Just as the *chatak* bird will take no water from earth, not seeing the clouds with his eyes, so Narahari would not worship any other deity but Shiva; 81. or as the lotus-flower, although it sees many clusters of stars, will not open until the sun appears to its sight, and

* In ch 20,71-72 there is described what is known as सहज भाक्ति (natural devotion). See also *Eknathi Bhagwat*, Ch. 11.770-772.

then immediately becomes full of joy; 82. or just as an infant child has no liking for any other beautiful woman except its mother; or just as to a dutiful wife, no other person is her deity or object of her reverence except her husband; 83. so with body, speech and mind Narahari worshipped Mallikarjun (Shiva). He would not even look from a distance at the pinnacle of the temple of Shri Pandurang. 84. Just as men and women do not look at the moon on *Ganesh Chaturthi* (festival of Ganpati); so Narahari the goldsmith would not even look at the dome of the temple of Vitthal. 85. A certain merchant came to Pandhari and planned a vow in his mind, ' If a son is given to me of noble qualities, I will offer to God a waistband. ' 86. The Husband of Rukmini had accepted his vow, and the man had come to Pandhari. After visiting and worshipping the God in love, he put the question to the priest: 87. ' Is there a clever goldsmith here who can make golden settings in a waistband and place in them diamonds and other jewels ? ' 88. The priest replied, ' There is a goldsmith here by name of Narahari. Go at once to him and enquire of him. ' 89. The merchant carried with him some diamonds, jewels and gold and gave them to Narahari, who said, ' Measure the size you want and give it to me. 90. If it should turn out to be more or less, do not blame me. ' The merchant hearing him say this was much astonished: 91. ' Although God is near to him, he does not like to look at Him. Still what does that matter to me ? ' So he brought and gave him the measurement. 92. Narahari with great cleverness placed the diamonds and jewels in their settings; and having prepared the waistband, he brought and gave it to the merchant. 93. The merchant bathed the eagle bannered One with a shower of water and worshipped Him with sixteen materials used for worship. He put the waistband around the idol but it was not large enough. 94. He brought it back to Narahari and he very cleverly lengthen-

ed it. When it was again brought to the god it appeared to be too large. 95. When increased in length it became too long, and when made of the exact measurement it was not long enough. The merchant became greatly concerned. 'Why has the Husband of Rukmini become angry with me ? 96. He does not regard my pure intention. Krishna will not accept this waistband.' The merchant came back to Narahari and patiently requested him, 97. saying to Narahari, 'Come to the temple yourself, look at the Holder of the disk (Krishna); and with your own hand place the waistband upon Him and then you may come back '.

THE LESSON NARAHARI LEARNED ABOUT THE ONENESS
OF KRISHNA AND SHIVA

98. He (Narahari) replied, ' I am observing a vow and I have never thus far been to see Krishna in His temple. I have never as yet looked upon any deity except Shiva. ' 99. Narahari covered his eyes with a cloth and went to the temple. Seeing him blindfolded, the citizens of the place laughed and thought it exceedingly strange. 100. They said, 'It is as if a poor man should close his eyes when he sees a treasure in the ground, such we understand to be the point of view of Narahari. 101. Or he is like one who leaves his *Chintamani* (wish-stone) jewel at home and in vain wanders about to different bathing places. So is this closing of his eyes and going to look at the god. ' 102. Others remarked, ' Just as one with fever is not fond of dainty food, so the Dweller in *Vaikunth* (Heaven) does not come into the thought of Narahari. ' 103. Others remarked, ' Each one knows his own case best. What is his case to us ? ' Thus the various classes of men talked among themselves. 104. With his eyes blindfolded, the goldsmith Narahari came to the great door of the temple, and the merchant held him by the hand and guided him inside. 105. Some one laughed and said, ' Make a prostrate *namaska*

to the god'. Another remarked, 'He does not even look at Him. How then can he worship the god's feet? 106. If one will not give a seat to one who comes to his house, will one give him daintily cooked food? If anyone will not listen to the *mantras* of the bath, will he make religious gifts? 107. Anyone who will not give water to a *tulsi* plant, will he take the trouble to circumambulate it? Anyone who will not make a bow to a good man will certainly not take him to his own home. 108. He who will not tell a traveller the way, will certainly not give him a place in his home. He who with his lips reviles god's *bhaktas* will certainly not go to listen to praise-services in honour of Hari. 109. He who will not listen to the praises of the Ganges river will not take a bath in it with all his clothes on. So, if Narahari is unwilling to look at the god, he surely will not make a *namaskar* to Him.' 110. Well, such were the remarks passed by the men and women. Narahari entered into the temple and groped for the god with his hand. 111. He groped for a form with ten arms and five faces. Around the neck He was adorned with a serpent-shaped ornaments. On the head was a beautiful mass of matted hair and his whole body was marked with the sacred ashes. 112. He wore the skins of an elephant and a tiger. It appeared to Narahari as though it was the blue-throated Shiva who was actually standing on the brick. 113. He said to himself, 'This is the very deity whom I worship, then why have I in vain closed my eyes?' Thus full of repentance in his heart he removed the coverings from his eyes and looked at the god. 114. That dark-blue-complexioned One was standing upon a brick with a very brilliant crown upon His head. His glorious face shone with intense purity and on His neck was the garland *Vaijayanti* and the *Kaustubha* jewel. 115. In His ears were earrings shaped like crocodiles. His breast was wide. His waist was thin. Both his brilliant

hands were placed upon His hips. Around His waist He was enveloped by His yellow raiment. 116. Seeing His parallel feet upon the brick, Narahari was astonished. Then again blindfolding his eyes, he found his hands touching the form of *Dhurjati* (Shiva).

NARAHARI'S REPENTANCE

117. Immediately opening his eyes again, he saw the Husband of Rukmini, and with his heart full of repentance he made the god a *namaskar* with love. 118. Said he, 'Victory, Victory to God Supreme, the Life of the whole universe! Victory, Victory to Shiva, O Keshav (Krishna), I have come as a suppliant to Thee. 119. Victory, Victory to Thee who dwellest in *Kailas* (Heaven). Victory, Victory to Thee, Lord of *Vaikunth* (Heaven). Victory, Victory to Thee, Lord of the *bhaktas*. Form without duality, O Guru of the world. 120. Victory to Thee, Enjoyer of the ocean of milk. Victory to Thee, the blue-throated One, blue-complexioned and the Dweller in the cemeteries. Victory to Thee, Lover of Thy *bhaktas*, Lord of *Pandhari*. Remove the illusions of Thy *bhaktas*. 121. Not recognizing Thy greatness, I thought that the two names implied two deities. Now Thou hast removed from me, O cloud-dark-complexioned One, the very thought of duality and hast increased my love for non-duality.' 122. Listening to this praise, Krishna said to Narahari, 'I want you to be My *bhakta* and that is why I have adopted this method. 123. Now do not regard Shiva and Krishna as forming two deities.' As *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) said this, Narahari embraced His feet. 124. From that time forth Pandurang held on His head the emblem of Shiva. For *Shrirang* (Krishna) never disappoints His servants.

125. Hearing this story of Narahari, listeners may

raise the question and say, 'In the feast given by Nama, saints were invited in order to please Nama. The saints were invited to dine. 126. Among the guests we had heard with our ears the name of Narahari the goldsmith.' But Shiva had brought him along with him on that occasion. 127. Just as a father brings along his son when going to a feast, so Shiva also had brought His *bhakta* along with him.

GOD TESTS NAMA'S BELIEF THAT GOD IS IN ALL
CREATURES

128. On a certain day the Lord of the earth took Nama aside and said, 'Let it be a fixed thought in your mind, that I live in all creatures.' 129. The servant of Vishnu replied, 'O Lord God, why dost Thou feel any need of telling me this? Through Thy favour I have compassion upon every class of being.' 130. Then in order to test the heart of Nama, the Lord of Pandhari assumed the form of a dog. On the twelfth day the dog wandered about among the pilgrims. 131. When anyone had seated himself in order to eat, *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) would go near to him, but no one would so much as throw him a morsel of food. Instead, they would say, 'Drive away the dog' 132. He would put his nose into the flour of some, but they would attempt to beat him then and there. But the Lord of Pandhari could not be touched by their hands and ran away. 133. When anyone was sitting at their lunch, the cloud-dark-complexioned One would come near them and if he attempted to snatch a bit of bread they would beat Him. 134. Whenever Brahmans sat to eat, there *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) was sure to stand. No one would throw him a single morsel and he wondered at it. 135. Seeing the special purity of those who had come back from the great pilgrimage, the Holder of the disk (Krishna) would come near them and

touch them while they were eating. 136. One remarked, 'The dog has defiled you.' Another said, 'But the dog is a black one, and we have heard of a law in the religious lawbooks that black dogs do not defile anyone'. 137. While some farmers were sitting down to eat the Life of the world came near them. As He snatched up their food and tried to run away with it they took it back from Him. 138. He wandered about among all the pilgrims and tested them also. But He did not see that anyone's belief was certain, that God was in every creature. 139. Some exclaimed, 'This is a dog; drive it away from among the pilgrims.' When the Life of the world heard this remark He adopted the following method. 140. The Lord of the world came near to Nama with a leap and seized a piece of bread in His mouth and began to run away. 141. When the servant of Vishnu saw this he took in his hand a cup of melted butter and said to the dog, 'Why do you eat a piece of bread dry?' 142. Nama then went to the dog and put a morsel of bread into His mouth. The Husband of Rukmini, the dog, lovingly sat down to His meals. 143. Seeing this rather strange sight all the people laughed at Nama. They made motions to another, and said as follows. 144. Some said, 'Nama has become crazy. Look how he feeds a dog. All animals are alike to Him. He sees no superior or inferior among them. 145. Just as the earth does not regard some trees as superior and others as inferior; or just as water equally regards a cow or a tiger. 146. The full moon shines equally bright over all beings. We know that such is the heart of Nama. 147. To the royal swan and the falcon the air is the same. So it seems that the heart of Nama is the same, regarding all things as alike. 148. Or just as when the sun arises it regards kings and subjects as alike, so this servant of Vishnu puts away all thought of duality, and in that belief lives among men.' 149. The dog now laughed and said, 'How did you recog-

nize me? Nama replied, 'It was Visoba Khechar who pointed out to me signs by which I should recognize Thee. O Lord God.' 150. After doing this marvellous deed the Husband of Rukmini became invisible. Everyone was astonished and exclaimed, 'Blessed is Nama's devotion. 151. Without any effort on our part we have met with the Life of the world in the form of a dog. We did not give it anything to eat. We were led astray by our bad deeds in our previous births.'

GOD INVITES NAMA TO EAT

152. It happened on the eleventh day of the month of *Kartik* (November) that Namdev was fasting. *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) said to him, 'Come quickly and eat.' 153. The servant of Vishnu replied, 'One should never eat food on this day. By doing so one is able to approach Thy feet during all future rebirths. 154. Just as Thou, *Hrishikeshi* (O Lord of the heart), art superior to all gods, just as the *tulsi* plant is superior among the plants; so among all religious festivals that of the eleventh day. It is highly honoured by us *Vaishnavas*.' 155. To this the Life of the world replied, 'Nama, listen to My words. Just as Rukmangad and Ambarish observed this festival with devotion, 156. so now no one seems to have the determination to fast on the eleventh day of the month. They hypocritically show their observance of the day before men. 157. But when there is no determination in the heart to perform the religious ceremonies properly they become vain actions, just as without moisture the seed which is sown will not sprout. 158. If one should eat without feeling any hunger, how can that food be properly digested? No one can wander to different sacred bathing places if he has no feet to walk about with. 159. He whose organs of sense are not under his control cannot adopt full means to obtain spiritual life. If a man has no sense of

generosity in his heart he will not make gifts to those who are worthy of them. 160. If a man has no courage he will not be able to give his life on the battlefield. So without ability there can be no fame in the world. 161. So my dear *bhakta*, in the same way, if one has no longer belief in fasting he should not observe the festival of *Ekadashi* (the eleventh day)'. 162. When the Holder of the *Sharang* Bow (Krishna) had said these things, Nama replied, 'If Thy favour is upon me, then there will be no lack of a fixed determination. 163. A roasted seed might sprout. An ocean might be contained in a well. But, O God, my heart will never lose its determination. 164. A fire could be hidden in the midst of grass ; the earth might be weighed ; but, O Ocean of compassion, my mind will never give up its fixed determination. 165. Seed might change its character when planted in the earth ; the air might be confined by a closed door ; but, O Ornament of Thy *bhaktas*, my mind will never have a wrong belief. 166. A tiger might have a feeling of gentleness, and come and sit quietly in a sheepfold, but, O Pandurang, I shall never give up my purpose.' 167. Hearing Nama's words, the Life of the world laughed and said, 'Over your good deeds I must wave salt and the *nimb* leaves.' 168. Having said this the Destroyer of Madhu thought to Himself, 'I must further test Nama, and see for Myself, whether he is true to his belief.'

NAMA'S BELIEF TESTED REGARDING THE ELEVENTH
OF THE MONTH

169. On the *Ekadashi* day (the eleventh day of every fortnight) therefore *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) assumed the form of an aged Brahman and went to the house of Nama. 170. He had a staff in his hand and old clothes on His body. He said, 'I am very hungry, and have come to ask for food. 171. You, a *bhakta* of Vishnu,

call yourself a generous man. So you must give me some food to eat.' Saying this to Nama He sat down by the door. 172. The *bhakta* of Vishnu seeing the Brahman there, bowed prostrate before Him. 'What is the wish you have which has brought you here, O *Swami*?' 173. The Lord of the world replied, 'I am in distress from lack of food. So give to some one the materials needed for cooking and get me a meal.' 174. Hearing this answer of the Brahman, the servant of Vishnu replied to Him, 'This is the *Ekadashi* day (the eleventh day.) It is not right to give cooked food. 175. If you will accept dates, fruit or roots, I will bring them at once and give them to you.' 176. Hearing him the Brahman said, 'I am not satisfied with anything other than cooked food. For this reason I have naturally come to your door for charity. 177. If you drive Me away I shall at once give up My life and the sin of having murdered a Brahman will fall upon your head.

NAMA'S RESOLVE

178. Nama replied, 'I am a *bhakta* of Vishnu. I am without good as well as sinful deeds. I have placed my heart at the feet of Pandurang, and have become a *Jivanmukta* (free while living). 179 He who cherishes in his heart no desire even for good deeds, how can sinful deeds do him harm ? He who does not love intensely, separation brings him no sorrow. 180. If anyone has discarded all love of money he will not be afraid of thieves. And if one has put away all desire to be honoured, how can he feel dishonour shown him? 181. He who feels no happiness in being praised by men, how can he feel any pain when he is reviled by men ? He who feels no pleasure in mere gain can feel no sorrow when he makes no gain. 182. When one looks upon the beautiful form of youth, and yet does not feel any pride of his own youthful appearance, how can he be troubled by the thought of old age ? 183. So, O Brahman, I

have destroyed all opportunity for sin as well as good deeds. I shall never have to go to hell because of sin.' 184. Hearing Nama say these things, the Brahman replied to him, 'You have no tenderness in your heart for others, and you go about preaching your philosophy. 185. I am a Brahman in distress from lack of food. If you do not take away my hunger, I shall immediately lose my life. Know this for certain, O *bhakta* of Vishnu.' 186. Nama said to him, 'If you give up your life, the same thing will happen to me, O Brahman.' 187. Hearing him say this, the Holder of the disk (Krishna) did a very remarkable thing. He rolled His eyes about and fainted away, falling on the ground. 188. The servant of Vishnu seeing Him thus, went close to him and looked. The Brahman was no longer breathing, he was dead.

PEOPLE REVILE NAMA

189. Hearing about this affair, men and women gathered together in the house. They said to Nama 'How is it that you have caused this murder of a Brahman at your very door?' 190. The Brahman was asking some cooked food of you. You did not give it to him. And so it resulted in this great disaster. In what way can the consequence be avoided?' 191. One remarked, 'This *bhakta* of Hari preaches very verbosely his own knowledge of divine things but he never gives even a morsel of food to anyone.' 192. Thus all reviled him. But Nama's determination was unchanged. He lifted up the corpse of the Brahman and carried it to the banks of the Bhima. 193. He erected a funeral pyre and placed the corpse upon it. He laid himself by the side of the corpse and set fire to the pile. 194. Every one was astonished at what Nama did. They remarked, 'The determination of Nama is very great. We see no noble *Vaishnava* on this earth equal to him.' 195. The Brahman was not really a

Brahman. He was *Shripati* (Krishna) and, as He died, true devotion led the *Vaishnava* Nama to be immolated with Him in his fixed determination. 196. Just as the fire began to blaze, the Brahman immediately sat up and assuming a form of four arms he embraced Nama. 197. He said to him, 'If I should hunt through all the three worlds, I would not find a *bhak'a* like you. Your determination to do your duty is greater than that of Ambarish and Rukmangad; 198. who took their whole city to *Vaikunth* (Heaven), but you are born as the saviour of the world.' Saying this, *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) embracing Nama held him close to His heart. 199. He said to him, 'Ambarish observed the festival and for his faith I suffered ten rebirths. You made Me speak, although I was in my *Buddha avatar* (mute); and although I was without body you made me assume a visible form.' 200. After saying this, the Holder of the disk (Krishna) immediately became invisible. People wondered in their minds and fell at the feet of Nama.

201. O Dweller by the banks of the Bhima, the Husband of Rukmini, Thou wilt further cause me to relate the stories of the saints. Aside from Thee there is no one to illuminate the heart. 202. It is by Thy favour that words proceed out of the mouth. Mahipati comes to Thee and worships Thy feet with devotion.

203. *Swasi* (Peace!) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen to it, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the twentieth very delightful chapter.

CHAPTER XXI

NAMDEV AND JANABAI

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Radha and Krishna.

GOD THE HELPER OF HIS *BHAKTAS*

1. Victory to Thee who dwellest on the ocean of milk, to Thee who reclinest upon Shesha, to Thee who assumest human body at will, Husband of Rukmini, who possessest a visible form, the Ornament of Thy *bhaktas*, a mine of goodness, Shri Vitthl. 2. Victory to Thee, who has assumed an infinite number of *avatars*. Thou who art in the form of Intelligence, Home of compassion, Protector of the gods, Lord of Pandhari, Thou who drivest away the illusions of Thy *bhaktas*. 3. Victory to Thee, Pervader of all things, Thou who art beyond all things, Saviour of the elephant Gajendra, Lord of *Vaikunth* (Heaven). Aside from Thee there is no one who can give joy to Thy *bhaktas*. 4. Victory, Victory to Thee, Mover of the heart, Cloud of intelligence, Advocate of Thy *bhaktas*, Slayer of *Daiyyas*, (demons), Giver of the promise to Pundalik, Husband of Rukmini, Life of the world, O Pandurang. 5. Thou who art the Father of Brahmadev, although a Doer of all things Thou art still a non-doer. There is no space even as large as an atom that is without Thee. 6. Do Thou now have compassion upon me and through me relate the stories of Thy saints. A helpless one like myself has no helper aside from Thee, O Lord of the world.

JANI THE LITTLE MAID OF NAMA

7. In the preceding chapter we had the specially interesting story of God's servant Paramanand Joga. 8. The well-known *bhakta* of Shiva, Narahari, was also made to worship Him. The Holder of the disk (Krishna) brought trouble to Nama and thereby tested his

mind. 9. It happened one day at Pandhari, when the place was filled with pilgrims, in the month of *Kartik* (November), that a little girl from amongst the pilgrims came and sat by the great door of the temple. 10. She said to her mother and father, 'I intend to remain here always. I will not come back with you to our home.' 11. Hearing the little girl say this, every one was astonished. They remarked, 'Being only seven years of age, how has she obtained such spiritual knowledge?' 12. The mother and father were greatly troubled by her resolve but she would not listen to anything. When Shri Hari casts upon anyone the eye of compassion, the love of that which is one's own does not arise in the heart. 13. Seeing her determination, however, her parents were comforted. They left their daughter at the great door of the temple, and returned to their own home. 14. When Nama saw this little girl, a feeling of compassion arose in his heart. He said to her, 'Who are you, sitting here alone in a country not your own, and without your mother and father?' 15. What town does your father belong to? Tell me your name. What difficulties have your parents experienced, that they should have abandoned you here?' 16. The little girl replied, 'I am called Jani. The Holder of the disk (*Krishna*) is my mother and father. I have no one aside from Him.' 17. Hearing her words, pity arose in Nama's heart. He took the little girl by the hand, and brought her to his home. 18. Nama told Gonai of his finding the girl and how the child had been lost among the pilgrims. 'Without her mother and father she seems to look very unhappy. We must protect her. 19. At the time of *Krishna's avatarship* he had a maid by name of *Kubja* (the cripple). She had now appeared as an *avatar* in this *Kali Yuga*. So she has come on a pilgrimage to Pandhari, and is absorbed in the worship of Hari.' 20. Day by day she grew in stature, and men and women said to her, 'Tell us truly who you are.' 21. Jani

would reply to them and say, 'I am the devoted handmaid of Nama. I have no mother nor father aside from him.' 22. While performing her domestic duties she was for ever repeating the names of Hari. When at night she listened to the praise-services of Hari she used to meditate upon them.

KRISHNA REPAIRS NAMA'S HUT

23. A very strange thing happened one day when Namdev was asleep. Five *ghatakas* of the night had passed and a dark cloud covered the sky. 24. A violent wind blew and carried Nama's hut away. When this was known to the Husband of Rukmini, He sent His *sudarshan* disk. 25. He said to it, 'Go to the home of Nama and revolve yourself for a moment around it, and I shall soon follow you.' 26. The *bhakta* of Vishnu was sleeping with his wife and children in his house. The disk of Vishnu made its visit there and revolved itself rapidly. 27. A great rainstorm raged around Nama but not a drop of water fell on Nama's hut. When one of God's servants devotes himself to His *bhakti*, He puts away from him all evil. 28. Having done this the Husband of Rukmini came quickly to that spot. With His own hand He rebuilt the walls of the hut and rethatched its roof. 29. Wise listeners may say, after hearing this story, 'If Krishna came, and in His own person thatched Nama's house, why did He not make it a more beautiful home?' 30. But Krishna does not permit His servants to become entangled in their domestic life. If He should give to them great wealth it would destroy their character of indifference to earthly things. 31. Duryodhan was created as an enemy of the Pandavas. He was constantly giving them trouble, yet when they fell into trouble the Life of the world would Himself rush to their help. 32. He said to Himself, 'If I should allow them to live without fear they will not remember Me in their hearts.' Yet the Enemy of Mura (Krishna)

will not allow His servants to be drowned in the sea of worldly existence. 33. 'If I should give my *bhaktas* a very beautiful house they would fail in their worship of Me.' Therefore it was that the Lord of all things gave to Nama a thatched roof. 34. Lest the cooked food should harm a child, the mother gives it a very small morsel. So the Pervader of the universe never gives great wealth to His *bhaktas*. 35. If too much water is given to plants their leaves will turn yellow. Therefore the gardener gives the plant only as much water as it needs. 36. So the Lord of the universe gives to His *bhaktas* sufficient of food and raiment as their bodies may need. By one means or other, he keeps their minds indifferent to earthly things.

37. Returning now to the story just now told, the Life of the world came and in His love gathered straw and rethatched Nama's hut. 38. When His *bhakta* awoke he looked outside and he saw a brilliant yellow garment shining with the brilliancy of lightning. 39. He then quickly came outside and in his love grasped Krishna by His feet and said, 'O God, what art Thou doing in coming here so late at night?' 40. The Life of the world replied, 'A terrible storm was raging and your hut was carried away. I have been here and rethatched it. 41. You have abandoned all thought of worldly things and in love are devoting yourself to My worship. Therefore, I (Krishna) Husband of Shri (the goddess of wealth) re-erected the walls of your hut.

KRISHNA AND NAMA DINE TOGETHER

42. If I had not quickly come, your children would have felt the cold. Gonabai would have become very angry with Me and would have spoken to me harshly. 43. Therefore, My dear *bhakta*, I have hastened to you at night.' When Gonabai heard Him say this, she immediately fell at His feet. 44. Talking there with Nama, and telling

him His secret thoughts, the Lord of the world remained there pleased. Jani at once came and began to rub God's back. 45. She exclaimed, 'O Ocean of mercy, Delight of the mind, Home of compassion, Life of the world, by Thy effort in Thy very person Thou hast protected us in many ways.' 46. *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) said to Nama, 'You must be hungry. Arise quickly and eat. And place Me alongside with you.' 47. Serving on a platter some daintily cooked food, Gonabai quickly brought it to them and all four at once sat down to eat. 48. Govind, Vitthal, Narayan and the fourth, Mahadev by name, were Nama's sons. The Lord of the world sat down beside them to eat. 49. Gonabai and Rajabai were seated near Nama by themselves, and Krishna, placing His *bhakta* beside Him, sat down to eat.

JANI'S GRIEVANCE

50. Seeing this going on Jani felt deeply grieved in her heart. She exclaimed, 'O Merciful to the lowly, O Holder of the disk (Krishna), why hast Thou abandoned me? 51. Thou hast placed all beside Thee and hast seated Thyself to eat. O *Hrishikeshi* (Lord of the heart), I am of very low birth, therefore Thou hast abandoned me as one without a protector. 52. Just as the cook in preparing food removes grapes from the rice, or as straw is removed from the sugarcane, 53. so without any feeling of compassion for me Thou holdest in Thy heart disfavour'. Thus the little maiden girl, Jani, became deeply grieved because the Lord of the world felt no pity for her. 54. Hearing her complaint, the Life of the world said to Nama, 'This food today gives me no pleasure. I do not understand the reason.' 55. The other replied, 'O Holder of the disk (Krishna), Jani stands outside in great grief. Hearing her cries of suffering Thy mind is overcome; 56. just as when a calf cries out loudly, the mother cow does

not enjoy her food ; or as when an infant is crying in the cradle, the mother does not enjoy her food ; 57. or as when a bird is collecting grain in the jungle, she remembers her little ones in the nest ; or as when a doe does not see her young even for a moment, she does not enjoy her food ; 58. or just as when wealth is beyond the reach of one who loves it, daintily cooked food even is not enjoyed by him ; therefore, because Jani is not comforted, Thou art not able to enjoy thy food.' 59. As God put away His hand from the food, all who were sitting there stopped eating also. When Rajabai saw this she was very much astonished. 60. The Holder of the disk (Krishna) washed His hands and then sat quietly on His straw mat. Gonabai called Jani and gave her the plate on which Krishna had left some food. 61. Brahmadev and other gods, desiring the same favour, are never able to obtain it. That favour Jani at once obtained because of her association with Nama.

KRISHNA EATS THE LEAVINGS WITH JANABAI

62. Jani then quickly covered over the food that was so desired. She waited in her own hut exclaiming, 'O Lord of the world, hasten now to my help.' 63. Nama and Krishna were at that time lying upon one bed. The *bhakta* was asleep. The Saviour of the world then arose. 64. The Life of the world walked very softly and in very humble voice said to Jani, 'I am hungry and therefore I have come to you. 65. I was eating with Nama but I had not invited you there. For that reason, removing My hand, I left the food.' 66. Jani replied to the Holder of the *Sharang* Bow (Krishna), 'O Ocean of mercy, Husband of Rukmini, I have nothing to give Thee in my hut except pure faith. 67. Gonsabai brought me what Thou didst leave on Thy plate and gave it to me. About giving it to Thee, O Krishna, I feel a hesitation in my heart.' 68. The Husband of Rukmini replied to her, 'Bring and give it to Me just as it is. One should not hesitate about serving to

another that which is his own. 69. A while ago I stopped eating, but I was hungry for it. Now bring Me that same food and give it to Me.' 70. Hearing these words spoken with love, you listeners will needlessly have a doubt. You will say, 'Why did the Lord of the world remain hungry, in order to eat later the food he had left on His plate?' 71. It was in order to enable Jani to carry out fully her purpose. For she had no other food with her to give to Him. Hence the life of the world asked her to let Him eat that which He had left on His own plate. 72. Then Nama's little maid seated *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart, Krishna) and at once bringing the plate with the food which had been left upon it placed it before Him. 73. Then the Holder of the disk (Krishna) seating Jani beside Him began to eat. When Mother Rukmini heard of this she became perplexed in mind. 74. He who finds His delight on the ocean of milk, He whose Banner is the eagle, He who dwells in the heaven *Vaikunth*, He, placing Himself beside the maiden, is eating that which was left on His plate. 75. He of whom the *Vedas* and *Shastras* are continually singing, and He whom the Lord of *Kailas* (Heaven) is always contemplating, He sits in the hut away from the others and lovingly eats what Nama had left on His plate. 76. Even when many sacrifices are made, He who will not accept the offering thrown into the fire, He, the Life of the world, then said to Jani, 'I have eaten and am fully satisfied.' 77. He then quickly washed His hands and laid down to sleep. Gonai came outside where Nama was and said to him, 78. 'While you were sleeping, God arose and went away. He went to the hut of Jani and there lovingly ate that which He had left on His plate.'

KRISHNA DISREGARDS CASTE

79. The servant of Vishnu said in reply, 'O Mother, the

Holder of the disk (Krishna) is a lover of His *bhaktas*. If anyone has pure heart, He comes rushing there to help him. 80. He does not enquire as to caste or family. This merciful one to the lowly, seeing a person's faith, immediately rushes to his help without wasting a moment. 81. The Bhil woman plucked the fruit from the tree and first tasted it herself. The Lord of the world, recognizing her love, lovingly ate it. 82. So seeing the *bhakti* of Jani, He ate that which He Himself had left on His plate. O Mother, what is there in this to be wondered at? How shall I explain it further? 83. The Life of the world after listening to Nama's and Gonabai's conversation came at once beside Nama, and with love He laid down beside him on the same mat. 84. Only one *prahar* (three hours) now remained of the night. The Holder of the *Sharang* Bow (Krishna) came, and sitting upon Jani's bed told her to arise at once. 85. ' O Jani, it is getting late. Arise at once and do your grinding. I have dusted the mill and I am waiting for you.' 86. The Lord of the world placed His hand under her neck and lifted her up. The Husband of Rukmini then placed the skirt of the garment on her head.

KRISHNA HELPS JANI AT GRINDING

87. Then he plaited her hair and seated Jani near the mill and placed the basket of grain close by. 88. The Husband of Rukmini then said to her, 'I will turn the mill. Place your hand upon the handle of the mill, pretending to grind, and lovingly sing songs.' 89. While *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) was saying this, Jani the little servant girl became awake. Full of joy in her love she began to sing verses relating to the saints. 90. ' Nivriddhi, Sopan, Dnyaneshwar are my dear relatives. It is through their favour that the Holder of the *Sharang* Bow (Krishna) shows His mercy to me.

91. The *Vishnudas* (Nama) is my father, Rajabai is my very dear mother, Gora the potter is my dearest uncle, and Kabir and Savata are my brothers. 92. He did seemingly impossible things. Dear friends, how can I describe them all ? They made the Holder of the disk (Krishna) subject to them, and became satisfied with the water of supreme spiritual joy. 93. Dnyaneshwar, troubled by the Brahmans at Pratishtan, also did a seemingly impossible thing. He made a young buffalo repeat with its own lips the whole of the *Vedas*. 94. Gora the potter, Thy *bhakta*, because absorbed in the thought of the Husband of Rukmini, trod his infant child into the mud and was unaware that he was doing so. 95. Because he had broken his vow made to Vithoba he cut off his hands. Thus while listening to Nama's service of song, the Life of the world came to his help. 96. As hands were being clapped, suddenly a little infant child came creeping in. That story seems impossible and one thinks of it with amazement. 97. *Vanamali* (Krishna) went to meet His *bhakta* Savata. He ripped open his abdomen and hid God in his lotus-heart. 98. Hari who has an infinite number of universes in His heart hid Himself in the heart of Savata. Nama came and drew him outside. 99. Then there is the story of brother Kabir, who lives in the far off country, Benares. *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) sat beside him, and did his weaving. 100. On the night of the festival to Shiva, Nama performed a *kirtan* in honour of Hari. Nine hundred thousand banners suddenly came down from heaven. 101. The Dweller in the Heaven *Kailas* turned His temple to the West for him. Such extraordinary deeds are indescribable even by the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*. 102. In this way, while continuing to grind, she sang her verses in love. The Lord of Pandhari, listening to her, wagged His head in love.

GONABAI'S REPENTANCE

103. When Gonabai heard Jani singing, she hastened

to her hut and questioned, 'Whom did you call here to help you grind? 104. Tell me quickly whether you brought here a hired woman or a neighbour.' Jani did not reply a single word. She remained in perfect silence. 105. Then Gonabai, with great anger in her heart, took a cane and entering into Jani's hut demanded of her to whom she had been speaking. 106. 'Our domestic affairs are in a very weak condition and we have not enough flour in the house. What hired woman did you bring here? You give her grain from the grinding, constantly stealing it from us. 107. She struck Jani, but it fell on God's head. He immediately remarked, 'My name is Vithai. I come here early in order to help Jani to grind.' 108. When Nama heard of the conversation he understood its true meaning. 'That was the Life of the world whom you struck,' Nama said to his mother; 'you do not know this.' 109. Hearing him say this, Gonabai felt ashamed. She said, 'I struck *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart).' From there she then came back to her home. 110. She said, 'The good fortune of Jani is exceedingly extraordinary. She has made the Husband of Rukmini subservient to herself. Without realizing what I was doing, I went there and did what was wrong. 111. He who is never seen even by Brahmadev and the other gods, Him I beat with a stick. Accursed be my worldly thoughts.' Thus speaking she became very repentant. 112. The beautiful cloud-dark-complexioned supreme Brahma, the Husband of Rukmini, Whose sight cools the heart and eyes, shows pity to Jani.

113. Turning now to Jani, the handmill of indifference to earthly things was turning around the pivot of this earthly existence. She ground in love in the mill an immense amount of grain in the form of deeds done in former births. 114. All that appeared in the shape of names and forms she ground in the mill. She mixed

together the visible and the invisible and sat there unconcerned. 115. Krishna then filled a basket with the flour and placed it aside. There was still a little time left of the night and so He laid down on the easy bed. 116. As the Life of the world was speaking to Jani He fell asleep. When the dawn began to appear in the East, 117. Nama's maid came to Him and said, 'O *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart), rise quickly. Thy worshippers will come to Thy temple, and will not see Thee there. 118. If the very early morning songs of praise of wick-light-waving are not sung, there will be an outcry in the city.' The Lord of the world hearing this hastily arose.

KRISHNA USES JANABAI'S BLANKET

119. In His hasty departure the Life of the world had not thought of what He was doing. He forgot His own costly woollen garment and clothed Himself in Jani's blanket. 120. The brilliant cluster of nine jewels which was fastened to a string of pearls, the Lord of the world also forgot and hastened to His temple. 121. As the door was opened His *bhaktas* came to see and worship Him, bringing the materials for worship. There they saw the Life of the world standing on the brick clothed in Jani's blanket, 122. All who saw Him thus were astonished. They said, 'He Who is dark-blue-complexioned, like the leaves of the *tamal* tree, has done a very strange thing. Whose blanket could He have brought? We have no idea whatever.' 123. Another one remarked, 'He is a great mimic. He is very proud of His *bhaktas*. He rebukes those who trust only to deeds and sets them on the way to acquire self-knowledge.' 124. So one said to Him, 'O Life of the world, Ornament of Thy *bhaktas*, Husband of Rukmini, Dweller upon the sea of milk, Recliner upon *Shesha*, this blanket is not becoming to thee.'

JANI SUSPECTED OF THEFT

125. Another remarked, 'Reasoning over the thing, I think Jani the maid of Nama is a very clever girl. She must have deceived the Holder of of the disk (Krishna) and confused His mind.' 126. Still another exclaimed, 'Just as the cripple servant-girl, Kubja, is described in the *Shri Bhagwat*, so are Jani's deeds. You should all know this.' 127. Yet another remarked, 'Go and tell Nama. He will restrain his servant-girl. She has confused the mind of the Holder of the *Sharang* Bow (Krishna), and deceived Him.' 128. Thus in different ways all the people reasoned in their minds. The priest went near to the image, and taking the blanket off, began to examine. 129. They saw that the cluster of the jewels and the pearl necklace were not to be seen upon His lotus-breast. They remarked, 'The generous *Vanamali* (Krishna) has given them away to someone.' 130. Some made humorous remarks that Jani had done a very clever thing in offering the blanket to the god, and keeping the cluster of jewels and the garland. 131. It is as if one offered God some milk, and asking His favour brought home butter ; or as if one offered God water from an earthen jar and brought back nectar to his home ; 132. or as if one gave crystals to the jeweller and had them exchange for diamonds ; or as if one offered to the Husband of Rukmini a black garment and then took to his home His yellow robe ; 133. or as if one should offer fruit of *rui* to Maruti to please him, and take from him nectar fruit ; 134. so at this time, offering her black blanket, she pleased *Vanamali* (Krishna), and has taken for herself the cluster of jewels on the pearl garland to which the nine forms of jewels are joined. 135. The priests then exclaimed, 'What shall we do? There is no one we can blame. All the doors being locked how did the Lord of Pandhari go away from here? We do not understand.' 136. Another remarked, 'Let

us go at once to the house of Nama, and call the servant-girl Jani, and ask her in regard to this.'

JANI THREATENED

137. With this thought in their minds, they hastened to Nama's house and said to Jani, 'The Lord of Rukmini has taken to being with you. 138. We do not understand how you have confused Him thus. He takes no pleasure in our worship and offering. You have been guilty of some trick or other and have deceived the Life of the world. 139. The dark blue-cloud-complexioned One is in love with you. And our good deeds are all lost. Last night the Merciful one to the lowly came to you. 140. You took His cluster of jewels and pearl necklace, and in their place gave Him your blanket. Bring it at once or we shall punish you.' 141. Hearing them say this she swore by an oath, 'If I have taken the cluster of jewels, may my eyes burst.' 142. As they began to investigate, they found the garland of pearls in the raiment. They then said, 'She must immediately be impaled upon a rod of iron. 143. She has really to-day stolen the ornament of the supreme Brahm, the eagle-bannered One. All the Brahmans said, 'She must be punished.' 144. They immediately seized Jani and carried her to the bank of the Chandrabhaga river. There she brought to her remembrance the Lord of the world and pleaded for His compassion. 145. She cried, 'O Purifier of the sinner, Holder of the *Sharang* Bow (Krishna), Helper of the helpless, Husband of Rukmini, Lord of His *bhaktas*, Ocean of mercy, Saviour of the humble, Lord of the world; 146. I am without a protector, helpless and lowly. Who is there to rush to my help?' Hearing Jani's pity-arousing words, the Life of the world came to help her. 147. The iron rod (for impaling her) had been well fastened in the ground. It suddenly turned into water. Seeing this wonderful miracle all were astonished. 148. The priests were puzzled and exclaimed, 'Blessed is Jani's *bhakti*. The moment she

brought to her mind the Husband of Rukmini, He rushed to her aid in her trouble.' 149. The assembly of *bhaktas* now gathered together, and clapped their hands at the cries of 'Victory, Victory,' and said, '*Vanamali* (Krishna) rushes to the help of His servants when they fall into trouble.'

KRISHNA WRITES DOWN THE VERSES OF JANI

150. A very strange thing happened one day. The servant-girl Jani was sitting in her hut. In her mind she was composing verses in which she made mention of the Holder of the disk (Krishna.) 151. The Holder of the disk (Krishna) then took a pen and ink, and as the poetry of Jani fell upon His ears He wrote it down with His own hands. 152. You will say, 'How could words from the house of Nama reach God's ears while He was seated in His temple? This is what our minds question.' 153. But the Pervader of the universe, the Life of the world, Witnesser of the thoughts of the heart Cloud of intelligence, is the all knowing One, who knows the thoughts of His *bhaktas*. 154. Dusshasan troubled Draupadi. She pleaded with Him while she was at Hastanapur (Delhi), and how could her words reach His ears at Dwarka? Yet He at once rushed to her help. 155. When Gajendra pleaded piteously, God heard his voice in *Vaikunth* (Heaven.) The Lord of the world through His inner light of knowledge at once heard Jani's words. 156. The Lord of Pandhari alone understands the thoughts of His *bhaktas*. So the listeners must have no more doubts in their hearts.

KRISHNA ADMIRE JANI'S VERSES

157. The Lord of Rukmini then thought to Himself, 'I enjoy the verses of Jani.' Therefore He took a pen in His hand and sat writing them down. 158. Just then Dnyaneshwar suddenly came to the temple to make

his *namaskar* to the god. The Holder of the *Sharang* Bow (Krishna) seeing him gave thought to what he was doing. 159. He hid away His ink, pen and paper. The supreme Brahm, the Root of all joy, now manifested a most wonderful deed. 160. Dnyandev came to Him and placed his head upon the god's lotus feet. He exclaimed, 'O *Vanamali* (Krishna) sitting here by Thyself, what art Thou writing ? ' 161. Hearing his question Pandurang replied, ' I am writing down the verses of Jani, ' As *Shrirang* (Krishna) said this Dnyandev burst out laughing. 162. He said, ' Victory, Victory, to the Husband of Rukmini. Jani is composing verses in Thy praise. Thou art writing them down in a book. I am much surprised at this. 163. Although one has visited many sacred bathing places, and has given much wealth in charity, performed many austerities, and observed several religious vows, yet to speak of them very much with one's own lips is not proper. 164. Thy wonderful deeds, O *Vanamali* (Krishna), must be many in the world but thou shouldst never write them down on a piece of paper. 165. O Husband of Rukmini, it is Sarasvati who writes of Thy deeds. The *Vedas* and the *Shastras* proclaim Thy goodness. The *Puranas* honour Thee with song. 166. Vyas, Valmiki and other great poets have described Thee and then attained their final bliss. And now if Thou dost write down the verses of Jani the poets will laugh at Thee. ' 167. Hearing him say this, the cloud-dark Krishna replied, ' The verses of Jani are full of love. I feel them today exceedingly interesting. 168. And as they fell upon My ears, I sat down to write them. But the moment I saw you I felt a hesitation in my mind. 169. And so I made haste and hid the paper and ink. But I do not understand how you understood what I was doing ? ' 170. Dnyandev replied, ' O Life of the world, Ornament of Thy *bhaktas*, aside from us there is no one who knows Thy inner thoughts. 171. It is a

dutiful wife alone who understands the thoughts of her husband. Only an infant can understand the love of its mother; 172. just as the delightful words of the poet are appreciated only by an expert; and as one who has knowledge understands the knowledge of philosophic books through experience. 173. O cloud-dark complexioned One, as it is the *chakor* bird who fully understands the moon, so it is the mind alone, O Krishna, that understands the objects of the sense organs. 174. So we always easily know Thy secret thoughts.' Dnyandev having said this, the god laughed.

KRISHNA AND DNYANDEV GO TO NAMA'S HOUSE

175. Dnyandev then exclaimed, 'O Lord of the world, let us go to meet Nama. I will tell him how great Thy love for Jani is.' 176. The Husband of Rukmini replied, 'I agree. That was already in My mind.' Then taking one another by the hand they hastened along. 177. Dnyandev and the Holder of the disk (Krishna) came to the house of the *Vishnudas* Nama. They embraced one another and sat down upon an easy mat. 178. When *Vanamali* (Krishna) arrived at Nama's house an assembly of saints had already gathered there; just as when a king comes and sits in his assembly hall, his whole army gathers there; 179. or as when hearing that Indra is seated, He becomes surrounded by the group of gods; or as when in their love the performers of austerities surround Shiva; 180. or as whenever Indira (Lakshmi, goddess of wealth) sits there, all *siddhis* gather together; or as when God-loving *bhaktas* come rushing in their love to listen to enthusiastic *kirtans*; 181. or as wherever precious jewels are to be found, there all experts gather together; or as when bumble-bees gather around the lotus; 182. or as when their eyes discover a generous giver, beggars gather around him; or as when ants come rushing to wherever there may be a

pile of sugar. 183. So, seeing the Lord of the world (Krishna) seated in Nama's house, all the saints full of joy gathered there.

JANI INTRODUCED TO SAINTS

184. The Lord of the world, having embraced all who were there, said to Nama, ' Call Jani and bring her here, in order that she may be introduced to the saints. ' 185. Gonabai remarked then to Rajai, ' Jani is out in the fields, making dung cakes. Go and tell her that the Husband of Rukmini is calling her. ' 186. Hearing this request, she hastily went and told her, ' The Holder of the disk (Krishna) has come to our house and calls for you. ' 187. Jani quickly washed her hands and came to Nama's home, and as she saw the Lord of Pandhari she bowed prostrate before Him on the ground. 188. Dnyandev remarked to Nama, ' I have seen a most extraordinary thing to-day. I saw the Lord of Vaikunth (Heaven) writing down the verses of Jani with His own hand. ' 189. The Ornament of His bhaktas said, ' The writing down of the verses of Jani has brought Me no loss of dignity. 190. I declare by an oath, and make your feet a witness to it that you must regard the Marathi version of Jani as containing happy thoughts. 191. I, Govind, take the paper of pure goodness, and with divine knowledge and joy of a happy experience I sing her verses in love. 192. If anyone reads her verses I shall stand waiting upon him in his yard. ' Such were the words that Krishna used in the house of Nama: 193. ' He who continually sings the verses of Jani, will suffer no calamities in his family life. Finally I shall certainly give him at his final end the highest form of deliverance (Sayujyata). ' 194. When Vanamali (Krishna) had said this, Dnyandev burst out laughing and clapped his hands. All shouted ' Victory, Victory. ' I will tell you who were there. 195. There was Kabir who

had come from Benares. There was Chokhamela the great *bhakta*, and there was Rohidas the shoemaker. The noble *Vaishnavas* were seated there. 196. There was Sajan the Pathan, God's *bhakta*. Baya the butcher who was exceedingly indifferent to earthly things. There was Kamal the gardener, a great saint and always full of joy; 197. and Mukundaraj the sifter of goldsmith's ashes, who always remained at the great door of the temple. There were Gonabai and beautiful Rajai continually crying out 'Victory, Victory.' 198. Then there was Nama, the very dear *bhakta* of God. The Husband of Rukmini sat in the midst of them, just as a king in the midst of his army outshines all in glory.

AVATARS OF NAMA AND JANABAI

199. Dnyaneshwar said to Jani, 'Namdev has assumed four *avatars*: Pralhad, Angad, and Uddhav, and made Krishna subservient to him. 200. During what birth did you especially pray to God? Tell us everything. Do not at all hesitate.' 201. When the maid of Nama heard this she became ready to speak. She said, 'When the Lord of the heart became Hayagriva [a certain *avatar* of Vishnu], I offered myself at His feet. 202. Then He as the Advocate of Ambarish assumed ten *avatars*. As the fish, the tortoise and the great boar, he came to kill the all-powerful *daiityas*. 203. After becoming Narasinha, Vaman and Parashuram, He finally became Ram the son of Dashrath. Now Shri Hari, the resting place for all, has become the *avatar* of Buddha. 204. When God took the form of these various *avatars* I was with Him.' When Dnyandev heard her say this, his mind was full of astonishment. 205. Said he, 'Blessed is this servant girl Jani. By her limitless good deeds she has made *Hrishik-shi* (the Lord of the heart) favourable to her. His sight is unobtainable even to Brahmadev and other gods.'

KRISHNA APPOINTS WRITERS OF THE SAINTS' POEMS

206. The Holder of the disk (Krishna) then said to the saints, ' Now make appointments among those who are to write down the words that come from the lips of the saints. 207. Sachchidanand the Brahman will write down the jewelled words of Dnyaneshwar. Sopan who is the full *avatar* of Brahmadev will write down the words of Nivriddhi. 208. Dnyandev will write down the verses of Muktabai. Visoba Khechar will write down the verses of Joga Paramanand. 209. There is also the *Vaishnava bhakta*, Savata the gardener. Let his writer be Kashiba Gurav. God Supreme appointed Sudev as writer for Kurmadas. 210. Anant Bhat the Brahman should be the writer for Chokhamela. And the Husband of Rukmini will Himself write down the verses of Nama's Jani.' 211. Thus appointing a writer for each one, the Holder of the disk (Krishna) said to Dnyandev, ' Now you should have no hesitation in listening to the verses of Jani. ' 212. The noble *Vaishnava* hearing Him say this replied, ' If a mighty person accepts anyone there can be no one who can blame him on the earth. 213. If the sun should take a blind man by the hand, what will he not be able to see? If Sarasvati is pleased with a dumb man, he will be able to repeat the *Veda*'. 214. Similarly, if Thou art favourable to Jani the maiden, who will call her a slave? ' As the Life of the world heard him say this, He smiled. 215. Then Nama took some water and washed the feet of all. With the sixteen materials of worship he lovingly performed the worship of the Husband of Rukmini. 216. He then gave *van-supari* to each one and made a prostrate *namaskar* to each one. Shripati (Krishna) then took leave of Gonabai and quickly hastened away. 217. *Vanamali* (Krishna) taking an assembly of *bhak'tas* with Him entered into His temple. Here He told Rukmini all that had happened.

218. The Holder of the *Sharang* Bow (Krishna), the Brother of the helpless, the compassionate One, the Lover of His *bhaktas*, Ocean of mercy, and Ocean of compassion, 219. He, the lotus-eyed One, is the Speaker here and the One causing the stories of His servants to be described. Mahipati is a mere puppet. All the wise saints know this.

220. *Swasti* (Peace)! This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it, the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen, you God-loving *bhaktas*. This is the twenty-first very delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER XXII
MATSYENDRANATH, GORAKHNATH
AND CHANGDEV

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Krishna.

STORIES OF SAINTS LEAD TO RIGHT FEELINGS

1. To-day you fortunate listeners have seated yourselves around the wish-tree. Therefore the longings of no heart remain unfulfilled. 2. When the touchstone touches iron, no blackness whatever remains in it. So in listening to the delightful stories of the *bhaktas* no doubt remains in the mind; 3. as when bathing in the sea it is the same as having bathed in all the sacred bathing places; or as it is by the light of the sun that all objects become visible; 4. or as when one obtains nectar, all diseases flee away; so those who listen to these stories of the saints cannot be troubled by the sorrows of this earthly existence. 5. If the moon is pleased with anyone, he will not feel any heat; so the wise one who listens to the stories of the saints will find that no lust or anger enters into his heart.

THE GURU ANCESTRY OF DNYANDEV AND NAMDEV

6. In the previous chapter we were told of God praising Jani, and that all saints expressed their astonishment and cried out, 'Victory, Victory.' 7. Having heard this statement the listeners asked this question, 'It is through association with Nama that Krishna joined Himself with Jani. 8. Now what was his guru descent? We do not know about it.' Such was the question asked by the saints. Listen now to the description of it. 9. It happened at a certain time that Shiva was sitting on the ocean of milk. He was contemplating the essential forms of Ram and repeating His name. 10. Parvati said to the Lord of *Kailas* (Heaven), 'Whose name are you

repeating ? What God is there superior to you ? This is a thing about which I have some doubt.' 11. After listening to her, the Lord of all things replied to her, 'The deity who is superior to me is Shri Ram, the Husband of Janaki. 12. O Bhavani, Brahmadev and Vishnu, develop from Him along with me. I was meditating that very form in my mind and I am constantly repeating His name.' 13. When the Destroyer of Tripur (Shiva) said this, Ambika (Parvati) was much astonished. She exclaimed, 'How is it that I being half of your own self have not been thinking rightly ? 14. Frogs are always near to the lotus-flowers, but they know nothing of the pure honey that is in the flowers. 15. Musk perfume is found in the navel of the deer. Still it wanders needlessly through the jungle. So, although Shiva has knowledge, I do not know it.' 16. Then joining both her hands palm to palm, she made a *namaskar* to the blue-throated One. Said she, 'You make your heart pure by continually repeating the name of the noble Ram, 17. Please tell me the most secret thoughts of your heart.' Hearing her say this the King of *Kailas* (Heaven) naturally in love replied to her. 18. And finding her alone, Shiva said to Parvati, 'I will truly tell you whose name I continually repeat in my heart.' 19. He (Shri Shanker) then placed His assuring hand upon her head and began to instruct her, by which Parvati became bodily unconscious and could not remember her own self.

BIRTH OF MATSYENDRA

20. While Shiva was giving her instructions the fair-complexioned One was unconscious. Just at that moment there was a foetus in the womb of a crocodile. It replied from there that it understood the instructions being given. 21. In the midst of the violent waves of the sea this foetus remained hidden in the womb of the crocodile. Hearing the instructions given by Shiva to Parvati, it held it in its

memory; 22. just as when Kayadhu was in a prison, and Narad came suddenly there and kindly gave her instructions, Pralhad still in the womb heard it; 23. so now as the Enemy of Madan (Shiva) was instructing Parvati, His words reached into the womb of the crocodile. At that moment, Matsyendranath was born, a saviour of the world. 24. He was in truth the *avatar* of Shiva. He was the very mount Meru of those indifferent to earthly things, an ocean of intelligence, descending as an *avatar* to save the world. 25. Matsyendranath was supremely wise in all divine knowledge. He was the wish-tree giver of the highest form of final deliverance, the internal Witnesser of every life, or the second Vishnu Himself, 26. the home of the qualitless One in the form of intelligence, a moon becoming a full moon. 27. Although He came with a body, He was separate from it. He was a statue of the supreme Brahm, the essence of the highest form of happiness made manifest to this world. 28. As He came out of his mother's womb He did not forget that he was the supreme Brahm. He was not touched by the violent winds of ignorance. He at once came out of the water. 29. He began to think to Himself, 'I want to see all the sacred bathing places' From there, therefore, Matsyendra wandered about as he wished. 30. He wandered about from town to town and ate whatever was given to Him. Afterwards He was accustomed to go into the jungle and sit by Himself alone. 31. Thus indifferent to all earthly things, twelve years of his life passed away. On one occasion, however, he arrived casually at a certain town.

MATSYENDRANATH'S BEGGING TOURS

32. He begged from house to house but remained before them only for a moment. One day he happened to stand before the house of a merchant. 33. He cried out ' *Alakh* ' at the door of the house. He spoke very rapidly,

'If you have anything to give me, give it to me at once, O mother.' 34. Hearing His sweet voice, the wife of the merchant was astonished. She exclaimed, 'Blessed is the mother of this guest that she should have borne such a person.' 35. As she came out of the house with her offering she saw a divine form before her. There were two earrings in His ears with a shining cluster like that of the stars. 36. The beautiful brilliancy of His form was like that of gold. He had rubbed white sacred ashes all over His body. He wore a brilliant waist cord. His elongated eyes were beautiful. 37. Seeing His form she bowed to Him in her love. She exclaimed, 'O *Swami*, where have you come from? Tell me.' 38. Hearing her Matsyendra-nath replied, 'The country of the supreme Brahm is My country. He who understands this has a right to the happiness which comes from the union with God.' 39. The merchant's wife said to Him, 'I have no child. Although we have in our home every form of wealth, yet our house seems empty because of this; 40. just as the night without the moon, just as the earth without trees, or just as rivers when there is no water in them causing a frightful appearance; 41. just as the rainy season is fruitless without a cloud; or as fatness when there is no strength in one's body; 42. like a king without any power; like acquaintance with scriptures but failing in duty; like a lamp without oil or wick does not look well; 43. wisdom without luck; planting the garden without water; so to possess wealth but to have no child, seems to be a vain possession. 44. Give me therefore the knowledge whereby I may have an increase in my descendants.' Hearing her words on this occasion in private, Matsyendranath was pleased. 45. Then taking some of His ashes and repeating a *mantra* over them He at once gave them into her hand. He said, 'The moment you eat this, you will certainly have a son. 46. You will see in living form the *avatar*

of Vishnu. Tell no one of this, and accomplish your purpose.' 47. Telling her this, Matsyendranath departed rapidly. The wife of the merchant took the ashes and placed them in the god-room. 48. She then called her friends to her and said, 'Listen to my secret, dear friends. A mendicant came into our yard, and I went out and gave him some food. 49. He was glorious and brilliant to the sight. He was unconcerned and indifferent to all earthly things and full of holiness. Seeing such a form as His, my mind felt great satisfaction. 50. I told Him that I had no child. He then looked towards me with a look of favour, and gave me ashes over which He repeated a *mantra*. 51. He said to me, 'The moment you eat this, you will conceive a child.' After telling me this He hastened away. 52. Now tell me truly whether you think the doing of this would prove true or false. I have none more intimate than you, dear friends.'

MERCHANT'S WIFE DISCARDS MATSYENDRA'S FAVOUR

53. One woman amongst these friends replied, 'What is the use of placing faith in the split-ear sect? They perform many tricks and thus deceive people. 54. If you trust to them you will lose in your domestic affairs. Wish a long life to your husband and you will prosper well in your family affairs. 55. The split-ear sect give ashes, making the one to whom they give it a dog, and make the dog run after them. At night they turn the dog into a woman and enjoy her. Such is their custom.' 56. Speaking to her in various ways they put doubts in her heart. Then they exclaimed, 'Throw these ashes at once into the fire. 57. By listening to the words of neighbours, a quarrel arises between the daughter and her mother-in-law, enmity ensues between brothers and they separate themselves and leave their mother and father. 58. It is a quarrel in the home that is the direct cause of loss to men: just

as when gruel is thrown into milk, it is at once destroyed, 59. And as when gold is covered with a metallic cement, it once appears tarnished, so, through the thoughts of others, evil character comes to one of good family.' 60. Therefore the woman at once threw into the fireplace the ashes given her by Matsyendranath; just as one might call nectar poison, and empty it on a heap of stones; 61. or as one might have found a book containing the *Vedanta*, he might think it an immoral book and throw it away; or as one might throw away pearls thinking them to be glass beads; 62. or as one might throw into the fire the seed of the wish-tree; or as the daughter of the ocean, Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth), is driven away by force; 63. or as when Kaikeyi (Ram's stepmother) obtained the remains of the (fire) sacrifice, but with doubt in her mind she threw it away; so through her fate the woman did not eat the favour given by Matsyendranath.

MATSYENDRA AGAIN AT THE MERCHANT'S DOOR

64. Twelve years passed after this event. Suddenly Matsyendranath the *Yogi* in His wanderings appeared again at her house. 65. Wandering at will from house to house in the city, He had come to the house of the merchant. There at the door He cried out '*Alakh.*' 66. Just as soon as the lady of the house heard His sweet voice she at once came out bringing her offering. The moment she looked at Him she remembered what had happened long ago. 67. Matsyendranath said to her, 'Allow Me to meet at once the son who was born to you after I had given you the ashes.' 68. The wife of the merchant having heard Him say this, her heart was filled with fear. She thought, 'If I should tell Him the very truth, He will curse me and turn me to ashes.' 69. So she remained silent, and would say nothing. Matsyendranath again repeated, 'Tell Me at once whether you ate the ashes or whether you threw

them away somewhere?' 70. To this the wife of the merchant replied, 'Listen to the exact truth. Listening to the advice of others, a doubt arose in my mind. 71. Believing that you had some deception in your mind I threw the ashes into the fireplace. Such was the writing of Brahmadev (on my forehead) when foretelling my fate.' 72. Matsyendranath said to her, 'Where did you throw the ashes (of the fireplace)? Tell Me quickly. Do not hesitate.' 73. 'I took them to that large place from where the farmers removed the manure, and have dug a ditch where for twelve years cowdung has been thrown.' 74. Then going outside with Him she showed Him the place and said, 'It is here that for many days we have thrown ashes, O *Swami*.'

THE BOY GORAKSHANATH COMES OUT OF DUNGHILL

75. Matsyendranath went to the heap of manure and stood there, and as He cried out '*Alakh*' a wonderful thing happened. 76. '*O Guru Adesh*,' such a sound came from the ground. As every one heard it their minds were filled with astonishment. 77. Then Matsyendranath told her to have the earth removed by men. Suddenly they saw the form of a twelve-year old boy glorious in appearance. 78. As the full moon, so was this beautiful and resplendent form, a boy with thirty-two points of excellency who was the very *avatar* of Vishnu. 79. His face was beautiful and he had elongated eyes. Earrings adorned his ears and without a support he sat constantly repeating the names of God. 80. No earth had soiled his body. People seeing this were astonished. Then Matsyendranath came quickly to him and awoke him up. 81. As Matsyendranath placed his assuring hands on his head, he made Him a prostrate *namaskar*. Matsyendra took His young boy by his hand and quickly started away. 82. Because the boy had lived in the dung and the ashes that had become mixed

during the twelve years, therefore the name lovingly given to him was Gorakshaknath.* 83. The merchant said to his wife, 'Our great treasure was almost in our hand; but the workings of fate did not allow it in the case of our fortune.' 84. Matsyendranath hearing his pity-arousing words, blessed him and said to him, 'Know this that you certainly will have another son.' 85. Saying this to the couple, he took Gorakshanath by the hand and started for a visit to sacred bathing-places.

GORAKSHANATH'S PILGRIMAGE

86. As they walked hastily along, Gorakshanath said to Matsyendra, 'Place your hand on my head and instruct me with the *mantra* that will be my saviour.' 87. His *Guru* replied to him, 'You have not yet served Me. I have therefore no authority to teach you and make you my disciple.' 88. One should not tie up in his cloth coins without examining them. So wise and clever men should not give instructions even to a good disciple at once. 89. One should not sow in a land that has not been ploughed; so before I have examined you I cannot accept you as my disciple.' 90. Hearing him say this, Gorakshanath made him a prostrate *namasakar*. Joining his hands together he said, 'Your command, O *Swami*, is my authority.' 91. As they hastily walked along they suddenly came to a city. Seating themselves outside, Matsyendranath sent Gorakshanath into the town to beg for food. 92. Before each house he cried out, '*Alakh*.' As he begged for food from house to house, there was one in which Brahmans were being feasted. 93. The lady of the house came out and placed in his cloth a wheat-cake and fried hot cakes. She said to herself, 'This split-ear seems to be a very good man, he did not sit doggedly for more

* *Go* = a cow; *raksh* = protection; the story being that during the twelve years the boy had been fed by a cow with her milk at the dunghill.

food. 94. A man who is satisfied with a little food is truly an *avatar* of God.' Such were also the remarks people made to one another. 95. Then going outside the city, Gorakshanath prostrated himself before Matsyendra. He selected all the best of the food and placed it before his *sadguru*. 96. Matsyendra was pleased and said to Goraksha, 'These fried hot cakes taste very delicious, and I am satisfied with them. 97. So tomorrow going again into the city, bring me the same kind again.' He replied that he would do so and made a *namaskar*. 98. The next day very early in the morning Gorakshanath took his wallet and went into the town. 99. Thinking to himself he said, 'If I should hasten to other homes, my promise will not be fulfilled. So I had better go to where the Brahmans were dining.'

GORAKH'S PERTINACITY

100. Gorakshanath then went and sat down at the door of the Brahman's house. There he called out, 'O mother, give me at once in my cloth some more fried hot cakes.' 101. The lady of the house came out and said to Gorakshanath, 'There are no fried hot cakes at all left in my house. 102. Yesterday the Brahmans dined in my house, therefore I was able to give you food. If you ask of me now the same food, tell me where I am to obtain it. 103. I can give you a pice (a small copper coin) or grain, but I have no fried hot cakes in the house.' 104. Gorakshanath said to her, 'I have no other wish. If you should give great heaps of money, they would look to me as if but clay. 105. Even if *riddhis* and *siddhis* (the accomplishments) or a royal fortune, or the dignity of Indra, should come into my hand, or indeed all the four forms of deliverance, I value none of them. 106. I ask you to fulfil the wish of my *sadguru*. Therefore I ask you for fried hot cakes. If I leave here before I obtain them, I swear by him.' 107. She

replied, 'You are using force on me, while I am doing a charitable action it is interfered with by my ill luck. You are not a guest. You are a supreme deceiver. You are asking for the daintiest of food. 108. Sometimes one throws bread to a dog and it then comes again and again to the door in the same way to get the food. So it was with you. I understand you now.' 109. Goraksha replied to her, 'We are even inferior to dogs, but unless I take these fried hot cakes, I will never leave this place.'

GORAKH GIVES AN EYE FOR HOT CAKES

110. She said, 'You obstinate fellow. You have seated yourself here with obstinacy; (but if you like to have it satisfied) take out one of your eyes and at once give it to me.' 111. Hearing her, Goraksha replied, 'I will give you one of my eyes.' She replied, 'Talking without corresponding action is useless. 112. Mendicants like you give others knowledge and themselves act unreasonably in their ignorance' 113. Hearing her say this, Goraksha putting his finger into his eye, quickly took out one of his eyeballs and placed it on her hand. 114. Seeing this the lady of the house became full of fear. Said she, 'If the officials should hear of this affair, they would take from us all we have.' 115. Then through fear she closed the door. She made a *namaskar* to Goraksha, and said, 'I spoke merely from a casual point of view. I did not know your fixed determination.' 116. The blood that flowed from his eyes she wiped away with her garment. But Goraksha said to her, 'Let there be no fear in your mind.' 117. If Goraksha had become angry, then the whole universe would have burned up with his curse. But he is a tree of peace and forgiveness. He never is angry. 118. Wherever his footsteps fall all the *siddhis* (accomplishments) come and stand before him there. But he does not care for them and continues begging from house to house. 119 A *sannyasi*

may perform many austerities, and yet be subject to lust and anger losing thereby his store of good deeds. This saying must be regarded as true. 120. Or if he should suddenly have a great desire for the *riddhis* and *siddhis* (accomplishments) he would lose the supreme spiritual riches and become entangled in great hindrances. 121. Therefore the son of Matsyendra quickly conquering his lust and pride, kicked away the *riddhis* and *siddhis* and lived a life indifferent to worldly things. 122. The lady then went into her house. She collected the materials for making hot cakes. She ground the *dal* with her own hand and added salt and cummin seeds. 123. She fried the cakes in melted butter. She then brought them outside and placed them at the feet of Goraksha, making him a prostrate *namaskar*. 124. She put the cakes in his knapsack and joining her hands together palm to palm, respectfully said, 'Let no one outside learn of this matter.' 125. 'I will not,' He replied. 'Let your mind be without any fear about this.' He covered his eye with his lotus-hand and came back to Matsyendra. 126. He bowed to Him with reverence, and said, 'I begged for food and have brought it here. So let the *Swami* show his favour to me. Let him eat it according as may suit his taste.'

GORAKH REGAINS HIS EYES

127. Matsyendra asked him, 'How did you lose your eye?' Goraksha stood with hands joined together and told him all that had happened. 128. 'While begging for the hot cakes, she asked for my eye. Then with my hand I took out one eyeball and gave it to her, O *Swami*.' 129. Matsyendra replied to him, 'Blessed is your courageous act. Now then take out your other eye, and give it to me.' 130. Goraksha replied, 'I will do so;' and at once took out his other eye. Matsyendra seeing him do this was astonished, and said, 'You truly are the *bhakta* of your *sadguru*.' 131. Then as

he waved his hands over his eyes, he immediately appeared with brilliant eyes. Matsyendra then gave instructions to Goraksha in spiritual knowledge. 132. After he had eaten with love some of the cakes he gave the remainder as a favour to Goraksha and said, 'Never have I seen such a disciple as you are.'

LINEAGE OF THE NATH SECT

133. Goraksha seeing that Shambhav was worthy of it, he gave him instructions and made him his disciple. That instruction fixed itself in his mind and through his favour all doubt flew away. 134. Advayanand came with reverence as a suppliant to Shambhav. He showed him favour and placed his hand upon his head. 135. Advayanand showed Prabhav his favour and gave him spiritual knowledge. He in turn explained the way of *yoga* to Gaininath. 136. Gaininath gave his instruction to Nivritti and he in turn gave it to Dnyandev. Visoba Khechar became the disciple of Dnyandev, giving him complete reverence. 137. The *Vaishnava bhakti* Namdev went as a suppliant to Visoba. Namdev's hand of blessing as a *Vishnudus* was placed on Jani.

138. The hearers [referred to in verses 7 and 8 above] listening to this explanation felt great satisfaction. They exclaimed, 'Our doubts have been removed, O speaker.'

DNYANDEV AND CHANGDEV SPEAK TOGETHER

139. On a certain day Dnyandev went to the temple and said to God, 'Give me leave to go to Alandi.' 140. Making his *namaskar* to the Husband of Rukmini he started from there. He arrived at Alandi and worshipped Siddheshwar. 141. Dnyaneshwar was the direct *avatar* of Vishnu. This reached the ear of Changdev. So he hastened to meet Dnyandev.

STORY OF CHANGDEV

142. You may ask who Changdev was and where he came from. Listen to the description of him. Listeners must keep their minds peaceful and listen attentively. 143. In the first watch of Brahmadev's day fourteen Indras were born. All these fell into prison. Such were the wonderful deeds of fate. 144. On a certain day the son of Brahmadev, the storehouse of all knowledge of *bhakti*, by name Narad, a noble *Vaishnava*, suddenly appeared. 145. The moment the fourteen Indras saw him they made him a *namaskar*. The celestial *rishi* with a smiling face began singing full of love. 146. Among them Changa was a noble Indra. Wearying of his many days of imprisonment he joined his hands to Narad and asked him a question. 147. He said, 'Tell me please, what means I can employ to obtain my release from this world? Tell me of that means of deliverance by which rebirths may be avoided.' 148. The son of Brahmadev, hearing him say this, replied, 'There is no such means in this world, but go into the world of mortals, and, O Changa, become an *avatar* there. 149. There is there a great sacred and holy city by name of Pandhari. You will find there a heaven on earth and the supreme Brahm will appear there to you standing on a brick. Know this to be true. 150. There you will enjoy the association of saints and the singing of *kirtans*, and all the citizens, men and women, are *jivanmuktas* (free while living). Go and become an *avatar* in the world of action and bring about your salvation. 151. Without going to the world of mortals, those who live in the city of gods and in the Heaven of Brahmadev can have no final deliverance.' 152. Hearing the words of Narad he made him a prostrate *namaskar*, and said, 'Use such methods as will free me from this body.' 153. Narad at once gave him a *mantra* with twelve syllables and he at once became free from his body.

CHANGA AND THE GOD OF DEATH

154. The *Marudgan* (Indra Changa) then became an *avatar* at Punyastamba (modern Puntamba) on the bank of the Ganga (Godavari), as the son of a Brahman. 155. Both Vithoba and Rukmini were very aged Brahmans. In having this pleasure of a son, they had supreme joy. 156. The child was glorious and brilliant. As soon as they saw it their hearts were filled with love. On their son's eighth year he was invested with the sacred thread and then he was married. 157. Whenever a thought came into his mind he would carry it out. By a mere wish he could go through the air. If he pronounced a blessing with his lips, it immediately took effect. 158. Wherever his footsteps fell, all the *siddhis* (accomplishments) were there to serve him. He knew all the fourteen kinds of learning and the sixty-four arts. 159. He knew how to hold the mind in control. When a hundred years of his life were completed the hour of death came. 160. He placed his soul at the crown of his head and deceived the god of death. He evaded the moment of death and then again brought back his life into his body. 161. Many days thus passed. Fourteen hundred years passed. Still he did not suffer the stroke of death. 162. He never became aged. His reputation in the world grew great. He was accustomed to go regularly to Pandhari to perform *kirtans* and to dance in them. 163. In joy and peace he lived in his hermitage by the banks of the Tapi river. He then used to come for his bath regularly to Puntamba on the banks of the Godavari river. 164. He accepted many disciples. They numbered fourteen hundred. He took all these together with him. He used to go with them upwards through the air. 165. Although he had this power, still he had not adopted a *sadguru*. He was accustomed to teach knowledge to his disciples and receive services at their hands. 166. Just as a physician eats whatever he

likes but prescribes a strict diet to others; or like a Brahman who without a bath tells others the *mantras* for bathing; 167. so, showing the power of *siddhis*, Changdev won a following of many disciples. But he himself never became the disciple of a *sadguru*. 168. He said, 'I have searched through all the world of mortals, but I do not see a *sadguru* worthy of me. I do not see anyone my equal in power.'

169. But indirectly he heard a rumour that Dnyandev, a direct *avatar* of Vishnu, was living in human form at Alandi. 170. Changdev then thought to himself, 'I will go as a suppliant to him. But first I will send a letter to Dnyandev and receive a reply from him.'

CHANGDEV'S LETTER TO DNYANDEV

171. He then took in his hand a pen and inkpot. After considering what to write he thought, 'I cannot address him as my younger, for I want to receive his instructions.' 172. He thought to himself, 'If I should write to him as to my elder, yet Dnyandev is younger than I am.' Therefore he sent a blank page by the hand of his disciple. 173. Dnyandev was seated as usual by the temple of Siddheshwar at Alandi. He was bringing the Husband of Rukmini to his mind and worshipping Him with love. 174. Suddenly by a path in the sky the disciple of Changdev arrived. Dnyandev understood why he came. 175. Before he told him his errand he (Dnyandev) said, 'Changdev has sent you.' He (Changdev's disciple) made a *namaskar* to him and placed the letter before him. 176. When he opened the letter, he saw that not a single word was written in it. He then said, 'Although fourteen hundred years have passed, he himself is still a blank; 177. just as if a nectar tree should grow to be great without bearing any fruit; or as if a lake were formed without any water in it; 178. or as if a wife has grown to adult age without bearing a child; or as a man without strength is useless; or as

a woman is useless who puts on adornments and yet does not possess the good fortune of having a husband; 179. or like one becoming a *sannyasi*, but without indifference to earthly things; or like a high house belonging to a miser; or like the stored wealth of a man without generosity, it deserves to be thrown into fire only; 180. or if one has no compassion in his heart, of what use is his talking of mercy to all creatures? If a cloud showers no water, it rolls through the sky in vain; 181. so, as he (Changdev) has not gone as a suppliant to a *sadguru*, his life is in vain. Although living for these fourteen hundred years, what of any value has he accomplished in them?'

DNYANDEV'S REPLY

182. Having said these things, Dnyandev wrote this reply with his own hands: 'The soul pervades all things, and is the same in all creatures. 183. There is no such thing with it as elder or younger, or of being with family or alone. And the soul is not long or short. It is never far away and never near. 184. When the sky is densely filled with clouds, space is just as it was before. Whether the size of anyone's body increases or grows small, the soul remains the same. 185. Whatever is seen in the universe, that substance is in our bodies. *Maya* or ignorance is guileful. It does not permit of a clear sight. 186. Because of ignorance, we of ourselves fall into confusion. Thinking rightly, however, we should remember all former things. 187. Whatever is the seed of the whole universe, you too have.' So Dnyandev wrote in his letter in order that Changa might understand the truth. 188. Having written the letter he quickly despatched it. The moment Changa read it he experienced its teaching.

CHANGDEV VISITS DNYANDEV

189. He thought to himself, 'I must go to meet at once one who is such an ocean of knowledge.' Then riding upon

a tiger he showed his great power. 190. Changa moved along taking with him his company of fourteen hundred disciples. At that time Dnyandev was at Alandi sitting upon a wall. 191. People came and told Dnyandev, 'A very distinguished guest has come. He is seated upon a tiger, and uses a serpent for his whip.' 192. Hearing this information Dnyandev understood its meaning. He remarked, 'I think this coming guest must be Changa.' 193. He then gave a command to the wall on which he was sitting. He remarked to it, 'Changdev, sitting upon a tiger, is coming quickly to meet me. 194. When *sadhus* or saints come to my house, you also must go forward to welcome them.' Listening to Dnyandev's words, a very extraordinary thing took place. 195. The wall on which he was sitting began to move with great speed. As men and women saw this miracle they were full of astonishment.

CHANGDEV'S PRIDE HUMBLLED

196. Just as Dnyandev had come out of the village, he (Changdev) recognized him from afar. He thought to Himself, 'Blessed is the power of the *sadguru* who can make an inanimate thing walk. 197. Of what value is it, that I should sit upon a living tiger, and go to meet him?' So he dismounted from the back of the tiger and prostrated himself on the ground before Dnyandev. 198. All the pride that was in his heart at once passed away; just as when medicines see nectar they flee away ashamed; 199. or as when seeing the heroism of Bharat, Maruti was amazed in his heart; or as when Rukmini took the form of Sitā, Satyabhama became ashamed; 200. or as when in Jambavati's marriage Shri Krishna made a bear sing, and hearing it sing, the pride of Narad immediately left him; 201. or as when Brahmadev stole the cows and cowherds and took them to his Heaven, Shri Krishna created others

just like them and Brahmadev felt ashamed in his heart; 202. so as Dnyandev caused the wall to move, Changdev was full of astonishment. He thought to himself: 'He is indeed Pandurang in bodily form.' He held a reverent heart towards him. 203. Then underneath a banyan tree, both of them met together. Hearing what Dnyandev had to say, Changdev was full of joy. 204. Even to this day the people call it the banyan tree of rest. Those who go there and sit even for a moment, they reach the highest state of final deliverance. 205. Dnyandev then took Changdev by the hand and brought him to his home. Muktabai happened at that time to be performing a bath. 206. When Changdev understood this he went away. Then Muktabai exclaimed, 'Confound you, you without a guru.' 207. But having heard her say this, Changa came rushing and grasped her feet. He said to her, 'Tell me, O mother, how you were able to know this?' 208. Adimaya [Muktabai: *See chap. 8. 186*] having heard him say this replied, 'From your turning back I understood it. 209. If the favour of the *guru* was upon you, such unworthy thought would not have come into your mind. There are niches in a wall. Just so, you would have taken my body and come forward. 210. Cows wander about among men and in the jungle do they put on clothes? I am just like one of these animals. Why did this not come in your experience?' 211. Hearing Muktabai's words, Changdev quickly grasped her feet and then went as a suppliant to Dnyandev. He took the *mantra* and became his disciple. 212. When the hand of him who was the supreme Brahm touched his head, Changdev became entirely indifferent to earthly things. He put aside every longing of his body. 213. All pride went away from his mind and it became spotless. Changdev embraced the feet of Dnyandev and praised him greatly. 214. Blessed is that place Alandi! It is heaven itself, situated in the world of mortals. Or it

may be called another Pandhari created in this world. 215. For the devotion of Dnyandev there came the Husband of Rukmini. This fact Mabipati always contemplates in his heart.

216. *Swasti* (Peace)! This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. Hearing it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen to it, you god-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the twenty-second deeply delightful chapter.



CHAPTER XXIII

CHOKHAMELA, NAMDEV, JIVA AND TATVA

PLEASURE FROM THE STORIES OF THE SAINTS

Obeisance to Shri Ganes'h. Obeisance to the Slayer of Kans.

1. Today good fortune comes rushing to the homes of those who listen. The wise *bhaktas* who listen to the stories of saints have realized this in their experience. 2. Just as when one eats sugar, one finds it sweeter and sweeter ; so the joy of listening to the stories of the saints fixes right thoughts in the heart. 3. Just as when one drinks freely of nectar all diseases flee away, so the moment the sweetness of the stories of the *bhaktas* is felt by anyone, ignorance no longer troubles such a man. 4. There are a great number of these stories and they are the nectar fruit of the trees of peace. God-loving *bhaktas* know how to drink it as they cast aside all wrong thoughts. 5. Those who say, ' Let us listen to the stories of the saints,' do not become subservient to *kal* (death).

CHOKHAMELA AND HIS REVILERS

6. In the previous interesting chapter there was related the instruction given to Changdev. It now happened that all the saints on the *Ekr'dashi* (the eleventh of the fortnight) proceeded to Pandharpur. 7. Chokhamela was a *Vaishnava bhakta* and chief among the out-castes. The dark-complexioned One showed His favour to him, seeing the loving emotion of his heart. 8. Pandhari was his birth-place and there he lived with his family. He had continually the Husband of Rukmini in his heart and was constantly repeating His name. 9. He was accustomed to bathe by the bank of the Bhima and to circumambulate the whole of the city of Pandhari. Then he would come

to the main door of the temple and prostrate himself there. 10. He had no authority to go within the temple, and meet the god; so bringing the Life of the world into his thoughts he worshipped Him from afar.

11. On one occasion he was seated at the great door of the temple and some evil-minded people saw him there. Listen to what they said to him: 12. 'If Vithoba had any love for you he would have taken you into the temple. If you do not actually see the Husband of Rukmini, why do you worship Him in vain? 13. When the dainty food has been cooked in the house of a Brahman, dogs are not allowed to sit by the ceremonially clean plates. So out-castes have no authority to worship Pandurang. 14. How can beggars enter into the pleasure-house of kings? Therefore Chokhamela should not go into the temple. 15. Just as an unfortunate man wanders about in the jungle, but does not see there a wish-tree, so Krishna is not seen by the eyes of Chokhamela. 16. Just as any man whose life is coming to an end, in vain licks his chops with the desire of seeing a well of nectar, so although the Lord of the world is in His temple, He will never meet with you.' 17. Hearing them say this, he prostrated himself before them, and said, 'My mother and father, why should I want in vain so great an honour? 18. Although the sun is one hundred thousand towns [or miles] high, yet from that distance it cares for the lotus. So Krishna being in His temple, He cares for me from there. 19. The moon is two hundred thousand towns [miles] away, yet its intense love is upon the *chakor* bird; so He who is the Helper of the helpless, and the Personification of compassion, He remembers me. 20. Just as the mother-tortoise cares for her little ones from afar, so Krishna looks upon His servants with a look of compassion. 21. Though seeing one who is continually near Him, yet if that one does not love Him nothing

whatever is accomplished by a still closer contact.' 22. Saying this he hastened back to his home, but he was remembering the Husband of Rukmini in his heart, and he continued worshipping Him with love.

KRISHNA TAKES CHOKHA INTO THE INNER SHRINE

23. Now when it was night the Lord of Pandhari said to Chokhamela, 'I intend tonight to take you into My temple.' 24. The Husband of Rukmini having said this He took him by the hand and lovingly led him into the innermost shrine. 25. The eagle-bannered One then spoke to Chokhamela of His heart's secrets. He said to him, 'I cannot endure a single moment without you. 26. I might be eating with Nama, or drinking nectar with delight, but even at such times the memory of you is in my heart.' 27. Krishna having said this, Chokhamela fell at His feet and said, 'You call yourself the Helper of the helpless and fulfil the desires of your servants.' 28. The priest who was sleeping near the door heard this conversation and full of amazement he arose. 29. He called others to come and bear witness to this, and told them all that had happened, 'Some one very much like Chokha is speaking to Krishna. 30. The Dweller in *Vaikunth* (Heaven) is evidently the supreme *Brahm* and yet an out-caste has touched Him. The locks on the doors are just the same. I cannot understand how he could have entered. 31. If a man of low-caste can touch the god on whom are garments and ornaments, then our duties as Brahmans will cease. What shall we do? 32. Just as at full moon its brilliancy is at its highest, then it is that the monster Rahu comes and in love embraces it; 33. or as when the sun in the dark half of the month rolls around in the heavens, the monster *Ketu* suddenly appears and dims its light; 34. so is the Husband of Rukmini glorious in His six qualities. That He Who is described in the *Vedas* and *Shastras* should in love

be embraced by an out-caste going into the shrine at night
 35. how can this be remedied? How can this hindrance be
 put away?' One remarked, 'Let us call him and ask him.'
 36. Then removing the lock of the door they questioned
 Chokha in reference to the whole affair. They said, 'How
 did you come into the temple? Tell us exactly how it
 happened.' 37. Hearing them say this, Chokhamela
 replied, 'I am your child. The dark-complexioned One
 took me by the hand and forcibly brought me into the
 temple. 38. Forgive me of wrongdoing and let your eye
 of favour rest upon me.' Saying this he at once started
 to depart.

PRIESTS ORDER CHOKHA OUT OF PANDHARI

39. The priests said to him, 'You should remain no
 longer in Pandhari. For if you are here the Lord of
 Pandhari brings you into His temple. 40. So you must
 dwell on the other side of the Chandrabhaga river a short
 distance away. If you do not do so we shall certainly
 punish you. 41. You have done a very great wrong. You
 have defiled the supreme God and because of all this sin
 you will have to experience hell.' 42. To these words of
 the Brahmans, Chokha replied, 'That I have defiled the
 Husband of Rukmini is a false charge. 43. If an out-
 caste and a Brahman both bathe in the Ganges, one should
 not blame the Ganges. 44. The earth is regarded as pure
 and on it all castes walk. How is it defiled? And in
 what *Shashtra* is it written that it can be defiled? 45. If
 the wind strikes an evil man, his evil qualities will not
 attach themselves to the wind. It is a wrong thought to
 blame the wind. 46. If space fills the washerman's vessel
 and an earthen jar, still it is quite detached from the two.
 It is not entangled in them. 47. So to God supreme, the
 Lord of Rukmini, all castes are alike. How can you
 think that He is defiled? 48. The Lord of *Vaikunth*

(heaven) fills all the universe but is unattached to it. You therefore have wrong thoughts in your mind and have become worthy of blame.'

INSULTED BRAHMANS EXCOMMUNICATE CHOKHAMELA

49. While he was thus speaking and giving illustrations, the Brahmans became full of rage and said, 'He is from a low and dirty caste and yet he teaches us knowledge. '50. A locust proud of itself, tries to teach an eagle how to fly. A shepherd comes and gives knowledge to Brihaspati (the *guru* of the gods). 51. Or it is like a thin coating of tin showing its bright qualities to the gold. It is like common serpents showing their jewels before the great serpent Shesha; 52. or as when other elephants show off their gait before the elephant Airavat (Indra's elephant); or as if before Shiva His servants should perform the *tandav* (dance) to show Him how it should be done; 53. or seeing the sun, the firefly shows off its brightness; or as if the ocean, on seeing the *muni* Agasti, should begin to roar. 54. We are Brahmans of high caste. We are expert in every *Shashtra*, but you are of low caste, and though an out-caste you are attempting to give us knowledge. 55. So now go to the other side of the Bhima river and live there. If on the morrow you are seen here we shall give you a good punishment.' 56. Hearing these words of the Brahmans, Chokhamela replied. He said, ' Mother, father, I am your servant and truly call myself your sweeper. 57. You have taken care of me for many days but now you drive me off.' Having said this his eyes became full of tears. 58. He then exclaimed, ' O merciful Mother Vitthal, from today I am separated from Thy feet. My fate is very powerful. What am I to do?' 59. Saying this he hastened as fast as he could to his home, at the same time remembering the form of Hari in his heart and in love repeating His name. 60. He told his wife all that had

happened and said, 'The Lord of Pandhari has neglected us. Let us now go to the other side of the river and there we shall live.'

CHOKHA IN EXILE

61. Then looking for a spot straight in front of the temple, on the other side of the river, he built there a pillar for lights. There it was that Chokhamela lived contemplating the cloud-complexioned Krishna in his heart. 62. Even today, when anyone goes on a pilgrimage to Pandharpur he sees there the pillar for lights. At that place then the chief of *bhaktas* lived indifferent to all earthly things. 63. Bringing the Husband of Rukmini to mind he continued to worship Him with love, saying 'God has abandoned me and cast off His love; so it seems.' 64. On a certain day this God-loving *bhakta* Chokhamela was eating his meal when suddenly the cloud-dark One (Krishna) appeared and sat down beside him. 65. Underneath the *nimb* tree there was a dense shade. Sitting in this shade *Vanamali* (Krishna) ate along with Chokha. 66. Just then a priest suddenly came on some business or other and for a moment stood looking at the astonishing sight. 67. At that moment his wife was serving curds to the god and the food rose up and fell down. Chokha said to his wife, 'A great fault has been committed by you. 68. The Husband of Rukmini is dining with us and you have soiled His yellow robe.' Hearing this conversation the Brahman was full of amazement. 69. Chokha turned to a crow in the tree eating the fruit of the *nimb* tree and throwing it down and said, *Vanamali* (Krishna) is sitting here and it is falling on His body. 70. Go at once from here and sit on another branch.' While the *bhakta* of Vishnu was saying these things the priest became very angry. 71. Said he, 'Seeing me here, he is talking at random. For how can the Lord of the world have dined with one who is an out-caste?'

CHOKHA RESTORED TO THE TEMPLE

72. The Brahman hastened to come near Chokha and slapping him over the mouth he immediately went away. 73. Then after bathing by the bank of the Bhima, the Brahman went into the temple of the god and there saw a most wonderful sight which astonished him. 74. There was Krishna standing on the brick but His yellow robe was all soiled with curds. Seeing this the Brahman looked straight at the god's face. 75. He saw that the cheek of the god was swollen. His eyes being closed by the swelling, the Brahman was full of astonishment as he came to understand the meaning of it. 76. Said he, 'I have persecuted Chokha and God has made me realize this. Just as when an evil man troubles an infant and this troubles the mother, 77. so when anyone persecutes a *bhakta* the Life of the world becomes sorrowful. Then punishing the ones who are not *bhaktas* He increases the glory of His servants.' 78. Thinking thus in his mind the priest came back to the bank of the Bhima and there said to Chokha, 'Come with me into the temple. 79. I did not know the glory of *bhakti*. I have persecuted you needlessly, just as if one should hammer a diamond on an anvil and only weary himself. 80. I punished you but the Lord of Pandhari felt the force of it in His temple. When I saw that His cheek was swollen, I became full of fear. 81. Therefore O dear *bhakta* of His, come at once with me. Perform some means or other and reconcile the Lord of Pandhari to me. 82. Then taking Chokha by the hand the priest came into the temple and there seeing the Lord of Pandhari, his (Chokha's) mind became filled with peace. 83. When he embraced the god, his heart felt great comfort. The face of Hari that was swollen now lost its swelling. 84. The Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) had become weary through the strain of separation from His *bhakta* but just

as soon as He met him again, His joy was unlimited. 85. From that time Chokhamela began to go into the temple always, just as when the Ganges accepts a streamlet, it becomes holy. 86. All the saints, *sadhus* and *Vaishnavas* became full of joy and said, 'The Life of the world takes pride in His saints.'

HOW GOD HELPS HIS BHAKTAS

87. Now listen to another story. The Lord of *Vaikunth* said to Rukmini, 'I am very weary today. Massage Me for a moment.' 88. Krishna having said this, Rukmini laughingly replied, 'What exploit have You performed and come back so soon to our house?' 89. Have you been weeding the garden of Savata, and therefore are wearied, O Lover of *bhaktas*? Or were you weaving a gold bordered scarf at the loom of Kabir, showing your love and compassion? 90. Or was it because you were thatching Nama's house? Or because You have hastened back here from Lahul? Or were You wearied by drawing the wall on which Dnyandev was sitting? 91. Did you draw the dead cattle for Chokha and thereby your hands and feet are wearied? Or is it that you rushed to the help of Joga and have turned back? 92. Hearing these words of Rukmini, the Life of the world replied, 'It has taken Me from early morning to finish the grinding for Jani. 93. A great many *sadhus* and saints had come to the house of Nama as his guests. And so I hastened to perform whatever was necessary. 94. Because of the abundance of work to be done, Jani had to make great haste, so I took her water jar and carried a great amount of water for her. 95. As the maiden Jani swept, I filled a basket with the refuse and threw it outside. I washed the clothes with My four hands and pounded rice for her.' 96. As *Vanamali* (Krishna) thus replied, Rukmini was astonished. She placed her head at His lotus-feet and looked with love into His face. 97. On a soft bed of flowers

Shri Hari lay, while Rukmini sat by His side and massaged His feet with her hands.

KRISHNA LEADS IN NAMA'S CHORUS

98. Now listen to another story. On a certain day Namdev stood by the eagle platform performing a *kirtan*. 99 As there was no one to stand behind him and help him, Shri Krishna at once appeared on the scene. He took the cymbals in His own hands and stood there sounding them. 100. Seeing this the *Vaishnava bhaktas* were astonished in their hearts. Indra and other gods came and showered flowers upon Him. 101. Krishna also took another form and danced on the *kirtan* stage. Accidentally His yellow robe slipped off and fell to the ground. 102. The Life of the world was overcome by His love, and He was lost to all consciousness of body, while all the *Vaishnavas* were overcome with astonishment yet no one spoke a word. 103. Dnyandev then took the god with his arm and stood Him up. He laughed at the god and listen to what he said, O clever and devoted ones: 104. 'You call Yourself all wise and clever and yet You dropped Your yellow robe in the *kirtan*. Now wake up and put on Your garment, O Lord God.'

BHAKTI MAKES KRISHNA FORGET HIMSELF

105. Hearing these words the Life of the world said, I know nothing of honour or of dishonour. 106. Dropping shame and the idea of " I " and " Thou, " dropping all consciousness of body, dropping all pride of being God, I dance on this *kirtan* stage. 107. Whatever form the love of Nama takes, I Krishna become that form, just as in a mirror the face appears as it is. 108. The sky appears according to the three seasons and in the same way, I, the Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) become like My *bhaktas*. ' 109. While this conversation was going on, suddenly the *bhakta* Kabir appeared. The noble *Vaishnavas* all stood up and embraced him. 110. The saint Kabir in Benares and the *bhakta* Nama in

Pandharpur were both intensely loved by God as He saw the purity of their trust. 111. Blessed is Pandhari the city of *Vaikunth* (heaven) where Nama performs his enthusiastic *kirtans*, where all the men and women are *jivanmuktas* (free while living) in their love. 112. Here in Pandhari banners with eagle emblem wave, kettle drums are sounded, *vinas* are played with their sweet music, and men clap their hands and wag their heads with joy. 113. Then lighting the five wicked platter of lights as if they were the five vital airs, Rukmini came and performed the service of praise. Namdev waved the lights over Shri Krishna and lovingly prostrated himself before Him. 114. Krishna then said to His *bhaktas*, 'There was great enthusiasm in today's *kirtan*.'

GOD'S PRESENCE CREATES ENTHUSIASM

Dnyandev hearing him say this, replied to Him, 115. 'It was because You Pandurang took the cymbals and standing behind Nama helped him in the chorus. Therefore the whole *kirtan* became one of enthusiasm, seeing the love of the heart of the *bhaktas*. 116. If the sun should hold a torch in its hand, what lack would there be of light ? If the moon should use a fan, what opportunity would there be for heat ? 117. If the ocean were to pour water into a jar there would be no lack of water. Where there is a heavy fall of rain no place remains dry. 118. Where Lakshmi performs cooking, all tastes are to be found there. If the wish-cow should perform the churning, there would be enough cream for the three worlds. 119. So when you, the Husband of Rukmini stood behind Nama and led the chorus, then why wonder at the enthusiasm that was aroused ?' 120. Hearing these words of Dnyandev, the Life of the world began to laugh and said, ' You now understand the secrets of My heart.' 121. Then the Husband of Rukmini, after distributing sweetmeats to all who were present, re-entered His temple. Here the *bhakta* Kabir came privately and in his

love prostrated himself before the god. 122. Taking leave of the Husband of Rukmini, Kabir started for Rameshwar and as he walked along the road he was bringing Shri Ram into his mind.

JIVA AND TATVA DEFY ORTHODOX CUSTOM

123. As he (Kabir) walked along the road he saw a certain city and here the noble *Vaishnava* lodged. By night he performed an enthusiastic *kirtan* with his heart full of joy. 124. Many people came to listen to him and all who listened became absorbed in his performance. Among them were Brahmans, one by name Jiva and another by the name of Tatva who were supremely wise. 125. They exclaimed, 'Blessed is Kabir the *Vaishnava* servant. He is especially wise in all philosophic knowledge. So with reverence let us go to him and let us both receive his instructions.' 126. Jiva and Tatva both came to Kabir and with reverence prostrated themselves before him. They said to him, 'Save us.' 127. Seeing that their purpose was pure he had compassion on them and placed his hand on their heads, and immediately made them his disciples. 128. The *bhakta* Kabir after seeing Rameshwar and the other Southern bathing-places returned to Benares with a feeling of repentance. 129. Now all the Brahmans began to revile the two brothers, Jiva and Tatva, and would not go to see them. 130. They were thrown out of caste. The Brahmans said to one another, 'Those who form connubial relations with them will be considered as belonging to the Muhammadan caste. 131. Kabir himself may be wise, though evidently he is a Muhammadan. But the moment these became his disciples they began to revile the religious deeds of Brahmans and have become possessed of spiritual knowledge.' 132. Thus spoke all the evil-minded, but these (Jiva and Tatva) would not listen to their words.

They said, 'If one prays at the feet of the *sadguru*, what is the need of different castes?' 133. In the meantime the son of one of them and the daughter of the other became of marriageable age. They therefore became deeply concerned and could not think what to do. 134. Seeing that they could not find a husband for their daughter, nor find a bride for their son, they went to Benares and told Kabir. 135. The father of Kamal (Kabir) through his power of inner sight understood what had happened without their telling him. Thought he to himself, 'They have received my instructions and have been turned out of caste.'

KABIR'S ADVICE TO DISREGARD CASTE

136. The *bhakta* Kabir then said to Jiva and Tatva, 'Listen to my advice. You two become the relatives of one another. 137. Lose all fear of such a deed and make one another your relatives.' To those words of their *sadguru* the Brahmans replied, 'We will do so.' 138. Kabir said to them, 'If you will trust my word all your trouble will at once vanish and you will reach final deliverance.' 139. Worshipping the feet of their *sadguru*, the Brahmans at once started back. Returning to their country they decided to perform the marriage. 140. Appointing the day for the marriage they at once began to collect the needed materials. When this news was heard in the city all were astonished. 141. The parents repeated the *mantras* with their own lips, invested the son with the sacred thread, and the marriage of the two was decided upon for the next day. 142. Then all the Brahmans came together and asked them for information. They said, 'Whom have you appointed as your relatives that you have determined on the marriage for tomorrow?' 143. To these words of the Brahmans they replied, 'We have a bride and a bridegroom at the house. 144. Just as in the case of animals and birds

such is the custom of our caste.' Hearing them say this, all the Brahmans were astonished. 145. They said, 'If we turn them out of caste, then there will be a mixture of castes. The blame will fall on us, and God will surely be angry with us. 146. Trusting to the feet of their *sadguru* they have cast aside all orthodox customs. Thus by testing their minds we have discovered the full facts.' 147. All the Brahmans then called Jiva and Tatva, and said to them, 'We will provide relatives for you gladly.' 148. So choosing a bridegroom for the daughter and a bride for the son, all the Brahmans helped and the marriages were performed. 149. Both of them went to Benares and told the whole story to Kabir. Hearing their words the *sadguru* was well satisfied in his mind.

150. In the next chapter, there is a story with deep meaning containing the very purifying history of Padmanabh. Mahipati says, 'Let the fortunate and wise *bhak'tas* give attention to it.'

151. *Swasti* (Peace)! This book is the *Bhaktavijaya*. In hearing it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen; you God-loving, pious *bhak'tas*. This is the twenty-third very delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER XXIV

PADMANABH AND KABIR

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Gopal Krishna.

THE IMAGE OF KRISHNA DESCRIBED

1. Victory to the Husband of Rukmini, Dweller upon the banks of the Bhima, Protector of His *bhaktas*, O Narayan, Saviour of the ignorant, Purifier of the sinful, Life of the world, and the Primal Being. 2. Thou, O Lord of the earth, hast remained standing with both hands upon Thy hips, Thy eyes directed to the tip of Thy nose. And thus dost Thou wait for Thy *bhaktas*. 3. In order to be the Advocate of Ambarish, Thou didst assume the form of ten *avatars*. Thou didst perform limitless deeds, according to Thine own pleasure. 4. But now, O Krishna, Thou, art standing with Thy hands placed on Thy hips revealing the glory of Thy *bhaktas*. Thou hast turned the minds of the ignorant to Thy contemplation. 5. Thou dost not look to caste or family. Thou didst dine with Nama. Thou didst drag the dead cattle for Chokha. Thou didst weave a scarf for Kabir. 6. It is Thou who didst cause their most wonderful lives to be recorded. So now, hearers, give attention and listen with love.

KABIR'S BHAKTI

7. In the preceding chapter there was related the story of two Brahmans, Jiva and Tatva, how they went to Benares, and there told their affair to Kabir. 8. Kabir was a *bhakta* with intense love for God. He was always unconcerned, and indifferent about worldly things. He put away all the troubles of his mind and devoted himself constantly to the worship of Ram. 9. He had no snare of desire in his heart. Cow-dung and gold were alike to him, as were also diamonds, jewels and pebbles, they all

seemed alike to Kabir. 10. Brahmadev and an ant, Mount Meru and a fly, all seemed to him alike. A speaker like Brihaspāti (the *guru* of the gods) and a dumb idiot were alike to Kabir. 11. Day and night when awake, when dreaming, and in dreamless sleep, he was worshipping Shri Ram. There never was a moment without his worshipping Ram.

THE HOPELESS LEPER

12. There was a certain merchant, supremely pious and extremely generous. He had five sons grown up and every kind of wealth in his home. 13. His money and grain were without limit. His wife was beautiful and of noble family. He was honoured by all his relatives, friends and family connections. 14. Although this was so, and everything was favourable, yet he was attacked by leprosy. His whole body became filled with worms. This was the result of deeds in some former births. 15. A person who has in his house wealth, health of body, sons, and an excellent wife, and has compassion on all creatures alike, is seldom found. 16. One learned in the *Shastras*, expert as a speaker, and yet without pride and of a high caste, and who does not find fault with others, is seldom found. 17. He who is not obsequious, to whom a prince and a pauper are alike, and to whom all other women are as his mother, is seldom found. 18. One who always performs acts of benevolence, whose mind puts aside all concern, and is always worshipping Shri Hari, such an one is seldom found. 19. He who has property and wealth and yet to whom all is as clay, and who in time of famine gives food, such an one is seldom found. 20. But according to the life one has lived in his former births he reaps fruit in conformity to it; and so the body of the merchant had become very diseased. 21. His whole body was filled with worms and the stench from him spread everywhere. No one

could even look at him, every one became disgusted. 22. Those for whom he had cared and whom he had fed during his life, now when he was about to die, put him off at a distance. He had not remembered in his heart Shri Hari, the Lord of heaven.

FAILURE OF REMEDIES

23. Physicians called it a very serious disease. They gave him all kinds of medicines, but Pandurang did not show him favour and his disease only grew worse. 24. Astrologers told of adverse planets and how they were all disturbed, therefore to recover his health they told him to propitiate these by repeating their *mantras*. 25. The sorcerers said, 'The goddess must have become angry,' so if you will go and beg in her name, you will certainly be restored to health.' 26. He heard all these various remedies and yet became worse and worse. If one has not the feet of Shri Hari in his mind, in his case even nectar becomes poison. 27. A Brahman came to his house and told him to repeat the name of Malhari. Another said, 'Divide all your wealth today among the Brahmans.' 28. Another said, 'Read the *Sapiashati* and the goddess will then make you well.' His sons did for him according to the various remedies suggested. 29. One said, 'You must worship the sun by ablutions of water. You must repeat the *Gayatri mantra* regularly.' 30. Another said, 'You must propitiate Shiva by a shower-bath of *maharudra*,' Another said, 'You must circumambulate Hareshwar.' 31. Another said, 'You must make the elephant-faced god (Ganpati) favourable to you. You must observe the *Sankashti chaturthi* (the trouble-removing festival of the fourth day) and offer to Him sweetmeats.' 32. Another said, 'You must quickly try the remedy of a *mantra*-understanding person.' Still another said, 'You must worship Kal Bhairav that he may advocate your cause.'

THE LEPER THINKS OF SUICIDE

33. Others said, 'Call Brahmans and give them the gifts of elephants.' Another said, 'You must have yourself weighed and according to your weight give money to the Brahmans.' 34. He listened to every one, and at once used the remedy each one suggested. He spent all his money in order to regain his health. 35. But day by day the merchant became worse and the stench spread far and wide and no one came near. 36. His whole body became full of worms. He was in great misery. Finally he thought to himself, 'I must offer my body to the Bhagirathi.' 37. The merchant called his sons, his wife, his relatives and his neighbours and said to them, 'Take my body and throw it into the river Bhagirathi.' 38. You have suggested many remedies, but my *karma* (fate) is opposed. Now I will perform a penance by drowning in the Bhagirathi'. 39. Hearing him say this they mourned because of their love for him. They then lifted up the merchant and took him to the banks of the Ganges. 40. An innumerable crowd of people assemble to see the marvellous act, saying, 'The merchant is about to give up his life because his disease is so terrible.' 41. On the banks of the Bhagirathi there was an unimaginably dense crowd; men and women viewed the scene and greatly wondered. 42. One remarked, 'He never thought to commit suicide'. Another said, 'How is it that his sons and wife have become indifferent to him?' 43. One replied to the other, 'Our end might become like that. One should now therefore give attention to the worship of Shri Hari.' 44. Hearing what the people said, the merchant replied to them, 'Now push me at once into the Bhagirathi river. 45. I cannot endure this intolerable disease.' All agreed to his request. They brought four water jars and fastened them to his hands and feet.

PADMANABH'S ARRIVAL AT THE CRISIS

46. Just then the Brahman Padmanabh came there in order to bathe. With his lips he was repeating the names of God, 'Rama, Krishna, Govind.' 47. He was a disciple of Kabir and with real love for God he was repeating His names. The *bhakta* of Vishnu came there with a garland of *tulsi* beads around his neck. 48. Here by the banks of the Bhagirathi a crowd of men and women more dense than would seem possible was viewing the sight and because of their love all were full of sympathy. 49. Padmanabh asked them, 'What is the unusual thing which you are looking at?' They then told him all about the affair. 50. Hearing what the people said he at once came near the merchant and said to him, 'You should not commit suicide. 51. You have passed through eight million four hundred thousand rebirths. And now at last you have a human body. If with it you commit suicide you will never get free from your rebirths. 52. As men are born in this world of action, it is only by the worship of Hari that births and deaths can be certainly ended.' 53. The merchant replied to Padmanabh, '*Karma* (fate) is very powerful and utterly impossible to withstand. I have made use of very many remedies in order to regain my health. 54. But all my body is full of worms. The stench from my body extends everywhere. All my relatives are in trouble about me. All means that have been devised have failed.'

RAMA'S NAME HEALS THE LEPER

55. Padmanabh then said to him, 'One remedy remains to be tried. If you repeat the name 'Rama, Rama,' three times, your disease will entirely depart from you 56. If anyone should listen to the *Vedas* and *Shastras* or the *Puranas* or pronounce *mantras* or perform austerities, and yet if the name of Rama does not come into his speech, everything will be in vain. 57. One might worship the various

deities, perform sacrifices and give the offerings, and yet if the name of Hari does not come into one's speech, everything done will be in vain. 58. One may make himself thoroughly wearied in going to sacred bathing-places, one may have performed all the religious ceremonies, but if the name of Rama does not come into his speech, then all these acts are in vain. 59. One might sit on iron spikes, might give away cows, land, jewels, and food, but if Rama is not remembered in the heart, all goes for naught. 60. At the beginning of an act the name of Keshav and Narayan are repeated, and at the end the name of Vishnu is repeated, and all one's acts are brought to full completion. 61. Now repeat the name 'Rama, Rama' and all your pain will at once depart.' So said the disciple of Kabir to the merchant. 62. To the great crowd that had gathered, Padmanabh said, 'If you will repeat the name of Rama three times, all the diseases of this earthly life will at once depart.' 63. Hearing these words of the *bhaktas* of Vishnu, every one began to repeat the name of Rama. As they repeated His name three times an extraordinary thing took place. 64. As the sound of repeating arose, the merchant's body became divine. That is due to the great glory of the *bhaktas*. Even the chief of the gods do not understand it.

RAMA'S NAME HEALS THE WHOLE CROWD

65. People who assembled there to see the great sight, as they repeated the name of Rama, all their troubles at once disappeared. 66. Of all the people there with diseases not a single person remained with a disease. Every kind of trouble at once disappeared. 67. Some had chills and fever, some were suffering from tuberculosis, but as they repeated with their lips the name 'Rama, Rama' their bodies became free from disease. 68. Some were suffering from ear-aches, some had a swollen jaw, but as they repeated with their lips 'Rama, Rama' they were freed from this

condition. 69. Some were suffering from guinea-worm and some were footsore, but as they remembered the Husband of Janaki their disease disappeared. 70. Some had pain in their abdomen and some had weak knees, but as they repeated the name of 'Rama' their bodies became healed. 71. Some had the skin disease, the itch, and others had white leprosy, but as they repeated the name of 'Rama, Rama' their diseases fled away. 72. Some were not able to see and some were deaf, but as they repeated the name 'Rama, Rama' (the Holder of the bow) they at once became free from their troubles. 73. Those who were afflicted with coughs, colds, leprosy, and diseases of the spine, they also in remembering the Lord of Ayodhya were at once without their troubles. 74. Some who were troubled by being possessed of devils and had to resort to many kinds of *mantras* and remedies, they also in remembering Rama became at once healed. 75. Well, enough of such long descriptions. The one hundred and eight severe diseases fled away at the sight of Padmanabh. 76. The merchant now healed, quickly arose and made a prostrate *namaskar* to Padmanabh. He exclaimed, 'Blessed are you, O noble *Vaishnava*. You have been born to be the saviour of the world.' 77. All the people of Benares now worshipped the feet of Padmanabh, and in their joy they worshipped Rama continually. 78. In their working moments, in their dreams and in their dreamless sleep, they continually worshipped Shri Rama.

PADMANABH GAVE THE WHOLE OF BENARES

THE FORM OF SHRI RAMA

79. All the people came and told Kabir what had happened. They said, 'The Brahman Padmanabh is your disciple. 80. He caused the people to repeat the name of Rama three times with their lips and thereby made every one well. Such a marvellous thing has never been seen

before in this world of mortals.' 81. Kabir then said to Padmanabh, 'Why did you have the people repeat the name of Rama three times? All the healing could have been done at once by repeating the two syllables *Ra-ma*. 82. Evidently you have not understood the supreme power of Rama's name. In explaining this in detail, I will tell you a story of what happened long ago. 83. Valha the fisherman was a very great sinner. By the preaching of Narad and by repeating the names of Rama, he became the *rishi* Valmiki. 84. It was before Rama had become an *avatar* that the *Ramayan* foretold His story. Through his own inner knowledge Valmiki wrote down the ten billion verses. 85. The Lord of *Kailas*, the Husband of Parvati took the *Ramayan* and made a distribution. The inhabitants of heaven, the world of mortals and the region below came to receive their portion. 86. Shiva then distributed among the three worlds the one hundred thousand million verses.' All this with his own lips Kabir told to Padmanabh. 87. 'In this way he gave thirty-three crores of verses (330,000,000) to the world of mortals. He gave just as much to the inhabitants of *Vaikunth* (heaven) and the same number to the inhabitants of the lower regions. 88. There still remained one hundred million which the Lord of *Kailas* distributed. Thirty-three hundred thousand He gave to the inhabitants of Heaven, and the same to the inhabitants of this mortal world and to the regions below. 89. The one hundred thousand verses that remained the Lord of *Kailas* (Shiva) distributed, just as a father distributes to his sons by his own hand. 90. *Chandramauli* (Shiva, with moon-crest on his head) distributed thirty three thousand to the region below, the same amount to those in this world and the same number to the inhabitants of heaven. 91. One thousand verses still remained. He gave to each of the inhabitants of the three worlds three hundred each. There remained now one hundred which

he also divided. 92. Thirty-three verses He gave to this world, the same to heaven, and to the regions below. In making this division there remained now but one verse. 93. Its thirty-two syllables He divided equally among the three worlds. The two syllables that remained, the Husband of Uma (Shiva) kept to Himself. 94. When Hari assumed the *avatar* of the tortoise form it was then that the ocean was churned, and the great and virulent poison came out of the sea. 95. That poison started to burn up the three worlds, and the gods were greatly troubled. But at that time the Husband of Uma repeated the two syllables "Rama." 96. The moment He repeated "Rama," Sadashiv (Shiva) became cool. And now Padmanabh, why did you make the people repeat the name of Rama three times? 97. At this question of the *bhakta* Kabir, Padmanabh prostrated himself before him.

TEN THOUSAND VAISHNAVAS AS KABIR'S GUESTS

You pious *bhaktas*, now listen to an extraordinarily delightful story. 98. Although Kabir had a wife and sons yet his mind was indifferent to earthly things; just as the sun is reflected in the jar, but does not become wet with its water; 99. or just as the lotus-leaf, although in the water, is not made wet by it; or as when the pleasure-seeking man looks at his face in a mirror, he does not become entangled in it; 100. in the same way the *bhakta* Kabir did not become entangled in the affairs of his life. Free from care and indifferent to all earthly things, and intensely pious, he worshipped God. 101. Now it happened on a certain day that ten thousand *Vaishnavas*, with three upright marks upon their foreheads and adorned with *tulas* garlands, arrived at Benares. 102. With caps on their heads, and with marks of white clay made upon their bodies they worshipped God in their love. Such were the *Vaishnava bairagis* (ascetics) who arrived suddenly in the

city. 103. Shouting out the names 'Sita Rama' they asked the people of the town, 'What *Vaishnava* is there in this town who is the devoted worshipper of Shri Rama? 104. What extremely pious man is there, who will give food to the *Vaishnavas* and satisfy their appetites? Tell us at once the name of such a giver in this place.'

105. Hearing what these *bairagis* had to say the inhabitants of the town replied, 'At this sacred place, the wealthy Kabir of 'a Muhammadan caste lives. 106. He is able to satisfy the need of ten thousand *Vaishnavas*.' Thus the crooked-minded people told the *vairagis* in order to enjoy the fun. 107. One who has money and grain in his home, and yet will not give to the hungry to eat and points out the house of another, he truly is a poor man. 108. He who builds a house of many storeys and yet will not give a lodging-place to the traveller, that house should not be called a house but a cemetery.' 109. He who has the gift of poesy and yet does not describe the goodness of God, and one who foolishly mutters heretical opinions, his power of speech should be called devilish. 110. Anyone who has great strength of body and yet will not perform works of benevolence, he is not a man but a village hog. 111. And so while the *vairagis* were asking for food, the very miserly people of the town got rid of their nuisance by pointing to them the house of Kabir. 112. Then all the *sadhus* who dwelt at the various sacred bathing-places went to the house of Kabir. At the door of the house they shouted out 'Sita Rama.' 113. As the father of Kamal heard their shouts he came outside. With reverence he made them a prostrate *namaskar* and embraced them in love. 114. The *sadhus* replied to him, 'We are ten thousand noble *Vaishnavas*. We have been wandering all over the earth to sacred bathing-places. Now we have come here. 115. The people of this sacred bathing-place have

told us the fact that the father of Kamal is a giver of food.' Listening to what was in the minds of the *sadhus*, Kabir replied, 'I certainly will do as you wish.' 116. In the *bazaar* there was a grocer by name of Tulsidas and Kabir went to his shop. He said to him, 'Some saints have come to my house as guests. Select the materials needed for cooking and give them to me.'

[Verses 117 to 165 are not translated, because these are similar to chapter XI 16-98. The two stories may be summarised as follows :—

In Ch. XI 16-98 The wife brings the provisions. To obtain these she promises the grocer to come back and pass the night in his company. She keeps her promise with the consent of her husband. The grocer on seeing her at his place repents, and takes her back to her husband.

In Ch. XXIV 116-166 Kabir brings provisions from a grocer on condition that his (Kabir's) wife goes to fulfil the evil desire of the grocer that night. The promise is kept. Kabir's wife goes to the grocer in company with her husband. God protects her in the form of the city *Kotwal* (police officer), and takes her back to her husband. Kabir goes to the real *Ko'wal* and takes him to task for his interference. The *Kotwal* ignores the charge. Then Kabir becomes aware that it was God who went to the grocer as the *Kotwal*. The grocer had the sight 'of God as the *Kotwal* and is saved.]

166. *Swasti* (Peace) This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the twenty-fourth deeply delightful chapter.

CHAPTER XXV

ROHIDAS THE SHOEMAKER

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Radha Krishna.

A HUMBLE TRADE NOT BLAMEWORTHY

1. Listeners, give close attention. Rohidas was a *Vaishnava* of the highest type. He was accustomed to worship Hari with feelings of love. 2. He had put aside every wrong desire. With reverence he sang the praise of Hari. He regularly bathed and then performed the worship of Vishnu. 3. Although he was entangled in domestic affairs he planned acts of benevolence. To any *Vaishnava* who came to his house he gave a pair of shoes. 4. The occupation of a worker in leather appears to be a low one but there is not the least fault to be found with it. If such a one performs acts of benevolence the Pervader of the universe will certainly be attained. 5. Carpenters and potters who perform their accustomed tasks do so without blame, and in doing acts of benevolence the Pervader of the universe is attained by them. 6. Masons and workers in stone as they perform their tasks are without blame, and in performing acts of benevolence the Pervader of the universe is attained by them. 7. Weavers and fishermen in performing their usual tasks are without blame and in performing acts of benevolence the Pervader of the universe will be attained through their devotion. 8. Washermen and dyers in performing their tasks are without blame and in worshipping through acts of benevolence, while in the body, the purpose of life can be attained. 9. If there is no hypocrisy in the performers of austerities, and the acts of the Brahmans, then on account of their benevolent acts the Husband of Rukmini will certainly show His favour

to them. 10. Well, enough of all these general statements. If I should describe the characteristics of the eighteen castes my story will increase too much in length. So let my hearers give attention.

DAILY LIFE OF ROHIDAS

11. Through acts of benevolence Rohidas served the servants of Vishnu. He used to repair the worn shoes of the pilgrims. 12. Hari is more fond of benevolent *bhaktas* than He is of His own life. At the home of the benevolent the Life of the world abides day and night. 13. Some preach to the people and demand their services but never oblige others by giving even a little water; 14. such a person though a learned man is a fool and ignorant. Rohidas understood this and worshipped the servants of Vishnu with reverence, realizing that earthly things are illusory. 15. He was accustomed to rise at dawn and to take breakfast before doing other things. He first performed his bath and then worshipped Vishnu. 16. My listeners may think this a wrong way of doing; but Rohidas thought that if he sat down to contemplate while hungry, his mind would not be undisturbed. 17. In this *Kali Yuga*, life is made up of food, so wise men say. When two watches of the day have passed the body becomes exhausted. 18. If one is hungry when sitting down to contemplate, the mind will at once wander. Rohidas understood this, and therefore he first ate; 19. just as when one is attacked by a thief, he should first abandon the money he has and run away; or in order that a person may not suffer injury from the possession of devils, the exerciser first makes an offering to them; 20. or when digging for a treasure, lest ghosts should persecute him a man first offers an offering as a preventive; or that the *Hawaldars* (village officials) may not swear at them, men give them bribes; 21. and so Rohidas in the same way was accustomed to make first an

offering of food to his life [i. e. to sustain himself]. Then he would hasten to his bath and worship God in private.

22. Now it happened on a certain day that this *bhakta* of Vishnu was sitting performing his worship of God. He had withdrawn to be alone with materials of worship, and he held his fickle mind in restraint. 23. He brought a bottle of leather and placed it there filled with water. His mat and his sacred bag and casket were also made of leather.

LEATHER (OR SKIN) ALL OVER CREATION

24. Rohidas was sitting down with all his vessels made of leather and just then a Brahman came to his house to explain to him the Calendar. 25. The Brahman sat down by the holy and beautiful *tulsi* altar. Rohidas at once arose and with reverence made him a *namaskar*. 26. The Brahman said to Rohidas, ' You are worshipping God while sitting upon a leather seat. What do you expect from that? 27. We Brahmans worship *Shaligram*, the idol of Vishnu. How is it you have placed Him in a leather bag? 28. How is it you have placed in a leather bag Him who dwells in *Vaikunth* (heaven), the Life of the world whom *Yogis* contemplate? How is it you have placed Him in a leather bag? 29. He Who dwells upon the sea of milk, the Recliner upon Shesha, and who cannot be described adequately by the *Shastras* though you might search there for Him, you have made a leather bag and placed Him within it. 30. *Shri Rang* (Vishnu) who cannot be attained by ceremonial acts, by bathing at sacred places, by austerities or by sacrifices, this Dweller in *Vaikunth* (heaven), Terminator of the earthly existence of His *bhaktas*, how is it you have enclosed Him in that leather bag? 31. Hearing what the Brahman said, Rohidas replied, ' What object have you ever seen which has not leather connected with it? 32. Musical instruments and

drums are used in the praise-service of Hari. One has never seen any of them without their being connected with leather. 33. The black cow has a leather skin, yet her milk is holy. And in the *Panchamrit* bath (in milk, curds, ghee, sugar and honey) it is used in the bathing of the god. 34. Animate things that are born, those hatched from eggs, and those produced from seed, all three are covered with skin, and *Atmaram* (God) is in them all alike. 35. Shudras, Vaishyas, Kshatriyas and Brahmins are covered with skin. They make drums with skin, and play them with hands covered with skin. 36. A pleasing sound comes from them that is heard by the ear which is of skin. The tongue is covered with skin and repeats the *Vedas*. 37. With hands covered with skin one eats food and drinks water. And from a leather shrine (the human body) *Atmaram* (God) speaks with His gentle voice.' 38. The Brahman now replied to Rohidas, 'You are talking philosophy, but while life is in the body the body is never defiled.' 39. To this Rohidas answered, 'If the Pervader of the universe, the Life of the world is in a leather bag, how can you regard Him as defiled by the leather?' 40. You considered the body of one who is conceiving or bearing a child as defiling.* 41. One just born and one dead you regard as defiling. What good object do you see in them? 42. The skin might be filthy and yet the good God *Atmaram* may be in it. Krishna who is without spot is alike in everything.' 43. The Brahman now replied, 'The emblem of Vishnu (*Shaligram*) is a holy pebble and so if a shoemaker worships Him, He is defiled thereby.' 44. Hearing the Brahman say this, Rohidas continued, 'Who should worship the *Shaligram* (the emblem of Vishnu)? Tell me, O *Swam*.' 45. The Brahman replied, 'You hundred times a fool. We alone should worship the Lord of

* This verse is merely paraphrased, not translated.

Vaikunth (heaven). Among the four races we Brahmans are the highest. 46. Shri Hari is chief among the gods. The Brahmans are the highest among the four races. They alone have authority to invest themselves with the sacred thread and they alone can worship Vishnu.'

THE BRAHMAN'S PRIDE HUMBLD

47. Hearing this remark, Rohidās replied, 'O *Suxami*, I will show you my sacred thread.' 48. Then with his sharp tool he ripped open his stomach, and showed the sacred thread within it. 49. The Brahman then exclaimed, 'You are indeed a *bhakta* of Vishnu, I was thoughtless and persecuted you. 50. Gold is cast into the furnace, and thereby its value is increased. In persecuting you I have but advanced your glory. 51. Or just as experts bore a hole in a coin in order to test it, thus in persecuting you I have only increased your glory. 52. If sandalwood is rubbed on the flat stone, its full fragrance is at once known, so in persecuting you I have but increased your glory. 53. When iron comes in contact with a touchstone it at once turns into gold, so in persecuting you I have only increased your glory. 54. Or as stone is shaped by a chisel and then the idol of God is firmly placed, so in persecuting you I have done what I did ignorantly. 55. You are a supreme *bhakta* of Vishnu. Worship the *Shaligram* at your pleasure.' Thus speaking, the good Brahman went back to his home.

56. In the next chapter, there will be a description of a very purifying story of the life of Pipaji. And Mahipati says, 'Let the good people listen with attentive minds, and with love.'

57. *Swasti* (Peace)! This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the twenty-fifth very delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER XXVI

KING PIPAJI OF GADEMANDAL

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to the Husband of Rukmini.

SUPERIORITY OF VAISHNAVA SAINTS

1. Listen now with attention, my hearers. This story is of special importance. As the story falls upon the ear all faults at once flee away. 2. In the country of Gademandal there was a very holy king. In his home, duty made its home. 3. When an assembly of *sadhus* came to his place he used to go out and meet them. He gave them lodgings in his place. He gave them to eat according to what they desired. 4. He was brave, exceedingly powerful, generous, wise, religious and a worshipper of Bhavani (the wife of Shiva). 5. Bhavani was favourable to him. He had a son, a wife and an abundance of wealth. With reverence the king was accustomed to worship Bhavani. 6. He used to rise early in the morning and perform his worship, using the sixteen materials. He offered Her garments, ornaments and flowers of perfume. 7. He brought incense and lights and made an offering of them. Seeing his reverence Bhavani accepted his offering. 8. With reverence he offered to Her fruit and *pansupari* and then circumambulating Her, made Her a *namaskar* after which the king returned to his own palace and sit down to his meals. 9. Now it happened on a certain occasion that a great assembly of *Vaishnava* saints, going to different bathing places, came to Gademandal to the king's city. 10. They were without desires and were indifferent to all worldly things. Undeiled by anything they lived in this world. Such were these *Vaishnava bairagis* (ascetics) who came unexpectedly to that place. 11. Men who in their former births have wandered

from place to place and have performed sacrifices, only to the house of such do the saints suddenly come. 12. If one has observed *Ekadashi* (the eleventh day of every fortnight) and served his parents, only to the house of such do *Vaishnavas* come suddenly. 13. If one has dug a well or a tank, and made a garden, then only because of his good deeds do the *Vaishnavas* come to his house. 14. Only to the house of one who has made gifts of a cow and food and offered them to Krishna, do the *Vaishnavas* suddenly come. 15. He who in an infinite number of rebirths may have performed in this world extraordinary austerities, to his house the assembly of saints will come because of his good fortune. 16. The infinite number of the king's rebirths had at this time come to their fruition, hence it was that the assembly of *Vaishnava bhaktas* came to the home of Pipaji. 17. Servants told the king that the *Vaishnavas* had come to his city. He honoured them and gave them the materials for their food. 18. After performing his bath he went to the temple of Bhavani as usual. He performed his worship there and presented Her with his offerings. 19 He was continually worshipping Bhavani, and Bhavani ate the offerings he made. Then after making Her his *namaskar* the king would sit down himself to eat.

VISHNU'S SUPERIORITY

20. *Bhadrakali* (Shiva's wife Parvati or Bhavani) then said to the king, 'An assembly of saints has come to your city. I cannot, however, eat your offerings until the saints have eaten. 21. The loved ones of the Lord of the universe, Who dwells in *Vaikunth* (heaven), Whose slaves are the infinite heavenly powers, they have come to your house, your good fortune has no limit.' 22. The king now joined his hands palm to palm and made a request of Her. 'What God is superior to you?' Hear-

ing his question, mother Bhavani replied, 23. ' He Whose limits are unknown even to Brahma, Indra and Shiva, He who dwells on the sea of milk, the Husband of Kamala (Vishnu), is superior to all. 24. It was He who gave light to the sun and the moon, and by His power they act. So He, the Husband of Rukmini, the Primal Being, is superior to all gods. 25. He who assumed the *avatar* of a fish and killed the monster Shankha by dashing him upon the stone, He, the Lord of the universe, the Life of the world, is superior to all other gods. 26. He assumed the *avatars* of a tortoise, a wild boar, a half man and half lion (Narhari), Vaman and Parashuram, and made the cows and Brahmans happy. This Slayer of Madhu is superior to all gods. 27. Indra and all other gods were imprisoned by Ravana. Rama assumed an *avatar* and by His power He delivered them all.' 28. The king replied to the Mother of the universe, ' Cause me to meet Him Who is the Chief among the gods.' Saying this he fell at her feet. 29. Hearing his request, the Primal Mother said to him, ' You must go as a suppliant to the saints. If you, O king, worship them, they will cause you to meet the chief of the *Raghus* (Rama). 30. If you asked of Me *ridhis* and *siddhis* (the accomplishments), a kingdom, or wealth, I could give them to you, but to cause you to see Shri Rama is not in My power. 31. It is the *Vaishnava* saints who are glorious, generous, wise, wholly indifferent to earthly things, and possess the glory of six qualities. 32. Such *Vaishnava* saints to whom the supreme and eternal God has become subject, even these have arrived at your city.'

ADVISED TO OBTAIN RAMANAND'S FAVOUR

33. Bhadrakali (Shiva's wife) having said this, the king arose and came to where the assembly of the saints was gathered. 34. The king came there and made them a *samaskar*. He supplied them with the needed materials

and gave them to eat. 35. With reverence he gave them *pansupari*, and put garlands of flowers around their necks. He then prostrated himself before the saints and made to them a request. 36. Standing before them the king joined his hands palm to palm and made his request. He said, 'I want you to cause me to meet Shri Rama.' 37. The saints replied to him, 'Go as a suppliant to Ramanand, receive his instruction and become his disciple. The purpose of your life will be a success. 38. If you worship an inferior deity, you can never acquire spiritual knowledge. So at least now, O king, give attention to His worship. 39. To worship an inferior deity is like that of serving a feeble king. An ignorant talker never gives happiness to his listeners. 40. A praise-service in honour of Hari but without love, an ignorant *guru*, a miserly disciple, and a sterile husband, never give happiness. 41. A speaker who is in bondage because of desires, a listener who is not a *bhakta*, one given to constant disputes, one who proclaims spiritual knowledge but is without experience of it, can never give happiness. 42. Becoming a *sannyasi* without proper knowledge, an idiotic son, a poor citizen, and an ugly looking wife, can never give happiness through association with them.'

GURU ALONE CAN MEET A BHAKTA WITH GOD

43. So the saints said to the king, 'Now give attention and go quickly as a suppliant to Ramanand.' 44. Hearing these words of the saints, the king realized his faults. Then calling his ministers he put the burden of the kingdom upon them. 45. He brought out from his treasure-house garments, adornments and ornaments. He then called the Brahmans, and had himself robbed by them. 46. In the name of Krishna he gave gifts of horses, elephants, chariots, and cows. Then he went as a suppliant to Ramanand and arrived at the Joy Forest (Benares). 47. The faithful wife

of the king also left behind those she loved and cared for, and distributed among the Brahman women her garments and ornaments. 48. Both of them came to Ramanand and placed their heads at his feet with reverence. 49. They offered to this *guru* their wealth, their minds and bodies. Supplicating themselves before Ramanand they became his disciples. 50. He gave them the *mantra*, 'Rama, Krishna, Narayan.' They then began to listen to the words that fell from the lips of their *sadguru*, to meditate upon them, and to study and experience them. 51. If a *guru* is wise and a disciple is repentant there will be found the light of spiritual knowledge. Studies without this are false and hypocritical. 52. It is like an excellent touchstone being applied to a piece of pottery. So what can a *sadguru* do with a disciple who is not a *bhakta* and who is filthy in his ways? 53. A saint is compassionate to all, to him a prince and a pauper are the same. But one gets the fruit according to his own devotion. 54. When the sun is fully arisen it gives light alike to every one. All doers of evil are punished and the wise receive honour. 55. The moon shines alike for the *chakor* bird and for the burglar. The burglar, seeing the moon, thinks it a nuisance, but the *chakor* bird thinks it to be nectar. 56. So *sadhus* and saints act continually with the idea of all things being alike but the fruit is obtained according to devotion.

57. Well, let this long statement suffice. Having visited and worshipped Ramanand *Swami* the king received the full spiritual knowledge through his look of mercy. 58. The king now listened to *kirtans* and performed them in honour of Hari. Night and day he was engaged with the worship of Hari and in repeating the *mantra* 'Rama, Krishna, Govind.'

PIPAJI GOES TO DWARKA WITH HIS QUEEN

59. Now it happened on a certain day that the king

took leave of his *Swami*. 'Give me now leave to go to Dwaravati.' 60. After worshipping the feet of his *guru* the two started for Dwarka. They bathed in the Gomati river. The king and queen went to see and worship Krishna in His temple. 61. Having come to the great door of the temple, there they made a prostrate *namaskar*. Then the two joining their hands palm to palm gave praise to Shri Hari. 62. 'Victory, Victory, to Mukund, Murari, the Primal Being, Shri Hari, have mercy upon us lowly ones. We have come as suppliants to Thy feet. 63. I was ignorant of the supreme God, the eternal one, and not knowing Thee I worshipped *Shakti* [another name for Shiva's wife Parvati, Bhavani, etc.]. 64. It was like rejecting nectar and drinking the water in which rice has been washed. It was like rejecting the touchstone and taking in its stead a common pebble. So because I did not know Thee, I worshipped *Shakti*. 65. It was as if I neglected the *ashvattha* tree and gave water to the *shundi* tree. So not knowing Thee I worshipped Bhavani. 66. So long as the sun has not risen I might consider the firefly as a special light. So, because I did not know Thee, O Krishna, I worshipped Bhavani. 67. So long as the *Vedanta* had not fallen upon my ears, I looked upon the treatise of the art of love with a special interest. So, not knowing Thee, the Holder of the disk (Krishna), I worshipped Bhavani. 68. Rejecting the wish-tree which was near me, I gave honour to the *baiñhul* tree. So, not knowing Thee, *Vanamali* (Krishna) I worshipped Bhavani. 69. But now the good deeds done in my infinite number of rebirths, most surely have come to their fruitage. Therefore it is that *sadhus* and saints have come unexpectedly to my home. 70. They told me of Thy glory above all comparison.' Having said this, he made a prostrate *namaskar*, and then again made another. 71. Hearing his pity-arousing plea, God gave him an embrace. Pipaji the king then had a direct vision of Krishna.

72. He was in His form of four arms, with qualities, and dressed in His yellow robe. The Life of the world had on His head a resplendent crown. Pipaji thus saw the eternal God. 73. They performed a praise service at the great door of the temple. In their enthusiasm, shouting loudly the names of God they danced. They remained in Dwarka for four months, performing their enthusiastic *kirtans* in honour of Krishna's name,

A TIGER SUBMITS TO PIPAJI

74. Then taking leave of the Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven), both of them, husband and wife, started to return. Further on as they were walking through a forest they saw a great tiger. 75. The tiger had a fearful appearance and he came forward with a roar. The wife of the king, seeing the tiger, became full of fear. 76. This supremely beautiful wife, a very mine of loveliness, turned and looked at her husband who was following her. She said to her husband, 'Did you notice a tiger over there?' 77. The king's wife trembled violently with fear. As the tiger came near to them, Pipaji the king said to her, 'Have no fear whatever. 78. It appears to you as a tiger but Shri Rama is in it. Not the least space can be seen anywhere that is without Him. 79. The sun's reflection is the same in all jars of water. Just as in all liquids there is water, so the Lord of Yadavas is the same everywhere. 80. Just as the reflection of the sky is the same in every jar and in every house, so the Lord of the world pervades everything alike. 81. The air is alike both to a locust and to the king of birds (the eagle). So, *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) is the same in all creatures. 82. There is no difference between cloth and thread, and gold in another form is called ornaments. So, not knowing the form of Him as *Vishwambhar* (who fills the universe), the ignorant call Him the universe itself.'

KRISHNA PERVADES THE UNIVERSE

83. 'The Life of the world fills the whole of the infinite universe and extends beyond it. This is not a tiger but the Husband of Rukmini. Know this for a certainty. 84. Krishna fills all waters and all rocks and extends beyond them. There is not the least space anywhere that is without Him.' 85. King Pipaji having said this to his wife she stood there amazed. The tiger came near and stood very close to them. 86. Pipaji said to the tiger, 'Worship Rama day and night.' The tiger then with reverence embraced the feet of Pipaji. 87. Having looked at the saint he at once received divine knowledge. Pipaji said to him, 'Cease all acts of killing.' 88. Pipaji then took off the garland of *tulsi* beads from his own neck and placed it on the neck of the tiger. He gave him the *mantra* of 'Rama, Krishna.' 89. He said, 'There is no *mantra* more important than that of, "Rama, Krishna, Narayan." The ignorant animal *gajendra* was saved by his worshipping Ram. 90. The fisherman Valmiki, who was a wayside robber when Narad gave him instructions and made him his disciple, began to repeat the name of Rama and became the *rishi* Valmiki. 91. Ajamil was a very sinful Brahman, wholly absorbed in his evil deeds, but by repeating the name of Narayan he was taken to *Vaikunth* (heaven). 92. Lust, anger, and pride, envy, hypocrisy, evil desires and arrogance, at once flee away by repeating the name of Rama.'

93. The tiger then joined his paws together and making a prostrate *namaskar* to Pipaji, he said to him, 'By your favour I have begun to worship Shri Rama. 94. Formerly my evil deeds were many, but now by the name of Shri Rama I am purified from them.' Then again he made a prostrate *namaskar* to Pipaji. 95. Having thus given to the tiger the chief of all *mantras*, Pipaji departed from there and went to the Joy Forest (Benares). 96. The

tiger was wholly repentant. He ceased from all acts of killing, discarded the eating of meat and ate only fallen leaves. 97. After wandering over the forest for seven days for the purpose of worshipping Shri Hari, he died. 98. Tigers, scorpions, lions, dogs, serpents, snakes, falcons, fierce elephants, all these have evil characteristics in their nature. None of them have good characteristics. 99. But through the power of association with a saint, the tiger received spiritual knowledge. Keeping in his mind the worship of Hari he offered his body to Krishna.

THE TIGER BECOMES NARSI MEHETA

100. He who is in this world may be entangled in the net of desire, but he who remembers Krishna at the time of death, he becomes delivered from rebirths. Have no doubt about this. 101. Putting his desires into the worship of Hari, the tiger left his body. But it was in order that he might take birth as a Nāgar Brahman in the city of Junagad [in Kathiawad, Gujerat]. 102. The tiger was reborn in the form of the noble *Vaishnava* Narsi Meheta.

Hearers must listen with reverence to this most pleasing history. 103. The lives of the saints may be regarded as the Ganges river or the Bhagirathi or Chandrabhaga rivers. One should bathe in them and then with reverence go as a suppliant to Pandurang. 104. Taking *tulsi* leaves and flowers as pure mind and pure devotion in his hand, Mahipati places his head at the feet of Pandurang.

105. *Swasti* (Peace)! This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it, the Lord of the world is pleased. Listen then, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the twenty-sixth deeply delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER XXVII

NARSI MEHETA

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to Shri Krishna.

GOD'S FAME INDESCRIBABLE

1. Victory to Thee, Merciful to the lowly, Husband of Rukmini. Thou pervadest the three worlds and extendest beyond them. The *Vedas* and *Shastras* attempt to describe Thee but are not able to describe Thy wonderful deeds. 2. In their attempt to describe Thee the eighteen *Puranas* become wearied. The six *Shastras* in attempting to discuss Thy character find that they do not understand Thee. 3. The serpent who supports the earth when attempting to describe Thy infinite qualities became wearied, and because Thy qualities have no limit his tongue became divided into fangs. 4. Becoming ashamed, therefore, he made of his body a place for Thee to recline upon, and with his thousand hoods made a shadow over Thee, O Lord God. 5. Saraswati made a resolution that she would not describe Thy power. She made the ocean of milk into ink and began to describe Thy qualities. 6. Taking pens that were made from eighteen *bhars* (a *bhar*=8,000 *tolas*) of reeds, and taking the earth itself as paper, she in her love tried to describe Thy qualities. 7. In her attempt to describe Thy qualities the ocean full of ink was exhausted. The earth as paper was insufficient. Seeing thus Thy wonderful nature, Saraswati fell at Thy feet. 8. In describing Thy wonderful qualities great writers have had to become silent. Thou art the Lord of an infinite number of universes. 9. Thus Thou art the infinite Pervader of every place. Thy power fills the universe and extends beyond it, O Lord of the universe, Lord of the earth. 10. I am fond of the lives of Thy *bhaktas*, O Husband of Rukmini, therefore en-

lighten my mind and cause me to compose this book properly. 11. And you, my hearers and saints, give me your attention.

BIRTH AND BOYHOOD OF NARSI

In the previous chapter the description given was heard by you all. 12. While coming from Dwarka, Pipaji gave instructions to a tiger. It then gave up its habit of killing and began to eat fallen leaves. 13. He was not in reality a tiger but was the Husband of Parvati. In becoming an *avatar*, however, it was the skin of a tiger that he beheld. 14. Because evil qualities entered into his thoughts he became a tiger. Just as in dreams one sees that which has been noticed in one's waking condition; 15. so when Shiva became an *avatar* it was his tiger-skin that was seen. Therefore it was that he was born an *avatar* from the tiger. 16. After seven days were passed he died. But then again in the city of Junagad [in Kathiawad, Gujerat] he was born to a Nāgar Brahman. 17. Day by day he grew in stature and he was invested with the sacred thread. When he was seven years of age his mother and father died. 18. His cousins (paternal uncle's sons) now cared for him. As the children of the village played, he also played amongst them. 19. They played at *itidandu*, *lingurchya* kissing games, hide-and-peek, *hamama*, *humari* and diving. 20. *Vaghodi*, *atyapatya*, *jhijya*, *bokut*, *agalgotya*, *pheravatya*, *bhoware*, *chakre* and caught each other in the square. 21. Thus he played many childish games. After some time had passed, a most extraordinary thing happened.

NARSI'S SISTER-IN-LAW REBUKES HIM

22. In playing these childish games, his whole life was now being spent, but he did not remember the cloud-dark Krishna. 23. Now on one occasion after playing various kinds of games, Narsi Meheta hastened to his home. 24. He

said to his sister-in-law, 'I am very thirsty. Please give me some water.' The other replied, 'What hard work have you been doing that you have come here wearied? 25. This very childish and disobedient boy has driven his parents to death. He plays day and night and eats like a glutton. 26. You do not study and you spend your life in vain. Your wife will hereafter cry, you useless and impudent boy.' 27. Such were the harsh words spoken to him by the wife of his eldest brother. This brought him to repentance and Narsi Meheta then started to go away. 28. He went a long way off towards a forest, and thought to himself, 'My fate is a very unhappy one. But it is very powerful and hard to resist. 29. To lose a mother in childhood, to lose a wife in youth, and to lose a son in adult age must be called the anger of God. 30. I am now receiving the fruit of the deeds I committed in former births.'

NARSI WORSHIPS SHIVA

As he was thus speaking to himself, he saw a forest further on. 31. Coming about four miles from his village, he saw the beginning of a very great forest. After Narsi Meheta had noticed it, he began to look about him on all sides. 32. Suddenly just before him he saw a temple to Shiva. Narsi Meheta entered it and there saw the Lord of *Kailas* (heaven). 33. It was a deserted forest and there was no passing by of men. Taking courage he worshipped the feet of Shiva. 34. It was Upamanyu, the son of a Brahman, who asked his mother for a cup of milk, and because she did not give it to him he sulkily sat down. 35. It was the King Uttanpad whose son was the child Dhruva; he also sulked and prayed to the Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven).

NARSI PLEADS WITH GOD

36. In the same way Narsi Meheta felt dis-

satisfied and cried, ' O Filler of the universe, Lord of the universe, care for me, Thy helpless one.' 37. He lay himself on the body of the Holder of the *Pinak* bow, the Husband of Parvati. He discarded all food including fruit, nor did he drink water. 38. After seven days had passed, the Lord of *Kailas* (heaven) with a perplexed mind thought to himself, ' In his devotion Narsi has offered to Me all his body. 39. People offer to me perfume, sacred rice, flowers, sandalwood paste, all kinds of brilliant jewels, strings of pearls, and golden ornaments. 40. By spending an immense sum of money, some build temples of Shiva and with great delight offer to me the water of the Bhagirathi. 41. Some come and offer to me a *lac* of leaves of the *bel* tree, but no one has ever offered to me his whole body. 42. Caring for their body they make use of many other means. All their knowledge has, however, gone in vain. The Life of the world does not meet them.'

SHIVA PLEASED WITH NARSI'S DEVOTION

43. Now seeing the unwavering devotion of Narsi Meheta, (Sadashiv) was pleased. He now revealed Himself in His form as Mahadev with qualities. 44. He who has ten arms and five faces, and has a serpent around His neck as an ornament, He who has yellow-coloured matted hair on his head and ashes rubbed all over His body, 45. manifesting Himself in this form as the Holder of the *Pinak* bow (Shiva), then raised up Narsi Meheta and gave him, His assurance not to fear. 46. He said to him, ' My child, My *bhakta*, I am now pleased with you. Tell Me everything which your heart desires.'

THE BOON ASKED FOR BY NARSI

47. Narsi Meheta having heard these words embraced the feet of the Lord of *Kailas* (heaven) and said, ' Thou hast become pleased with me, and hast given me the

word of assurance. 48. I am but an ignorant child. I do not know the best things to ask for. Give me, O blue-throated One, that which thou art more fond of than Thou art of Thine own life. 49. Just as the infant ignorant of its mother does not know the proper time, but is at all times pleasing to its mother and in her love she adorns him with ornaments, 50. so, O Lord of the universe, art Thou pleased with me to-day and art ready to give me a boon with Thine own lips. So give me, a helpless one, whatever pleases Thee.' 51. The Holder of the *Pinak* bow (Shiva) with a smiling face was perplexed in mind, and said to Himself, 'Never have I seen such a clever *bhakta*.' 52. In reply Shiva next said to Narsi Mahata, 'I am more fond of Shri Krishna Who is the object of the worship of all other gods. 53. Without telling Ganga or Parvati, I repeat the name of the Lord Shri Krishna, but I am more fond of the stories of the saints. 54. You say to Me, "Show me the secrets of your heart." But if a beggar asked the king for his kingdom, it would be of no use whatever. 55. If a beggar asks a miser for his wealth, he is not made happy by him. If one asks for the gift of his wife from a libertine, the one asking for this receives no honour.' 56. The other replied, 'Holder of the *Pinak* bow (Shiva), Thou givest me illustrations and dost try to make me understand, but still I have a doubt in my mind. 57. Seeing that king Bali was a very generous man, Shri Vaman (Vishnu in His fifth *avatar*) went to him in the form of a beggar. He at once gave Him his kingdom and also made an offering of Himself to him. 58. King Hrishchandra was a very good king. Vishvamitra in the form of a beggar having asked for a gift, he (Hrishchandra) gave to him his kingdom, his wife, and his son, and thus he preserved his goodness. 59. So Thou, O generous Lord of *Kailas* (heaven), if Thou art pleased with me show me Him who is dear to Thee.

SHIVA'S FONDNESS FOR KRISHNA'S RAS DANCE

60. Having heard these words, the Destroyer of Tripur (Shiva) replied, ' I am especially fond of the Krishna-*lila* (the popular stories of the deeds of Shri Krishna). 61. The Krishna-*lila* (sports or deeds of Krishna) among men are extraordinary. He amused Himself in Gokul by *Ras* dancing [a special dance] which I am more fond of than I am of My very life. 62. On the bank of the Jumna river, the Lord of the world amuses Himself with the *Gopis* [cowherdesses]. I love that dancing greatly and go often to see it. 63. He arranges dancing, and dances with them. I myself sit beating the time on the drum. ' 64. Saying that He would show it to him, He placed his assuring hand upon him and the blue-throated god (Shiva) gave to him the dress of the *Gopis*. 65. The Holder of the *Finak* bow (Shiva) then took Narsi with Him into the dancing and worshipped the Holder of the disk (Krishna). 66. Hearing such a statement, the wise will have a doubt in their minds. You will say that it was in the *Dwapar Yuga* that Krishna amused Himself in the dance. 67. Now in this *Kali Yuga* in relating the story of the *bhakta* Narsi Mebeta, why was the story of Krishna introduced ? You may hold this doubt but you should not say the verses composed about it are useless. 68. Even today the Holder of the disk (Krishna) is amusing Himself at Mathura, Gokul and Vrindavan. Those who are pious *bhaktas* are able to see the *Hari-lila* (or deeds of Hari) with their eyes.

STORIES OF BHAKTAS NOT IMAGINARY

69. This story is found in the *Bhavishyottar Purana* written by Shri Vyas himself. He has also described the stories of the chief of *bhaktas* of the *Kali Yuga*. 70. Just as the water of the ocean does not pass over the shore and cover the land, so the lips of the chief of poets will not describe a thing unless it exists. 71. Unless one's life-

time has come to an end, death will not punish any being; so the chief of the poets will not describe deeds unless they have really happened. 72. The sun does not set until the full measure of the day and the proper hour of the setting of the day has arrived; so unless deeds have been done, poets do not write regarding them. 73. Just as a dutiful wife will not act unless she receives the opinion of her husband, so the voice of the chief poet will never relate a useless or an untrue story. 74. When a neighbour is asked to come and help in the cooking she never brings her own materials to help in the cooking. 75. If the cook is a clever one, she will make very tasty food; and the poet with a few appropriate illustrations will give his description. 76. But the poet will never describe the original verses by inventing the story himself; so I beseech the *pundits* not to hold wrong thoughts in their minds in regard to this. 77. The Husband of Rukmini, who dwells on the bank of the Bhima and is pure intelligence, is the giver of inspiration to the mind. He is the One that causes this book to be written; otherwise I, Mahipati, am too ignorant to write.

SHIVA TAKES NARSI TO KRISHNA'S DANCE

78. Now listen, you pious people, and give your attention to the story as formerly told. The Husband of Parvati (Shiva) has taken Narsi to the *Hari-lila* (the dance of Hari). 79. On the banks of the *Kalindi* (Jumna) there were intensely high trees, that kissed the very sky; they were such as the *davana*, the *ketaki*, and the *parijat* trees, and doves cooed in their branches while watching the *Hari-lila* (the deeds of Hari). 80. Mango trees, the *jambhul*, the *avali*, the *nimboni*, the *raikayli*, the *bakuli*, the *Rama-Sita-phali* and the *padli*, moved to and fro with their fragrance. 81. The *bilva* tree, the *banyan*, the *gondhani*, the *ashwattha*, the *rudraksha*, the *saramani*, the *champak*, the pomegranate, with their many flowers waved on the dancing stage of

Krishna. 82. The *pim̄yari*, the *sherga*, the *makarukha*, the *pasavani*, and the *selataka*, the *phanas* and *noha* waved their branches in the sky while beholding the Lord of the Yādavas. 83. There was a row of trees around them, and inside it was a flower-garden. In it there were the *mcgra*, the *jai*, and the *servantika* that beheld the Lord Krishna. 84. The *salasrajadi*, the yellow *servanti*, the *bhuyachor̄ha*, the *jasundi*, the *servanti*, the *kapurveli* and the rose beautified the place and watched the acts of Krishna. 85. The *sarante*, *shyam*, *hansarashi*, the *lamoḡra*, the *suhasi*, the rose, the red *gulchani*, and the *tulsi* were planted in the *Kunjavan* (garden). 86. The spring coming there had adorned *Kunjavan*. In such a place the Son of Yashoda (Krishna) joyfully danced. 87. The very look of Krishna has the greatest power. The *sarante* (thorn bushes) become wish-trees. Even nectar is not able to equal the water of the streamlet in the garden. 88. There *Shr̄rang* (Krishna, the Holder of the *Sharang* bow) amused himself. Pebbles of no value became precious stones and ordinary stones became touchstones for ever. 89. Pigeons, parrots, swans, *chash*, *chatak*, all beautiful birds, doves, sparrows, *salonki* and the *vamana*, wagged their heads and performed a *kirtan* in honour of Krishna.

KRISHNA IN THE KUNJAVAN

90. Well, this long description is quite sufficient. In this exceedingly beautiful garden by the bank of the *Kalindi* (Jumna) Shri Krishna amused Himself. 91. Narsi Mehta and the Husband of Uma (Shiva) going there, quickly with reverence bowed to Krishna and lovingly gave him an embrace. 92. Shri Krishna was the visible image of the supreme *Brahm*. The *Gopis* (cowherdesses) were *avatars* of the *Vedas*, and when Krishna played on the pipe all the *Gopis* out of love assembled together. 93. The *Gopis* stood together in a circle, and in the midst of them was the

cloud-dark Krishna, the Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven). The *Gopis* seeing this attractive One rushed and embraced His feet. 94. The feet of Shri Krishna were exceedingly tender. There were marks of *Vajrankush* and the *to'lar* ornament on His feet. Even Brahmadev, His own son, was not able to have a sight of those feet. 95. As to holiness, the Ganges flows from His feet. Therefore, the Husband of Uma (*Shiva*) held it gladly in His head. 96. Ornaments such as the *Vanki* and the *Nepura* shodded out on His feet, ' Blessed are we in the three worlds. The Husband of Kamala (Krishna) being pleased with us has fastened us upon His feet. ' 97. The moon looking at Krishna's nails became extremely ashamed at heart. The *todur* loudly proclaimed, ' At the feet of Hari, sins are destroyed. ' 98. The calves of His legs and His thighs were beautifully shaped. A yellow robe enveloped His thighs. A million brilliant lightning flashes shone from His body. 99. Shri Krishna's hands reached down to His knees. Both His arms were like clubs. Although Brahmadev was born from His navel, he did not know his limit. 100. His abdomen was of vast expanse. His body was of a dark complexion. On His breast were the beautiful three folds. The colour of His hair was without comparison. The *Shri Vatsa* jewel, how can I describe it ? 101. In His face all joy seemed to be gathered. The happiness arising from the enjoyment of the nectar of His lower lip was understood by Lakshmi alone. 102. Krishna's eyes were like the petals of the lotus. His straight nose appeared glorious, as though the spring had come and settled there. 103. In His ears were wonderfully lustrous earrings. His eyebrows were well formed. His brows were wide. His curly hair was very attractive. It was surrounded by peacock feathers. 104. When the sun looked upon the crown of Krishna it became ashamed of itself. The sun on seeing the *Kaustubh* jewel around the neck of Krishna

was at heart frozen through shame. 105. Just as in the clear sky the clusters of stars shine, so the great diamonds surrounding the *Kaus'ubh* jewel looked brilliant with the ornaments of Krishna. 106. Around His neck was a necklace of pearls. The *Vaijayanti* garland waved back and forth down to His feet. His *bhaktas* had placed garlands of many flowers around His neck. 107. His whole body had been rubbed with sandalwood perfume. On His forehead was the beautiful mark of *kis'uri* (musk). The Lord of the Yadavas lovingly wore the *tulsi* garland.

KRISHNA'S RAS DANCE

108. So appeared in visible form the supreme *Brahm* itself. As he sounded His flute the eyes of the *Gopis* (cowherd-esses) became fixed upon Him (Krishna), gazing on His form. 109. Krishna sounded the flute very sweetly. The *Gopis* danced all around Him. They sang many songs to Govind (Krishna), the Attractor of the heart. 110. Stringed instruments, the flute, the pipe and cymbals were the attractive instruments that were played, and songs were sung in accompaniment. 111. The Husband of Parvati played on the drum and the *Gopis* danced to it. The Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) manifested His inner feeling by the beating of time. 112. The *Gopis* said to Krishna, ' You pervade everything. With our heart's desire fixed upon You, O Krishna, we have hastened here. 113. We are many *Gopis*, but You, O Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna), seem as one person. Seeing Your form, cupid became excited. 114. We look at your face, O Krishna, and we feel as though our lips wish to be kissed by Your mouth, and placing heart to heart give you an embrace.' 115. As the *Gopis* said this, Hari took many forms. According to each one's fancy the Enemy of Mura (Krishna) becomes. 116. Krishna took as many forms as there were *Gopis*. They took the Life of the world by the

hand and danced. 117. Taking the dark-complexioned One by the hand, the *Gopis* hung upon His neck. As their eyes fell upon His *sagin* form, they (the women) hastily gave Him kisses. 118. A Krishna's form and a cowherdess took each other's hand, dancing in pairs; such was the arrangement in the *Ras* dance in which they enjoyed Krishna. 119. Krishna's body was extremely tender. His chest was broad. His waist was slim. Seeing the hair on His chest, the *Gopis* became love-sick. 120. Taking Krishna's hand the *Gopis* placed it upon their hearts. Again and again they kissed His face. From His mouth they took into their own mouths the *tambul* (*pansupari*) chewed by Him. 121. Just as each one desires, the dark-complexioned One supplies. Krishna becomes rest to every one. The blue-throated God (Shiva) repeated His name. 122. Arranging the platform for dancing, He and the *Gopis* sang and danced.

KRISHNA INQUIRES ABOUT NARSI

At that moment Krishna recognized Narsi Meheta. 123. Just as among the eighteen *bhars* (a *bhar*=8,000 tolas) of herbs, the *tulsi* plant becomes specially recognizable, so with His eyes He recognized Narsi Meheta. 124. Just as when the sky is filled with clusters of stars, one recognizes among them the polar star (*Dhruva*), so Krishna recognized Narsi Meheta. 125. Or as among the nine planets one prominently discovers the sun, so seeing Narsi Meheta, Krishna was surprised. 126. Just as among the assembly of the great adepts and seekers of spiritual knowledge the son of Anasuya is distinguished, so the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) recognized at sight Narsi Meheta. 127. He who was the ornament of *Vraja* said to Shiva, 'Who is this new *Gopi* whom you have brought here today? O blue-throated One, You have betrayed our friendship, 128. for it is only because of the close love between You and

Me that I invite You to the dance. ' As *Vanamali* (Krishna) said this, the moon-headed One (Shiva) laughed. 129. The Husband of Parvati (Shiva) by the movement of his eyes made a sign to Narsi Mehta. He then came forward at once and worshipped the feet of Krishna. 130. Shiva said, ' O Lord Krishna, I will tell you in detail the ancient story regarding your servant Narsi Mehta. 131. In a former birth he was a great tier of evil disposition While he was in the forest Pipaji told him to repeat Your name. 132. And as he repeated Your name all his sins departed. Thus in the city of Junagad he was born as a Nāgar Brahman. 133. In his childhood his father and mother died. He then offered his whole body to me, O Lord Krishna. 134. For seven days he refused food and water. Being pleased, I became favourable to him. 135. He then said to me, " I do not know the best thing to ask of You. Whatever You are fond of give it to me, O blue-throated One (Shiva)." 136. O Life of the world, I am fond of You. Therefore I have come here bringing him. So now place Your hand upon his head, O Husband of Kamala (Krishna), and give him Your blessing.'

KRISHNA COMMANDS NARSI TO DESCRIBE HIS SPORTS

137. As he heard this, the Husband of Kamala (Krishna) took Narsi Mehta by the hand and this Image of compassion gave him His assurance and embraced him with love. 138. The Holder of the disk (Krishna) then said to him, ' You have seen the *Ras* dance with your eyes. Compose poetry on the subject and so cause every one to hear it. 139. My character and *lila* (voluntary acts) you will always see.' Such was the blessing of the cloud-dark One (Krishna). 140. Krishna now said to Shiva, ' Depart, taking him with you.' Hearing this the Husband of Uma (Shiva) made His *namaskar*. 141. Giving him his assurance He brought him and by the

action of His wish He seated him in His temple and then He retired to *Kailas*. 142. Staying in Shiva's temple, Narsi Meheta performed *kirtans*. Night and day he lovingly repeated the names of God. 143. He sang of the *lila* and nectar deeds of Krishna in his love and danced. He threw aside all shame and sang of the character of Shri Hari. 144. Just as Shri Krishna had performed in this dancing game, so Narsi Meheta wrote of it in his books. Even to-day the people in that part of the country sing it. The language in which it is written is Gujarati.

NARSI MARRIES A BRAHMAN'S DAUGHTER

145. In the preceding description we found that Narsi Meheta had left his home and had gone sulking into a forest. His relations had seen him do this. 146. Now in the forest there were cows feeding. Along with them were cowherds. They were always delighted to hear the *kirtan* of Narsi Meheta. 147. Returning to his home he told his brothers of the event that had occurred. They replied, that Narsi Meheta was describing the qualities of Hari in the temple of Shiva. 148. Hearing of this affair they were well pleased and persuading Narsi Meheta brought him to their home. 149. Some of the pious men in the town, experts in the *Vedanta* and scriptures, said, 'Narayan is delighted with him; you can see this by the changed signs. 150. The little streamlet that joins with the Ganges receives the qualities of holiness. So, as the Life of the world has shown him mercy, the mark of goodness has come to him.' 151. There was a Brahman in the town who was a *Voishnava* of supreme piety. He gave to Narsi Meheta his daughter and had the marriage performed. 152. Just as when the touchstone touches iron it immediately turns into gold, so when Narayan shows His compassion what lack can be there to anyone? 153. He never asked anything of anyone. A prince and a pauper were alike to him. He

regarded the poor and the rich as of equal rank. 154. After becoming a householder he became an adult. He had two issues, a daughter and a son.

155. Now hearers, give attention to a very interesting story to be hereafter related. The marriage of Narsi Meheta's son will be performed by Himself. 156. All these stories of the saints are indeed priceless. They are like a garden of fragrant flowers. Here Shri Krishna who dwells in Dwarka is like the friendly spring to them. 157. The verses in Marathi may be regarded as flowers. Mahipati as gardener strings them into garlands and takes them into the assembly of the *Vaishnavas*.

158. *Swasti* (Peace)! This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen then, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*—This is the twenty-seventh deeply delightful chapter; it is an offering to *Sri Krishna*.

CHAPTER XXVIII

MARRIAGE OF NARSI MEHETA'S SON

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to the Husband of Rukmini.

PURANIC STORIES OF GOD'S DEEDS

1. O Giver of the promise to Pundalik, Pandurang, Father of Madana, Delight of Rukmini, Thou, O Krishna, didst dance with the *Gopis* (cowherdesses) on the dancing floor. 2. Those *bhaktas* who have a longing for Thee in their hearts are always desireless. Thou art the resting-place of all beings, O God, O Rama. 3. Thou art the Mover of the heart, the Sun of all intelligence, extending beyond qualities and at the same time Quality-less. Thou dost give a gift of final deliverance even to Thy enemies. Thou art the Sun of all joy. 4. Thou art God supreme and eternal. Ambarish came as a suppliant to Thee. With affection and delight he performed the regular ceremonies belonging to the *Ekadashi* (the eleventh day of the fortnight). 5. The *rishi* Durvas, a performer of innumerable austerities, came in order to persecute Ambarish. That cruel-hearted *rishi* having cursed him, he pleaded with Thee, O Ocean of compassion. 6. Hearing the pity arousing cries of Ambarish, Thy heart overflowed with love. At once Thou didst come to his help, O Life of the world, O Delight of the heart, O Shri Krishna. 7. Thou didst send Thy disk after the *rishi* Durvas who had become dispirited, but Thou, O Lord of the world, didst look with the eye of mercy upon Ambarish. 8. Thou didst give assurance to Thy *bhaktas*, Thou didst suffer births ten times from the womb.

VISHNU'S AVATARS

Thou didst assume the *avatar* of the fish, the tortoise, the wild boar, and supported the earth on the tusks. 9. When

Hiranyakashipu began to trouble Thy *bhakta* Pralhad, Thou didst hurry to his aid. Thou didst roar from the midst of the pillar and quickly made Thy appearance. 10. In Thine anger Thou didst destroy the *Dai'ya*, and didst protect Thy servant Pralhad. When the Kshatriyas prevailed over the earth, Thou didst become Parashuram. 11. Thou wast then born as an *avatar* from the womb of Jamadagni and Renuka. And Thou alone, O Sūri Hari, didst destroy the Kshatriyas. 12. So, having overcome the Kshatriyas, Thou didst give the kingdom to the Brahmans. Such wast Thou, O Ocean of mercy, O Saviour of the universe, O Rama Krishna. 13. When Shiva gave His blessing to Ravan, that monster became exceedingly intoxicated with power. He conquered all the gods and put them into prison. 14. That ten-faced one (Ravana) used the nine planets as his stairway and carried on his kingdom. The wind used to come and sweep his yard and the rain watered it. 15. The sun became his barber and shaved him. The elephant-faced One (Ganesh) kept his cows without feeling any shame at doing so. 16. The goddess *Adimya* (Primal Mother) constantly shampooed the feet of Ravana. The goddess Satavi washed the clothes of his wife who was lying-in and felt no shame in her heart for doing so. 17. All the gods worked for him. He imprisoned even the Lord Indra and so all the gods in their trouble appealed to Thee. 18. Thou didst listen to their pity-arousing cries. Thou didst feel compassion for them. Thou didst become an *avatar* in the form of Rama and Thou didst destroy Ravana. 19. Thou didst deliver all the gods and didst establish the duties of life. And when Kans and Chanur grew powerful, Thou didst become the *avatar* of Krishna. 20. Thou didst destroy all doers of evil. In various ways Thou didst protect Thy *bhaktas*. Thou, Enemy of Mura, Shri Hari, didst clothe Draupadi with garments.'

21. 'And now in this *Kali Yuga*, Thy chief *bhaktas* have with reverence followed Thee, and Thou hast made their cause Thine own, and hast given them final deliverance. 22. Because of the *bhakti* of Ramdas, Thou, O Lord of the world, didst go to Dakur. He sold Thee in the market for a *val* in gold. 23. At the house of Thy loving *bhakta* Jayadev, Thou didst raise to life a corpse. Thou didst place upon him Thy hand of assurance and didst increase his glory in the world. 24. Thou didst show to Narsi Mehta, Thy loving *bhakta*, Thy dance with the *Gopis* (cowherdesses).' And now, all hearers, listen to the story that is interesting beyond all comparison.

KRISHNA'S POPULARITY EXPLAINED

25. I have already stated that Shiva showed to Narsi Mehta the dancing of Krishna with the *Gopis*. That exceedingly beautiful *lila* (sports or act) of Shri Krishna's therefore continually came to his sight. 26. And just as it appeared to him in its beautiful form, he composed verses to describe it. And Shri Krishna, the Destroyer of His *bhaktas'* desires for worldly existence, gave him His blessing. 27. In many forms of poetic composition he described the qualities of Hari. Taking the cymbals and *vina* in his hand, he danced in the midst of the *kirtan*. 28. He did not count on anyone's favour. He was always repeating the names of God. To his view a king and his lowly citizens were alike. 29. The wish-tree and the *babul* tree, a *panit* and a herdsman, a *sadhu* and a wicked reviler appeared alike to him. 30. Having adopted the principle of asking no one for anything; he accepted whatever garments or food were given to him. Being satisfied with that he carried on his duties of providing for his family.

A MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER MARRIED TO NARSI'S SON

31. Near to Junagad there is a village by name of

Shampur. The merchant Tripurantak of that village was a follower of the same *Vedic* branch. 32. His daughter had reached the marriageable age, and the merchant was considering the question of her marriage. He sent his priest here and there to make propositions. 33. He (the priest) was a Brahman by name of Krishna Bhat and of supreme piety, who came to the house of Narsi Meheta and spoke to him as follows. 34. Krishna Bhat said, 'My patron has sent me to say that he would offer his daughter in marriage to your son.' 35. In examining the horoscopes he found that they reached the point of thirty-six. After an agreement for the marriage was made the priest returned home. 36. This relationship which was agreed to by the priest was acceptable to all, for it was the custom in that country for all to accept the decision of the priest. 37. If the patron did not accept the promise made by the priest, then the priest would cut off a finger and give it to the one he had chosen as a bridegroom. 38. Such being the rule in that country, the Brahman announced his decision and said to his patron that he had fixed the marriage of his daughter. 39. He said, 'There is a Nāgar Brahman at Junagad, supremely pious and a *Vaishnava*. I have made an agreement with him to offer your daughter to his son.' 40. Listening to the words of the priest, every one began to laugh exclaiming, 'The fate of the girl seems to be a very unhappy one.'

THE MERCHANT DISLIKES THE PROPOSAL

41. The merchant exclaimed, 'He is a *Vaishnava* indifferent to worldly things. He is constantly dancing in his *kirtans*. How is it you offered my daughter to him? Do not accept him as our relation. 42. We are not agreeable to a relationship to the house of one where *sadhus* and saints listen to the *Shri Bhagwat*, and one always unconcerned and indifferent to worldly things. 43. We do

not want any relationship with one who does not recognize similarity or dissimilarity, that which is his and that which belongs to another, and one who looks with the same reverence on all creatures. 44. How is it that you agreed to give my daughter in marriage to one who is without anger, a doer of good deeds, and one who has friendship for every creature, and one in whose house is the very least food and raiment?' 45. The priest replied, 'Listen to my words. I have returned having made an agreement. If you reject the agreement, I will cut off one of my fingers and give it to him.'

MERCHANT'S SEVERE CONDITIONS

46. Hearing him say this, the merchant Tripurantak said, 'Tomorrow is the appointed day for the marriage. Let the would-be bridegroom come to the marriage, bringing all the materials necessary. 47. I am a noted merchant and my relationship will now be with a very weak *bhakta* of Vishnu. The evil-minded will laugh at me and therefore such a thing must not happen. 48. Bring to the marriage five hundred elephants, horses, palanquins and chariots. Let there be innumerable players of instruments to accompany the procession. 49. Let the bridegroom come bringing garments and ornaments for the bride, and let him give to the inhabitants of our town a banquet of dainty food. 50. If the bridegroom does not come tomorrow bringing these materials then the engagement is broken off. Know this for a certainty, you noble *guru*.' 51. The priest understood the meaning of such a proposition, and he gave Tripurantak several illustrations. 52. He said, 'The daughter of King Bhimak was offered as a bride to Krishna. Rukmini insulted Him and you have done just the same. 53. Parvati was the daughter of the Himalaya mountains and the Destroyer of Tripur (Shiva) was fixed as the bridegroom. His wives insulted Him and

you have done the same. 54. All that your mind wishes will take place.' Saying this, the Brahman went back to give information. 55. He said to Narsi Meheta, 'Tomorrow is the most auspicious time for the wedding. You must all come bringing the needed materials, taking Shri Krishna as your helper.' 56. Krishna Bhat, a supremely pious *Vaishnava*, told him concerning the things that would bring about the marriage.

IMPORTANCE OF GOOD MEDIATORS

57. He thought to himself, 'If I should tell him of the things that had happened there all the arrangements would be destroyed. Narsi Meheta is supremely indifferent to worldly things. He has no desire for anything.' 58. Speaking in a very humble way as to how the marriage would be accomplished, the priest made the remaining arrangements and returned to his home. 59. Where a needle, borax and a good man act as mediators, there is no duality seen there. They bring two together. 60. Where a bad man, scissors and an axe act as mediators there an instant destruction is certain. These are at the root of all evils. 61. At the wedding there should not be a vilifier. In a battle there should not be a coward. In a *kirtan* there should be no noise or confusion. Among *tulsi*-plants she-goats should not be allowed. 62. While a *Purana* is being read, there should not be a garrulous person. Among pious men there should not be wicked revilers. In travelling there should not be anyone who is always excessively hungry. When worship is going on there should not be anxiety. 63. A relative should not be a neighbour. In the rainy season there should not be a southern wind. When receiving the *mantra* of the *shri guru*, there should be no doubt regarding it. Those who are indifferent to worldly things should not have a store of wealth. 64. The weak should not be haughty. There

should be no thorn in a narrow path. A learned man should not be proud. 65. A person who is worthy of receiving a gift should not have the desire for it. Maintenance of sacred fire should not be practised in a miserable village. A physician should not give medicine to one who needs to be put upon a diet. 66. A friend should not be a trouble-maker or a miser. One should not lend with interest to a relative. For a seeker of spiritual things to eat royal food is a way to destroy his good deeds. 67. Well now, this long discussion is quite sufficient.

MERCHANT'S RELUCTANCE

After the priest had made the agreement he returned to his village. 68. He told his patron that the bridegroom would surely come on the morrow for the wedding. 'Go and make all necessary preparations and be on the watch.' 69. Tripurantak laughingly replied, 'Narsi Meheta is all alone. How can he come tomorrow, since he has no materials of his own?' 70. I announced that the marriage would be tomorrow in order to break off the possibility of any relationship with him.' He then explained his action and illustrated it. 71. 'The two-faced earthworm went in the month of *Shravan* (August) to ask for the daughter of the serpent Shesha. The serpent replied to him that the marriage would take place in the month of *Vaishakh* (May). 72. When the hot season was near, the two-faced *davane* had died. Just so, I have announced that the marriage would take place on the morrow.' 73. The priest replied to him, 'You are an unfaithful man. You are not thoughtful. Your heart is full of pride. You will be very soon dishonoured. 74. Duryodhan was dishonoured because he persecuted the good Draupadi. The same thing will happen to you today I think.'

NARSI STARTS FOR HIS SON'S MARRIAGE

75. On the next day Narsi Meheta at the rising of

the sun performed his bath and worshipped Shri Krishna. 76. He drew twelve marks on his forehead and person. He hung the *tulsi* garland around his neck. He took along with him *Vaishnavas*, all the time repeating the names of God. 77. Taking his son and wife with him this *bhakta* of Vishnu started for the marriage. With music of cymbals, the drums and the *vina* the goodness of Hari was described. 78. 'Victory, Victory to Thee, Mukunda, Enemy of Mura, Helper of the helpless, Advocate of Thy *bhaktas*. Ancient of days, Slayer of the *Daityas*, Madhu and Kaitabh, Dweller in the hearts of Thy *bhaktas*. 79. Victory to Thee, Dweller at Dwarka, Lord of the earth, Husband of Rukmini, Father of Brahmadev, Slayer of Kans. Thou art the One dear friend of Thy *bhaktas*. 80. Victory to Thee, God supreme, Lord eternal, Protector of Thy *bhaktas*, Slayer of Madhu, Pervader of the universe, Life of the World, Delight of the heart, Govind. 81. Victory to Thee, Ancient of Days, Possessor of names without end, Whose name is the Being of qualities, dark-complexioned One, the Wish-tree of Thy *bhaktas*, Delight of the heart, Shri Hari.' 82. Describing the qualities of Shri Hari in this way, they sang and danced in their love. Narsi Meheta walked along at that time full of joy. 83. At that time Shri Hari was seated on His throne in Dwarka, and went into the private room and sent for Rukmini. 84. He said to her, 'The great *bhakta* Narsi Meheta has with reverent spirit followed Me. The marriage of his son takes place today. But he is singing of My qualities without any sense of shame.'

KRISHNA AS MARRIAGE GUEST

85. 'We should now go there before him and ourselves bring the ceremony to a successful consummation.' Thus speaking that Store-house of compassion gathered together an assembly of *bhaktas*. 86. Uddhav, Akhur, Narad, Tumar,

Shuka, Valmiki, Pralhad, the great Bhishma, Bibhishan, Vidur and Maruti were quickly invited. 87. Sudama, Penda, Vankada, Vadaja, Kana, also a set of cowherds, one who was dumb and lisping another with one eye, one who was a dwarf, another who was lame and had mucus eyes, one with a running nose. 88. Such were the *bhaktas* small and great that He collected. Krishna said to them, 'Come at once to the marriage'. 89. Saying this to them Shrípati Himself invited Jambavanti, Satyabhama and Kalindi the good. 90. Shri Krishna taking with Him Mitravinda, Yadnyajiti, Lakshamana and Bhadravati walked along for the wedding. 91. Mother Rukmini sat in a palanquin bringing the *Gopis* (cowherdesses) along with her as the marriage-party of the bridegroom. The kettle drums were sounded. 92. Taking with Him eight *siddhis* (accomplishments) and all female slaves, the Lord of the heart (Krishna) hurried along to the marriage of Narsi Meheta's son. 93. As Narsi Meheta walked along the path, he danced and sang in his fulness of love. In front of him the Lord of the world moved rapidly along.

KRISHNA'S ARRIVAL

94. As Krishna approached the city and was in sight of it, he sent word of their approach. Tripurantak hearing this report, was overwhelmed with amazement. 95. The townspeople also reported that an innumerable company had come to the marriage. They would not be able to find sufficient room in the village for them. What was to be done? 96. Some people climbed up their roofs to gaze at the people coming, and as they listened to the playing of the sweet instrument they felt the air was reverberating with sound. 97. Tripurantak taking the citizens of the village with him, started to meet the procession. He took with him one band of players and started out, 98. just as when the sun is ris-

ing, the moon disappears, and as when a mere pool of water finding itself near the ocean is ashamed of itself. 99. What is the flying of a grasshopper before an eagle's flight? And the lustre of a piece of glass is dimmed before a priceless jewel. 100. It was just as when a poor fellow proud of his knowledge is lost sight of before a really learned man in philosophy, or just as a poor fool is ashamed before a wise *pandit*; 101. so, seeing the procession of the bridegroom, all the bride's party felt very insignificant. The priest exclaimed, 'O Life of the world, Thou hast come to my help.' 102. The Creator of the world has come Himself and made all the necessary preparations. He prepared a great, beautiful pavilion with seats. 103. Pillows, cushions, mats and wooden seats of many kinds were placed there. Rambha and Tilottama came and danced there, while all the gods were looking on. 104. There were many kinds of gifts, and perfumes of *keshar* (saffron), musk and sandalwood. God Himself, coming with the procession of the bridegroom, sat down with them. 105. Mother Rukmini sat in the midst of the female party of the bridegroom, which made a delightful circle. The wife of Narsi Meheta came and sat down near her. 106. There were many kinds of garlands of flowers around their necks and in the midst of the assembly of *bhaktas* the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) sat full of joy.

NARSI'S RECEPTION

107. Taking the people of the town with him Tripurantak started out to meet Narsi. As he came near to them the Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) arose. 108. Hari with all the *bhaktas* around Him embraced those who were to become their relatives. Krishna spoke in a gentle voice to Tripurantak. 109. He said, 'When a river is in flood a pumpkin raft takes one to the other side;

in the same way, Narsi Meheta is to be united to you in relationship true and close. 110. Just as when the life of anyone is coming to an end, nectar prevents him from death, so this God-loving *bhakta* Narsi Meheta is to be in a relation to you of that kind. 111. You were about to fall into lust, anger, pride, and the other diseases of this life, and in order that all these may be put away from you, you have gained a *Vaishnava* relative. 112. When the touchstone touches iron, rich people make ornaments of it, so through him we have the opportunity of meeting you. ; 113. Hearing Him say this Tripurantak replied, 'Tell me please your name. I had never met you before. Where have you come from?' 114. Hearing him, God Supreme answered, 'My name is Savalasa. I am the one who buys and sells for Narsi Meheta. 115. I live in Dwarka and act as his agent. I am the only one who understands his personality.' 116. Thus spoke the Life of the world and no one recognized who He was. No one understands the glory of this Delighter of the mind, and skilful in acts of illusions'

BRIDE'S FATHER FEELS HIS INFERIORITY

117. The clothes with which the bridegroom was to be honoured on the outskirts of the town were of small worth and so Tripurantak felt ashamed in his mind. 118. Understanding this the Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) said to Tripurantak, 'An innumerable number of people have come to the wedding. I see that your mind is perplexed by this. 119. Now, when preparing the banquet of tasty things, one should not put much salt into the food. One should not form any relationship with one who is greater than oneself. 120. One should not give money at interest to the king of one's own town. So one should not give one's daughter to form a relationship with one greater than oneself. 121. Who is able to discuss the verses of a chief poet? So, one should not form a relationship with one

of higher rank than oneself. 122. Just as when the sun arises the moon appears to fail, so, seeing the wealth of Narsi Meheta, you feel hesitant in your mind. 123. The preparations made by you can only be for a very few, and yet innumerable people have arrived for the wedding. After saying this to him, the Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven), advised him as follows. 124. Krishna said to Tripurantak, 'Whatever materials are possible for you bring them here, and carry to completion the marriage arrangement. 125. All *Siddhis* (accomplishments) are favourable here. Put what little you have into it. Do not keep in your mind any sense of duality through doubt. 126. The knots of relationship are as strong as those of silken threads. Consider the question from the point of view of knowledge and hold in your mind no sense of duality.' 127. Seeing that he agreed, he returned to the city and brought the materials for the wedding together with the bride. 128. King Bhimak whose *bhakti* was perfect, having agreed to offer his daughter in marriage to Shri Krishna, lovingly came to Mulmadhav for the wedding. 129. In the same way Tripurantak, putting aside all mental opposition, came there with the bride and all the materials for the wedding. 130. When a little streamlet joins the Ganges, who is there who would call it unholy? So when the Life of the world accepts anyone, no pious person lacks anything.

MARRIAGE DESCRIBED

131. The marriage was performed with great eclat and the band played sweet music. Termeric powder was applied to the bride and bridegroom. The wedding was carried on in the most elaborate way. 132. The gods were installed and Brahmans were feasted with many forms of dainty food, and God Himself offered gifts of money to the Brahmans. 133. Shri Krishna offered clothes with love to

Narsi Mehta. At the setting of the sun the Brahmans repeated the eight auspicious verses of the marriage ceremony 134. 'When Durvas persecuted Ambarish, God supreme Dweller in *Vaikunth* (heaven), suffered ten births; may He protect the bride and bridegroom. 135. He, at the repeating of Whose name all sins are burnt up, Dweller at Dwarka, the Delight of the heart, may He protect this bride and bridegroom. 136. He whom Brahmadev and the other gods, including Shiva, continually contemplate in their hearts, He, the Lover of His *bhaktas*, Lord of the heart, may He protect this bride and bridegroom. 137. Thou, O God supreme and eternal One, who reclinest on *Shesha* (the serpent) in the ocean of milk, Husband of Lakshmi, Life of the world, protect this bride and bridegroom.' 138. With these eight verses the Brahmans performed the marriage, instruments gave out their sweet music, and the drums were beaten. 139. Because the Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) was present, there appeared no lack of anything. And in this offering of the daughter, gifts without limit were made to the Brahmans. 140. To all the citizens of the village a banquet was given as they desired, and to the bride and bridegroom were given beautiful ornaments, garments and adornments.

COMPLETION OF THE MARRIAGE

141. Blessed, blessed are the people who were assembled there, for they saw Narayan. It was the Life of the world who completed all arrangements for both parties. 142. With great eclat the procession of the bridegroom walked the streets, the sound of the instruments was heard, and the four deliverances came and fell at their feet. 143. Rockets of all kinds were let off and guns were fired. Eight dancing women sang and danced and the *Vaishnavas* repeated aloud the names of Hari. 144. After many festivities, Mother Rukmini per-

formed the ceremony of looking at the face of the daughter-in-law. At this the wife of Narsi Meheta was amazed. 145. For five days the marriage ceremony continued and the Life of the world, Shri Krishna, gave gifts to the party of the bride, offering them garments and ornaments. 146. The Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) then said to Tripurantak, ' You have now become a relative of a *bhakta* of Vishnu and in the midst of your domestic affairs you have also seen what the supreme spiritual riches are.' 147. After the marriage the bridegroom party returned to Junagad and Narsi Meheta continued joyfully to sing of the greatness of Shri Krishna. 148. The Lord of the world whispered to Narsi Meheta, ' Whenever any distress comes to you, think of Me.' 149. Having said this the Husband of Rukmini returned to Dwarka.

BHAKTAVIJAYA LIKENED TO TULSI PLANTS

And now let the hearers lovingly give attention. 150. This book of the *Bhaktavijaya* is like a forest of tender *tulsi* plants. The Husband of Rukmini, who dwells on the banks of the Bhima, dwells here. 151. Clouds of joy gladly and with love rain upon it and the *Vaishnavas* who are pious and fortunate are made happy by hearing it.

152. In the next interesting chapter Narsi Mehta will write a cheque for God to cash. Mahipati says, ' You fortunate listeners, be prepared to listen with reverence. '

153. *Swasti* (Peace) ! This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the twenty-eighth very delightful chapter ; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER XXIX

NARSI MEHETA'S CHEQUE IN GOD'S NAME

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to the Lord of Pandhari.

GOD'S NAMES AND EPITHETS REPEATED

1. Victory to Thee whose face is auspicious, Lord of all blessings. One who extends beyond the three qualities, Lord of the heart, Pervader of the universe, Lord of all, Lord of Pandhari, Shri Vitthal. 2. Victory to Thee, Ancient of Days, Whose name is Infinite, the Wish-tree of His *bhaktas*. Thou who takest the form of One with qualities, One with the complexion of a dark cloud, the Object of love of Thy *bhaktas*, 3. Victory to Thee who didst prevent the dishonour of Draupadi, Deliverer of Gajendra, Recliner upon *Shesha*, Dweller in the sea of milk, lotus-eyed One, Ornament of Thy *bhaktas*, Pandurang. 4. Thou art God above all gods. In repeating Thy name, Shiva became cooled. All the gods including Indra praise Thee. 5. Thou art the internal Witnesser, Cloud of intelligence, Object of contemplation by the *yogis*, Thou who givest the highest form of deliverance even to Thine enemies, Cloud of joy, merciful One. 6. Thou who art the Father of Brahmadev, although Thou doest everything, Thou art a non-doer, Lover of Thy *bhaktas*, Husband of Rukmini. Even the *Vedas* do not know Thy limit. 7. The fourteen sciences and the sixty-four crafts praise Thee, Lover of the *bhaktas*, O Gopal. Thou goest from these to be near Thy loving *bhaktas*. 8. Leaving Thy heaven of *Vaikunth*, leaving the ocean of milk, leaving the drinking of nectar, Thou huntest with love for Thy *bhaktas*. 9. Leaving the city of Dwarka, Thou didst come to the home of Pundalik. Thou didst place Thy hands upon Thy sides, and there Thou standest upright, O Shri Hari. 10. And so Thou art fond of the love of Thy

bhaktas, O Being of goodness. O Thou whose home is in the heart of Thy loving *bhaktas*, Thou art the rest of the soul. 11. Therefore again and again I bow to Thee, Thou, O Shripati (Krishna), inspire me to write this book.

KESHAV BHAT CALLS ON NARSI

12. Now listen, you hearers. In the preceding chapter it was related how after completing the wedding the Life of, the world left. 13. And Narsi Mehta, God's loving *bhakta* continually repeating the names of Krishna in his heart, danced continually in his *kirtans*. 14. Putting aside all pride of knowledge, putting aside bondage through the snare of desires, putting aside his desire for public honour, he continued to think of Shri Krishna. 15. Putting aside all sensual things, breaking the chains that would bind him to things of his own, putting aside all wrong thoughts, he put on the beautiful garment of peace. 16. Putting aside all ideas of equality and inequality, he considered a citizen and a king of the same value; He regarded the beings of the infinite universe and Indra and the other gods as on an equality. 17. He did not consider the evil qualities of tigers, scorpions, lions, and dogs. A herder of goats and a Brahman seemed alike in his sight. 18. The wish-tree and the *babhul* tree, the *hingan* and the *malayagâr* he regarded as the same in value. In his sight he regarded discourteous and courteous language as the same. 19. If he saw before him a heap of money fallen on the ground, to his sight it was of the same value as dirt. The most priceless of jewels he regarded like common pebbles.

STORY OF KESHAV BHAT

20. Now on a certain day a procession of pilgrims was on its way to Dwarka. They came and stayed one day at Junagad. 21. Among them there was a supremely pious Brahman by name of Keshav Bhat. Coming into the city he made enquiries of the people there. 22. In the public

square of the town there were many revilers and evil men. Coming near to them, and standing before them, he spoke as follows. 23. He spoke to the people in a very courteous way, 'I am a Brahman making a pilgrimage. I am on my way to Dwarka to see and worship the feet of Shri Hari 24. What merchant is there in your town who can write a cheque for me? Tell me quickly, according to what may be true.' 25. Hearing what he said, these revilers and evil men began to laugh. They said, 'Narsi Meheta *bhakta* lives in the midst of all luxuries. 26. He is a most fortunate one and wealthy, but he lives as if indifferent to all earthly things. Go to where he is, and your purpose will be fulfilled. 27. O Brahman, you will recognize the house of Narsi Meheta by the banners, altar of *tulsi* plants, the banners with eagle-picture, and the praise-service of Hari.' 28. Hearing them say this, and placing confidence in what they said, he hurried at once to the house of Narsi Meheta. 29. You hearers may say to me, 'Since Shri Hari is in all hearts, how is it that there can be persecution of His *bhaktas*. Tell us truly.'

GOODNESS IS VALUED BECAUSE OF BADNESS

30. God Himself has created *bhaktas* and those who are not *bhaktas*. For His servants receive honour because of those who are not *bhaktas*. 31. If the crocodile had not seized the Gajendra, then why would the Dweller in *Vaikunth* (heaven) have had to rush to his aid? If Dusshasan had not persecuted Draupadi, then why would Hari have given her raiment? 32. If the *Daitya* Hiranysakshipu had not troubled the *bhakta* Pralhad, then how would the Lord of the universe have revealed Himself from within the pillar? 33. If iron had not been created, then who would have placed any value upon the touchstone? So by means of those who are not *bhaktas*, the servants of God receive honour. 34. If a beggar had no desire

for anything, he would not ask anything of the wish-tree. If the darkness did not fall at night, who would ever light a lamp? 35. If there are no false statements, then who would have considered truth as a good deed? If subjects were not created, then who would have honoured the king? 36. If the stars were not so very small, who would have regarded the moon as being superior in size to them? If there were no iron hammers to test a diamond, who then could have become expert in testing them? 37. If the city of Yama had not been created, then who would have had a desire for heaven? If there were no eighty-four hundred thousand rebirths, then who would have paid attention to the final deliverance? 38. So having created in the world those who are not *bhaktas*, God looks with an eye of compassion upon those who are His *bhaktas*. When the Lord of the world sees His *bhaktas* in distress He rushes to their help.

KESHAV BHAT MEETS NARSI

39. Turning now to the preceding description, the pious Brahman, Keshav Bhat, arrived quickly at the house of Narsi Meheta. 40. That Vishnu *bhakta* was seated by a pure *tulsi* altar. Remembering the Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) in his heart, he was lovingly repeating His name. 41. Having put aside all thoughts of bodily needs he enjoyed deep meditation. Putting aside disturbances of his life, he lived in peace because of his knowledge of non-duality. 42. Suddenly seeing the Brahman coming into the house before him, Narsi Meheta lovingly bowed to him. 43. He spread a mat for the Brahman and seated him upon it. He said to him, 'Where are you from, and where are you going?' 44. The Brahman replied, 'I am going to the city of Dwarka. The road from here is through a very difficult country and there are robbers in the way. 45. I have brought here with me money to the value of seven hundred rupees.

as travelling expenses. Write a cheque for the same and give it to me. 46. When darkness had settled upon the town I enquired of the people, "What merchant is there here who would write a cheque for me?" 47. They gave me your name.' When Narsi Meheta heard these words of the Brahman, he was much troubled in his mind and said to himself, 'Truly the people have deceived him. 48. But the Helper of the helpless, the Advocate of His *bhaktas*, my Protector, He has assumed many forms of *avatars* for the sake of His *bhaktas*.' 49. Thus determining in his mind, he said to the Brahman, 'The money which you brought from your home, place it here.' 50. The Brahman hearing him replied, 'Who is your agent at Dwarka? Tell me his name.'

GOD AS TRADER

51. Hearing him say this, the *Vaishnava bhakta* replied, 'His name is Savalasa. Indra and all the gods worship Him. 52. The four *Vedas* breaking out into song continually praise His good deeds. The Lord of *Kailas* (heaven), the Husband of Uma, continually repeats His name. 53. His chief shop is on the sea of milk. Another shop is in *Vaikunth* (heaven). He has lived at Gokul, Brindavan, Mathura, and in the home of *Vaishnavas*. 54. In Mandesh on the banks of the Bhima He has placed a great shop at Pandhari. And he still stands there near to His *bhakta*, *Shet* Pundalik. 55. He it is who is at Dwarka and who is carrying on His merchant's business from there. Vyas and Valmki carry on business in such things as are connected with *kirtans*. 56. One of His customers is Nama, and another the pious *bhakta* Kabir. Buying the articles they sell, the dull-minded have been saved through their devotion to Him.' 57. Hearing him say this, the Brahman was satisfied. He placed the seven hundred rupees on the *tulsi* altar.

NARSI'S CHEQUE TO KESHAV BHAT

58. At the same time Narsi Meheta wrote a letter in pleading terms. He said, ' O Krishna, Dweller at Dwarka, hear the plea of Thy servant. 59. Thou art generous, O Ocean of compassion. When Upamanyu as a child asked for milk, Thou didst listen to him and gave him the ocean of milk. 60. Brahmadev has become weary in describing Thy qualities, O Husband of Rukmini. When the Brahman Sudama came to visit Thee Thou didst give him a city of gold. 61. Thou didst perform a very wonderful thing. Thou didst place the child Dhruva in his immovable position. Such Thou art, Husband of Ramā [Ramā is another name for Lakshmi, Krishna's wife], Thou art the Protector of Thy *bhaktas*. 62. Do Thou, chief among the generous ones and the brave, listen to the reading of my letter, and by giving money to the Brahman, O Holder of the disk (Krishna), satisfy him. 63. It is because I trusted to Thee that I took the money from him. After hearing these pity-arousing words, do Thou, O Cloud of joy, rain down upon him. 64. Thou mayest say that I have written the cheque on Thee, although Thou art the unmanifested and the unconquered. But do not do that which will cause people to laugh at me.' 65. He wrote the following cheque, ' Savalasa, Dweller in Dwarka, pay seven hundred rupees to the bearer.' Thus writing the cheque he gave it to the Brahman.

KESHAV BHAT'S DOUBT ABOUT THE CHEQUE

66. Then immediately he invited the saints and *sadhus*, all the *Vaishnavas* and all the Brahmans of the village and distributed all the money at once to them. 67. Becoming free from disturbances he (Narsi Meheta) sat repeating the names of God. The Brahman made his obeisance to Narsi Meheta and started on his way. 68. But as he walked along the path he was wondering in his mind. He thought,

'I have never seen before a merchant so generous. 69. In every way he seems generous and one indifferent to earthly things. He has in his house the very least food and raiment. With love and peace in his heart, he lovingly performs his *kirtans*. 70. It is with such an one that I have carried on this business. How did I make such a mistake?' Becoming deeply concerned he thought to himself as follows:—71. 'Just as when one throws salt into the sea and it can never return, so my money is offered to Krishna, as it were, and will never come back. 72. If one makes a sound into the air no echo returns, just as I have now done by carrying on this business with Narsi Meheta. 73. If you throw butter into the fire it will never return, do what you may. So what I have given to that *Vaishnava* has really been made an offering to *Brahm*, as it were. 74. When giving water to the *tu'si* plant one should not desire any fruit from it. So I do not now see that anything will come back to me from that cheque. 75. If water is mixed with the sea water it never will return; so my money has truly gone into the storehouse of Kuber. 76. It is as if I placed flowers in the sky and they gave honey to the wind; so the god's *bhakta* has distributed the money to the Brahmins.' 77. He now said finally to himself, 'Why mourn in vain for it? The Lord Shri Krishna, the Pervader of the universe, cares for every one.'

KESHAV BHAT AT DWARKA

78. Comforting himself in that way the Brahman came to Dwarka. After bathing in the Gomati he went to see and worship Shri Krishna. 79. Worshipping the feet of Shri Krishna he stood with hands joined palm to palm, and with love and complete reverence he praised Hari. 80. He said, 'Victory, Victory to the Husband of Rukmini, Brother of the lowly, Lord Ranchhod !

Helper of the helpless, merciful One, remove my concern.' 81. Having spoken these pity-arousing words, he prostrated himself before God. The Brahman then sought information from the priest. 82. He said, 'Show me the house of the merchant Savalasa. That name is written upon the cheque which I hold.' 83. Hearing him say this, all the people replied, 'We have never heard of a merchant by the name Savalasa, nor have we seen anyone of that name. Nor could we do so, if we hunted throughout the city of Dwarka.'

REVILERS CALL NARSI'S CHEQUE VALUELESS

84. 'Narsi Meheta has given you a cheque that is valueless. In giving your money to him you did not properly consider the question. 85. One should carry on business looking to profit, and one should give only to those worthy of it. One should go as a suppliant to one's *guru* and ask him for the needs of one's soul. 86. When one sees a *Vaishnava*, one should with reverence make a prostrate *namaskar* to him; but one should not transact worldly business with him. 87. One should give food and garments with reverence to God's *bhaktas*, but one should never carry on the business of buying and selling with them. 88. They make like themselves anyone who associates with them. When a river meets with the ocean it becomes a part of the ocean without effort. 89. When iron touches the touchstone, all its darkness flies away. So when one associates with a saint worldly business comes to naught. 90. When a little streamlet joins the Ganges, it takes but a moment to change its name and form. So by one's association with a *Sadhu*, business abilities no longer remain with him. 91. Such being our custom from the elders, you have carried on business with a *Vaishnava*. So now, O noble Brahman, where will you hunt for the merchant Savalasa?' 92. Hearing these words of the priest, the

Brahman became deeply concerned. Then bowing to God the Brahman departed. 93. Returning to his lodging the mind of the Brahman continued greatly disturbed. He said to himself, 'Narsi Meheta distributed the money at once. 94. Abandoning all illusion regarding money, let me go as a suppliant to the King of *Vaikunth* (heaven).' Thus remarking, the Brahman sat down in the square.

KRISHNA AS A BANKER

95. Just then God supreme, the Husband of Rukmini assumed the form of a merchant. Bringing Uddhav and Akur, He drove along in His chariot. 96. The Life of the world, sitting in His chariot, said to Daruk (His charioteer), ' Narsi Meheta has sent a cheque with our name written upon it. 97. In order that I may accomplish his purpose I have become to-day Savalasa the merchant. I have changed My four-armed form, and am going, instead in the form of a man. ' 98. Uddhav then said to Him, ' O Life of the world, even the *Vedas* do not know the limits of Thy power. Thou, O Narayan, dost assume an infinite number of forms in order to carry out the purposes of Thy *bhaktas*. ' 99. Narad said to Him, ' Thou actest like a skilled actor in a drama. Thou puttest hindrances in the way of Thy *bhaktas*. Then assuming a form with qualities, Thou, O Hari, dost rush to their help; 100. just as a mother tells a child about a goblin when one is not really there, and when the child cries out with fear she comforts it in love. ' 101. Conversing in this way with His *bhaktas*, Govind came along. Such is the Advocate of the *bhaktas*, One praised in the universe and Whose unfathomable *kā* (deeds) cannot be understood. 102. With His divine ornaments, garments and adornments, beautiful in form, He appeared with qualities. The Life of the world hastily drove along the royal highway. 103. As the chariot was moving steadily along, He said to His (charioteer)

Daruka, 'A Brahman is seated in the square who is full of concern. Take Me at once to where he is.' 104. Having given this order, the Husband of Rukmini and His chariot moved swiftly along. And as the people lovingly saw this form with qualities, all wondered.

KRISHNA SEES KESHAV BHAT

105. As the Lord of the world approached, He saw there the Brahman. The Husband of Rukmini asked him, 'Why are you thus concerned?' 106. At the question of the Dweller in *Vaikunth* (heaven) the Brahman felt astonished, with reverence he bowed to Him, and gave Him the reasons for his concern. 107. 'There is a *Vaishnava bhakta* at Junagad by name of Narsi Meheta. His agent Savalasa is here at Dwarka. 108. Because I cannot find him, I am very much troubled.' Hearing him say this, the Lord of the world spoke to the Brahman. 109. At this the Husband of Rukmini laughed and said, 'They call Me here Savalasa. What is the order which Narsi Meheta has given to me?'

KESHAV BHAT COMFORTED

110. As the Life of the world said these things the Brahman was much comforted; just as when during a drought a cloud pours down rain, the grass on the mountain side is made happy; 111. or as God-loving *bhaktas*, hearing at a *kirtan* the praising of Hari, are comforted thereby; or when a person repentant of his sins, sees a sacred bathing-place, then his mind experiences comfort; 112. or as when listening to the reading of the *Bhagwat*, *Vaishnava bhaktas* become full of joy; or as when suffering from thirst, one sees water and he feels a sense of joy; 113. or as when a seeker after spiritual things finds himself in association with a saint and through connection with him he feels satisfaction; or when one who has a request to make and sees a generous giver, he is

delighted in his heart; 114. in that same way the Brahman hearing what the merchant said was greatly pleased. He at once took out the letter and placed it in Krishna's hand. 115. After looking over the letter, He lovingly bowed to it with His hand. He Whom the *Vedas* and *Shastras* praise, but Whose extraordinary deeds they are unable to describe, 116. this God supreme, Husband of Rukmini, became thus subservient to His *bhakta*. As the Life of the world read the letter he spoke with a smile on His face. 117. The Lord of *Vaikunth* said to Uddhav, 'Narsi Meheta the God-loving *bhakta*, although living in the midst of domestic matters, is one indifferent to all earthly things. He has sent Me a small cheque to be cashed.' 118. Saying this He took out seven hundred rupees. The Husband of Rukmini gave this to the Brahman.

HOW CAN A SERVANT BE GREATER THAN HIS MASTER ?

119. As the Brahman saw the money, he was much comforted. Astonished however in his mind, he answered in a humble voice, 120. 'You seem to be a wealthy merchant, but Narsi Meheta seems a very poor person. A rich servant with a helpless lord seems to me to be very strange. 121. I have never seen the charioteer of the sun more brilliant than the sun itself. The *Puranas* never speak of a streamlet running through a village as superior to the Ganges. 122. I have never seen in the world a minister greater than the king. I have never heard that any monkey was greater than Shri Ram Himself. 123. Who is there greater than the Lord of *Kailas* (heaven), the Husband of Parvati ? One has never seen or heard of a river of greater importance than the ocean. 124. I have never heard of a *siddhi* (accomplishment) greater than Lakshmi. There are no stars more brilliant than the moon. 125. I have never seen a little diamond more brilliant than a large diamond. I have never heard of any-

one learned in the *Vedanta* (philosophical knowledge) who was greater than one in the *siddhanta* (established facts). 126. Now today I see with my eyes what seems topsyturvy, Therefore I ask you to explain it.' Hearing what the Brahman said, Krishna began to speak.

KRISHNA DISPELS KESHAV BHAT'S SCRUPLES

127. The Husband of Rukmini said to the Brahman, 'A *Vaishnava bhakta* is continually indifferent to all earthly things. Although he is in worldly surroundings he is without illusion and without desires. 128. As the sea has no desire that the cloud should continually rain upon it, so a *Vaishnava* does not allow his mind to be entangled in the snare of desire; 129. just as the sun has no desire to light a lamp in the house, so a *Vaishnava* does not allow his mind to be entangled in the snare of desire. 130. Those who have nectar to drink will make no effort for medicine. A *Vaishnava bhakta* despises money and wealth. 131. As the Lord of Lakshmi does not willingly accept the *bakul* or *shevanti* flowers as more important than the *tulsi*, so a *Vaishnava* does not consider in his mind that money or wealth is more important than worship. 132. Those who have the knowledge of *siddhanta* will not listen to the reading of an immoral book, so a *Vaishnava bhakta* remains absorbed in the worship of Hari. 133. Narsi Meheta, supremely indifferent to earthly things, does not care for money or property. How are we to help this character? 134. It is a mother's characteristic that she desires to put ornaments upon her child. So Narsi Meheta has showed his favour towards Me without limit. 135. A father does not steal from his property and wealth, and so Narsi Meheta has placed great confidence in Me.' 136. The compassionate One to the lowly having said this, all the *Vaishnavas* were astonished. They exclaimed, 'Narsi

Meheta the God-loving *bhakta* has made the cloud-dark Krishna subservient to him.' 137. Hari, after having performed this miraculous act, became invisible. The Brahman felt it very strange, and his mind was astonished. 138. Then he counted the money to see how much it was. He found it to be an immeasurable quantity. This made him exclaim to himself, 'The Lord of Dwarka quickly met me.' 139. Comforting himself in this way the pious *Vaishnava bhakta* satisfied the Brahmans with a feast.

KESHAV MEETS NARSI

140. While waiting at that beautiful city of Dwarka, the Brahman distributed all the money to those worthy of receiving it. He offered it to those learned in the *Shastras*, to Brahmans and to priests who were pure and worthy of it. 141. Then going to the great door of the temple, with reverence he bowed to the Lord of Dwarka. Taking leave of the god, the Brahman started on his way home. 142. Returning to Junagad he went to see Narsi Meheta. He told him everything about the event that had taken place. 143. He said to him, 'You are a God-loving *Vaishnava bhakta*. You have made the Lord of Dwarka a debtor to you. Savalasa came quickly and met me. 144. I placed your letter in His hand. In His love He bowed His head to it. Having read it, His mind showed His love. 145. He at once took out seven hundred rupees, and placed them in my hand. When I counted it out it was beyond my power of reckoning the amount. 146. When I looked back to him at that moment He became invisible.' Hearing these words of the Brahman, tears filled Narsi Meheta's eyes. 147. He exclaimed, 'O Dweller at Dwarka, Husband of Rukmini, Brother of the helpless, Delighter of the mind, Filler of the universe, Cloud of mercy, Thou dost weary Thyself for my sake. 148. Thou art the Brother of the lowly, Ocean of mercy, even the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*

do not know the limits of Thy power. Thou art the indescribable, even by the four forms of speech. Thou alone art the Saviour of the world. 149. O Lord of the helpless, Lover of Thy *bhaktas*, Thou dost carry out the wishes of Thy servants.' Saying these things, tears flowed from his eyes. 150. At once he steadied his mind and began to repeat the names of God.

BHAKTAVIJAYA AS OCEAN OF MILK

In the next chapter will be described the puberty ceremony (of Narsi Meheta's daughter). Let the saints listen to me. 151. This book containing the lives of the saints, may be considered as the ocean of milk. The Recliner upon the *Shesha*, the Husband of Lakshmi, continually dwells upon it. 152. There I, a lowly and helpless one, have been able to drink the supreme nectar. Here the Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) in His love gives the water of affection. 153. In the rows of the *Vaishnava bhaktas*, pious *bhaktas* have seated themselves. With love and pleasure Mahipati eats what they have left on their plates.

154. *Swasti* (Peace)! This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the twenty-ninth deeply delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna, an offering also to Jagadishwar (the Lord of the world).

CHAPTER XXX

MATURITY CEREMONY OF NARSI'S DAUGHTER

Obeisance to Shri Ganesh. Obeisance to the Slayer of Putana

NARSI MEHETA INDIFFERENT TO ALL EARTHLY THINGS

1. Listen, O hearers, with a reverent mind. Narsi Meheta the *Vaishnavi bhakta*, full of love, living at Junagad, was continually in the worship of Shri Hari. 2. He in whom forgiveness and peace continually dwell in personified form, is one whose characteristic is that he does not ask for anything and is always satisfied with a little. 3. With complete *bhakti*, knowledge and indifference to earthly things he worshipped Hari in his love. Although he had a family and a wife he was unattached to anything; 4. just as when a lotus plant is growing in a lake, the water does not touch it; or as when the sun is seen reflected in a jar of water, it does not become wet with it; 5. just as the wind, being everywhere, the stormy wind cannot be confined; so a good man, although in the midst of domestic life, is untouched by the evil effects of it. 6. Ignorant men say that the *bhaktas* of Hari are affected by domestic affairs, but such great revilers are a burden to the earth. 7. Those who seek to stain the sky find that their own hands are stained. So he who reviles a *Vaishnavi bhakta* is guilty of a wrong.

GOD PROVIDES NARSI MEHTA WITH GIFTS TO BE

GIVEN AWAY.

8. Narsi Meheta was indifferent to earthly things. His daughter had reached maturity and to celebrate it he had an invitation from his new relative. 9. At his own home he had neither raiments nor food. His wife said to him, "What have you planned to take as gifts?" 10. He

replied to her, 'I have the name of Hari to take as gifts.' Saying this to his wife he hastened to where his daughter was. 11. Everybody there began to laugh, when they saw Narsi Meheta, and exclaimed, 'What is the purpose of his having come here? 12. As a matter of conventional formality we sent him an invitation, but he has come with a *tulsi* garland around his neck and cymbals in his hand.' 13. Musical instruments sounded loudly and his chief relatives assembled together, remarking, 'Having no presents to give his new relatives, why has he come here?' 14. The daughter full of doubts in her heart said privately to Narsi Meheta, 'Bringing nothing you are losing in reputation, and I feel ashamed.' 15. Hearing what all said Narsi Meheta replied, 'Let each one tell what gifts he would like. 16. Let each one write down what he wishes, and give the list to me.' Hearing him say this, all the people broke out into a hearty laugh.

A LIST OF GIFTS

17. Then there came a mischievous fellow bringing a piece of paper, and exclaiming, 'I will write down what all of us want.' Such were the words of this evil fellow. 18. Then the father-in-law, and the son-in-law and the evil minded relatives, all of them said what gifts they desired, and the daughter said, 'I want ornaments.' 19. Whatever each one desired he wrote down. Narsi Meheta then said to him who had written down what was desired, 20. 'Whatever *you* desire, write down upon this paper.' The unbeliever, because he did not believe him, replied to him, 21. 'I want a stone.' He wrote it down at once, and all the people laughed at him. 22. He remarked before all the people, 'I cannot believe that the gifts he tells me to write down will ever come.' 23. Someone has said that he who will not trust the words of the saints, and

is a hater of his father, is a very bad man. Having fallen into the whirlpool of worldly existence he cannot be freed even to the very end of the time 24. A learned fool, who is a hater of Brahmans, and a reviler of sacred bathing places and sacred cities, such an one cannot attain to Hari. 25. One running after women, and a hater of his mother, are sure to fall into the whirlpool of death. Such cannot attain to Hari. 26. Those who do not know what is permitted and what is not permitted by law, those who have a desire for the wives of others, never attain to Hari, no, never. 27. Such being that wicked person, he exclaimed, 'I want a stone.'

NARSI'S PLEA

Narsi Meheta hearing this, bowed to Hari. 28. He exclaimed, 'O Merciful to the lowly, Lover of Thy *bhaktas*, Lotus-eyed One, Dweller in *Vaikunth* (heaven), the Moon to the *Chakor*, Heart of Rukmini, come quickly this time to my help. 29. Thou callest Thyself the Helper of the helpless. Thou suppliest the desire of Thy *bhaktas*. Now do not throw aside Narsi Meheta, O merciful One.' 30. When Krishna heard these pity-arousing words he was pleased. He came with a bale full of garments. 31. Hari took the form of a Brahman and stood at the door and requested the men there to tell Narsi Meheta that he had brought a whole bale of cloth. 32. The relatives questioned Him, 'Who are you and where are you from? The Life of the world hearing them say this answered: listen to what He said:- 33. 'I am one of the agents of Narsi Meheta in his shop at Dwarka. I have hastened here today bringing the gifts for you, his relatives.'

KRISHNA'S DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTS

34. So spoke the Ornament of His *bhaktas*. No one, however, recognized who He was. People were deceived by

their love of things and closed their eyes of knowledge through illusions. 35. Hari having brought a box full of ornaments, stood there. Narsi Meheta then said to his new relatives, 36. 'All of you ask for whatever you desire. Putting aside the idea of duality, hold no doubt in your mind.' 37. The Husband of Rukmini asked for the paper with the list of gifts wanted and took it in His own hand. He then undid the bale of cloth and with His own hand distributed the garments, 38. The Lord of the heart gave a shawl woven with golden threads to the son-in-law of Narsi Meheta. A jacket and a silk *sari* He gave to the mother-in-law. 39. To some He gave short *saris*, to some long *saris*, and to some jackets, to some a neck ornament, to some garments with coloured spots. To some He gave turbans woven at Mungi Paithan. 40. To some He gave some very finely woven crimson cloth and to some a yellow-cloured garment. The Life of the world gave to some a green thin cloth woven with golden threads. 41. To some He gave turbans and *Parakata*. Some who had asked for a shawl with coloured borders received it. To some Hari gave a pair of silk *dhotars*. 42. To some He gave black cloth with gold borders. Some asked for a yellow raiment, and the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Krishna) immediately took it out of the bale of gifts and gave it to them. 43. Narayan gave one a garment with beautiful borders. The enemy of Madhu (Krishna) had brought a bale full and it continued to remain full. 44. Men came to see this strange thing, and he gave to them beautiful garments. Krishna distributed limitless beautiful shawls to them. 45. Women of the town assembled to receive saffron and yellow-coloured paste for their foreheads. The Lord of the heart (Krishna) gave them garments with His own hands rapidly.

KRISHNA'S GIFTS TO ALL THE GUESTS

46. *Vanavali* (Krishna) distributed to them different

sorts of *saris*. He divided among them the white thin shawls worn in royal palaces. 47. Blessed, blessed were those people to whom Narayan distributed the garments. What illustrations can I use to compare them? 48. When that wicked man at Hastinapur started to remove the cloth of that pure one Draupadi, Hari rushed there with garments for her, and so He did now. 49. After distributing the garments, he gave them ornaments. To some He gave head ornaments of crescent shape, to others head ornaments of various shapes. 50. To some the Husband of Rukmini gave pearl earrings, to others clusters of ear-ornaments of the shape of fishes, to others the neck ornaments. 51. To some He gave garlands of pearls, to others necklaces and others neck ornaments with pendants. Krishna gave them with His own hand. 52. Govind distributed with His own hands the bracelets according as each one had desired and to others gold bracelets. 53. The enemy of Mura (Krishna) gave to some waist-cords, woven with golden threads, and others ankle-jewels, chains and many ornaments. There were toe-rings for the feet and earrings which Shri Krishna Himself put on some people. 54. The Holder of the disk (Krishna) fastened their neck-ornaments, fastened their waist-cords and distributed to them these jewels. 55. As the Holder of the *Sharang* bow (Shri Krishna) did this marvellous deed, men and women were all pleased. He was infinitely generous in His benevolent acts for His *bhaktas*. 56. Just what they wanted, Narayan gave to them in full. The Saviour of the world brought a stone to the man who had done the writing and who had asked for it. 57. The Life of the world lifted up the stone with His own hands and placed it upon the man's head. The people who had assembled there all laughed as they saw this remarkable *lila* (sport, or deed). 58. All the people said to him, 'Your fate has broken down. You are as one sitting under a wish-tree, and yet begging. 59. When the *daitya* Bhasma

pleased the Husband of Girija (Shiva) he asked Him for a wrong blessing, so you have done.' 60. All having said this to him, that evil-minded person became ashamed, just as when a clod of earth is put into water, it melts away.

PEOPLE RECOGNIZE KRISHNA AS NARSI'S HELPER

61. All again and again made their *namaskar* to Narsi Meheta, They said to him, 'Shri Krishna has come to your aid, now we truly understand this.' 62. In this way having celebrated his daughter's puberty-ceremony, this *bhakta* of Vishnu started from there to Junagad, there to see and worship the image of Krishna. 63. He said to Him, 'O Husband of Rukmini, Shri Hari, Thou hast today wearied Thyself greatly for me. O Enemy of Mura, Thou hast brought for me the presents to be given to my relatives.' 64. The Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) thought to Himself, ' I distributed garments to the people, but I did nothing to honour Narsi Meheta.' 65. Being pleased therefore, the dark-blue-complexioned One took off from Himself His flower garland mixed with *tulsi* leaves and placed it around the neck of His *bhakta*. 66. He became invisible at the same place, where in the form of a Brahman He had brought gifts for the new relatives so that all the people worshipped the feet of Narsi Meheta. 67. And whenever he made a *kirtan* in praise of Hari, that garland appeared about his neck.

NARSI PERSECUTED

Someone conveyed the news of this to King Manduk. 68. The king came to see him and worshipped the idol, but he had a doubt in his mind, thinking there had been some crooked dealings. 69. He therefore took a needle and thread and fastened the garland to His coat. Showing anger, he said to Narsi Meheta, 70. 'By means of your knowledge of tricks you have deceived many pious people. If your garland does not appear around your neck to-day,

I shall punish you.' 71. Narsi at once taking his cymbals and his *vina* in his hands, danced full of love in his loud shouting of the names of Hari. 72. In many ways he described the good qualities of Hari, but the garland did not appear around his neck. Then joining his hands together palm to palm, he pleaded with God:—73. 'Thou didst at once take the form of a fish, and in a moment's time didst destroy the *duitya* Shankhs. Now why art Thou delaying to give me the garland? 74. Thou, Lord of *Vaikunth* (heaven) didst take the form of a tortoise and didst skilfully take out the fourteen jewels. Now why art Thou at all delaying to give me the garland? 75. Thou, O Krishna, taking the form of a wild boar, didst kill Hiran-yaksha, and why, O Govind, art Thou delaying to give me the garland? 76. When Pralhad was persecuted Thou didst break out from the pillar. Why dost Thou not yet take pity on me and give me the garland? 77. Taking the form of Vaman, with one step Thou didst measure the whole three worlds; then why dost Thou not feel pity today, on hearing my piteous request? 78. Because the Kshatriyas troubled the wish-cow Thou didst come with an axe and didst kill them. But now Thou dost not have pity on me, though hearing my cries. 79. Because the gods were thrown into prison, Thou didst kill Ravana and Kumbhakarna; so I do not understand why my distress is unheard by Thee. 80. When Draupadi was insulted, Thou, Husband of Rukmini, at once camest to her help. Why dost Thou not now feel pity when Thou hearest my cry of distress? 81. O Krishna, although hearing my piteous words, Thou art yet not pleased.'

KRISHNA FOND OF ABUSIVE WORDS FROM HIS *BHAKTAS*

Krishna replied, 'Speak to Me with abusive words, and I will take off My garland and give it to you.' 82. The king in the meantime said to Narsi Mehta, 'Now I understand the purpose of your tricks.' Saying this, the king came forward to punish him. 83. Seeing

his own distress Narsi Meheta cried out, and by it the Life of the world was pleased. Let good and pious people listen. 84. He said, 'What does it matter to Thee or Thy father about giving me the garland?' The Lord of Dwarka having heard him give this abuse was pleased. 85. When he had in countless words pleaded piteously, it did not come to God's mind to give it, but the moment he used abusive language the garland came upon his neck. 86. The king looked and the garland was still there with the stitches, which made him exclaim, 'Blessed is this *Vaishnava*. He is the complete *avatar* of Shiva.' 87. The king then with reverence lovingly embraced the feet of Narsi Meheta and said, 'Do not further consider in your mind my transgression. 88. You are a noble *Vaishnava* and God's *bhakta*. Sinner as I am, I surely did not understand this. I heard what people said and came here to trouble you. 89. Just as when Duryodhan was persecuting the Pandavas, that evil one was defeated, so in persecuting you the same thing has happened to me.' 90. The king then made Narsi a prostrate *namaskar* and returned to his city. And Narsi Meheta full of love continued his worship of Shri Hari.

91. In the next chapter we shall read of how the Husband of Rukmini came from Dwarka to Dakur. Mahipati pleads with his hearers to listen with love and joy.

92. *Swasti* (Peace)! This book is the *Shri Bhaktavijaya*. In listening to it the Lord of the world will be pleased. Listen then, you God-loving, pious *bhaktas*. This is the thirtieth deeply delightful chapter; it is an offering to Shri Krishna.

End of Volume I of the English

Translation of Mahipati's Marathi BHAKTAVIJAYA

Appendix

103 Extra Verses

*There are four printed texts of Mahipati's **Bhaktavijaya**. In addition there is an unpublished manuscript of this work in the possession of Martand Chintaman Taharabadkar, Esq., Retired Mamlatdar, 828 Sadashiv Peth, Poona, who is the sixth descendant of Mahipati's brother. This manuscript was written by the brother of his grandfather and the writing was finished on the bright 11th of Vaishakh (May), Virodhkrit Sanvatsar in 1778 of the Shaka Era, i. e. A. D. 1851. Mr. Taharabadkar has very kindly loaned this manuscript for the present book and it has proved to be of immense use. The manuscript has 103 extra verses which we give below. Our numbering of the verses is taken from the manuscript. This is the first occasion on which these verses have been published. In each case the English rendering is printed on the left hand page and the Marathi original on the right hand.*

Chapter 2

251. If one listens with devotion [to the reading of the *Bhaktavijaya*] the Life of the world is pleased with him, and frees him from his earthly bondage in a moment's time. 252. Earthly enjoyments and salvation become his slaves, and the eight *siddhis* (accomplishments) wait upon him. *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) always remains with him. 253. *Shri Hari* always abides at his home together with *Lakshmi* [Vishnu's wife, the goddess of wealth], and fully satisfies whatever wish he has in his heart. 254. God Supreme, honoured by other gods, lets him lack for nothing. All his pains, poverty and calamities at once disappear. 255. The Son of the sun (*Yama* the god of death) stands before him with both his hands joined palm to palm, and even the Creator (*Brahma*) and *Hara* (*Shiva*) always bow down to him. 256. Even *Shiva* and *Brahmadev* are not able to describe his glory. *Purushottam* (the good Being) takes him finally to *Vaikuntha* (His heavenly home). 257. The fruit of listening with devotion cannot be described completely. The cloud-complexioned One (*Krishna*) is found through devotion, and there is no other means of finding Him. 258. Devotion itself is God. Everything else is of no value without devotion. If one listens with devotion, *Madhav* (*Vishnu*) becomes subject to him.

अध्याय २ रा

भावे करितां श्रवण ॥ तयासी पावे जगजीवन
त्याचे निवारी भवबंधन ॥ अर्धक्षण न लगतां ॥ २५१ ॥
भुक्तीमुक्ती दासी ॥ सिद्धी तिष्ठती सेवेसी
तया जवळी हृषीकेशी ॥ सर्वकाळ वसतसे ॥ २५२ ॥
लक्ष्मीसहित श्रीहरी ॥ सर्वकाळ राहे त्याचे घरी
जे इच्छा असेल त्याचे अंतरीं ॥ ते परिपूर्ण करितसे ॥ २५३ ॥
तयाचे कांहीं न्यून ॥ घडो नेदी देवमान्य
दुःखदारिद्र्यदैन्य ॥ निरसोनि जाय तत्काळ ॥ २५४ ॥
तयापुढे सूर्यकुमर ॥ उभा जोडोनि दोन्ही कर
विधी आणि हर ॥ सर्व काळ वंदिती ॥ २५५ ॥
तयाचा महिमा ॥ वर्णू न शके शिवब्रह्मा
तो आवडे पुरुषोत्तमां ॥ वेकुंठधामा नेतसे ॥ २५६ ॥
सद्भावे श्रवणाचे फळ ॥ न वर्णवेची सकळ
सद्भावे सापडे घननळि ॥ उपाय दुसरा नसेची ॥ २५७ ॥
भाव तोचि देव ॥ भावार्थेवीण सकळ वाव
भावे श्रवण करितां माधव ॥ वश होय तयासी ॥ २५८ ॥

Chapter 4

259. By listening to the lives of saints, bad qualities disappear. Good qualities arise, and one loves devotion to perfection. 260. Those who love the stories of the *bhaktas* of Hari become more attentive to the supreme spiritual riches. The Lord of Pandhari loves them more than his own life. 261. *Vanamali* (Krishna) comes near him to protect him, and constantly lives with him, and does not go away from him. 262. Such is the great glory of listening which cannot be expressed by speech. May the hearers listen with reverence to the reading of this book. 263. In fact Shripati (Vishnu the Husband of *Shri* the goddess of wealth) is the author of this book. It is He who causes me to speak out with love the tales of His *bhaktas*. It is only a marvel that Mahipati's name appears in the verses.

Chapter 5

157. By your favour surely I have had poetic inspiration. I describe the deeds and fame of *Hari* by the favour of saints. 158. By Thy kindness an ignorant man becomes knowing. Even the blind are able to test a brilliant diamond. Such is Thy greatness. 159. By Thy favour a lame person is able to climb the top of Mount Meru, then what wonder is there that Thou shouldst enable me to compose a book ?

अध्याय ४ था

संतचरित्रं करितां श्रवण ॥ हरपोनि जाय तमो गुण ॥
आंगीं प्रगटे सत्वगुण ॥ भक्तीपूर्ण आवडे ॥ २५९ ॥
आवडे हरि भक्तकथा ॥ दक्ष होती परमार्था ॥
ते आवडती पंढरीनाथा ॥ प्राणाहूनी पैलीकडे ॥ २६० ॥
त्यासी येवोनि वनमाळी ॥ क्षणक्षणा सांभाळी ॥
अखंड राहे त्याचे जवळी ॥ कोठें दूरी नव जाय ॥ २६१ ॥
ऐसा श्रवण महिमा थोर ॥ बोलतां वाचेसि अगोचर ॥
श्रोतीं धरोनि आदर ॥ ग्रंथ सादर परिसावा ॥ २६२ ॥
ग्रंथकर्ता श्रीपती ॥ भक्तकथा वदवी प्रीती ॥
अभंग नाव महिपति ॥ नवल किती हें केले ॥ २६३ ॥

अध्याय ५ वा

तुमचे कूपनें निश्चितीं ॥ मी लाघलों कवित्वस्फूर्तीं ॥
हरिगुण वर्णितों कितीं ॥ हा प्रसाद संतांचा ॥ १५७ ॥
तुमचे कृपाळूपणे ॥ अज्ञानासी होय ज्ञान ॥
अंध परिक्षिती महारत्न ॥ ऐसें महिमान तुमचें ॥ १५८ ॥
तुमचें कूपनें एकाएकीं ॥ पांगुळ चढे मेरुमस्तकीं ॥
ग्रंथ वदवाल माझे मुखीं ॥ याचें नवल कायसे ॥ १५९ ॥

Chapter 7

155. For revilers, heretics and the evil-minded this food is not obtainable. It is obtainable by him who is in the possession of unlimited good deeds done in his former births. 156. When this food is obtained the Husband of Rukmini becomes subservient. *Riddhi* and *siddhi* (eight accomplishments personified) cling to such a person, and (the four kinds of) salvation become his slaves. 157. When the loving God becomes subservient, Brahmadev and Shiva and the great gods like Indra and Chandra (the moon) prostrate themselves before him without doubt. 158. Such is the importance of listening to the *Bhaktavijaya*. This is thrice true, and can never be otherwise. 159. Should anyone consider this as untrue in his mind, he cannot escape hell, and deliverance from the servants of Death is certainly impossible.

Chapter 8

187. In the same way it is the Lord of Pandhari who causes me to compose this book. Know this for certain. Good people who listen to it with devotion meet with God. 188. They who listen with faith, the Husband of Rukmini is pleased with them, and whatever wish they may entertain He fulfils it. 189. If one wishes to have a son, the Lord of the universe will grant him one. To those who are sad on account of the pain of poverty, He will give wealth and fortune. 190. If one listens who is afflicted with disease, his disease will be destroyed. If one has a desire for marriage, Narayan (God) will bring it about. 191. One wishing to have a daughter will have a daughter. A soldier will obtain victory on a battlefield. A Brahman will obtain wealth of learning. 192. A man who is troubled by debt will surely be free from it. Such boons the Husband of Rukmini has granted for listening to this book. 193. He Himself has declared this fact. It cannot be otherwise. The loving *bhaktas* know that the Lord of Pandhari is the author of this book.

अध्याय ७ वा

निंदक पाखांडी दुर्जन ॥ तयासी प्राप्त नसे हें अन्न
 अगाध पाहिजे पूर्व पुण्य ॥ तरीच प्राप्ती होय याची ॥ १५५ ॥
 या रसाची जालिया प्राप्ती ॥ वश होय रुक्मिणीपति
 ऋद्धीसिद्धी वोळंगती ॥ दासी होती मुक्ती पै ॥ १५६ ॥
 विरंचि आणि हर ॥ इंद्रचंद्रादि थोर थोर
 तयासि वंदिति साचार ॥ सखा श्रीधर वश होतां ॥ १५७ ॥
 ऐसा महिमा श्रवणाचा ॥ असे पै भक्तविजयाचा
 सत्य सत्य हे त्रिवाचा ॥ अन्यथा नोहे सर्वथा ॥ १५८ ॥
 कोणी असत्य मानील चिर्ती ॥ तयासि न चुके अधोगति
 सुटका नव्हे कल्पांती ॥ यमदूता पासोनी ॥ १५९ ॥

अध्याय ८ वा

तेवि ग्रंथ वदविता पंढरीनाथ ॥ हें जाणावें निश्चित ॥
 भावें ऐकती जे संत ॥ तयासि भगवंत भेटे पै ॥ १८७ ॥
 जे श्रद्धायुक्त करिती श्रवण ॥ तयासि प्रसन्न रुक्मिणीरमण ॥
 जे जे इच्छा धरील मनें ॥ ते परिपूर्ण करील ॥ १८८ ॥
 पुत्र इच्छा धरितां पोटीं ॥ पुत्र देईल जगजेठी ॥
 दरिद्र दुसें होतां कष्टी ॥ धनसंपत्ती देईल ॥ १८९ ॥
 व्याधिस्त करितां श्रवण ॥ होय व्याधीचें निरसन ॥
 लग्नार्थियाचें लग्न ॥ नारायण कर्ता पै ॥ १९० ॥
 कन्यार्थियासी कन्या होय ॥ क्षेत्रीं पावे रणी जय ॥
 ब्राह्मणासी पाहे ॥ विद्याधन लाधे पै ॥ १९१ ॥
 जो रिणें पिडिला गृहस्थ ॥ तो ऋणमुक्त होय निश्चित ॥
 ऐसा वर रुक्मिणीकांतें ॥ ग्रंथश्रवणीं दिधला ॥ १९२ ॥
 तोचि बदला यथार्थ ॥ अन्यथा नसे निश्चित ॥
 ग्रंथकर्ता पंढरीनाथ ॥ प्रेमळ भक्त जाणती ॥ १९३ ॥

Chapter 9

46. Then asked the Brahmans, 'What are your names'? Then Sopan told them in reply: 47. 'My eldest brother is Nivriddhi, and the wise Dnyandev comes after him. I, Sopan, am their younger brother, and sister Mukta is the youngest of all.'

* * * *

206. If one listens to the reading (of the *Bhaktavijaya*) the Life of the world lives with him. He Himself destroys his hindrances. 207. Whatever desire he has in his mind is fulfilled. He lets him lack nothing. He in person provides everything. 208. *Shri Hari*, who is merciful to His *bhaktas*, what will He not do? One who loves to listen is honoured by the gods with bowed heads. 209. One who is loved by *Shri Hari* is highly honoured by all. *Riddhi* and *Siddhi* (eight accomplishments personified) perforce enter his house. 210. The friend of *Shri Hari* is revered in the three worlds. Such is the power of listening. Even the Lord of the *Yadavas* (Krishna) becomes subservient to the listener. 211. Therefore, listen day and night. Make the Husband of *Ramā* (Krishna) your friend, and thus increase His reputation in the world. 212. The importance of the reputation is great. It takes place in every age. *Mahipati* tells this to the saints with hands joined palm to palm.

अध्याय ९ वा

मग म्हणती ब्राह्मण ॥ तुमचीं काय नामाभिधानें ॥
मग सांगतसे सोपान ॥ तयालागुन ते काळीं ॥ ४६ ॥
वढील बंधू निवृत्ती जाण ॥ त्याचे पाठिचे ज्ञानदेव सुजाण ॥
त्या कनिष्ठ मी सोपान ॥ मुक्ता बहीण धाकुटी ॥ ४७ ॥
* * * *

प्रीतीनें करितां श्रवण ॥ तयाजवळी राहे जगजीवन ॥
तयाचीं विघ्नें निवारून ॥ स्वयें आपण टाकिता ॥ २०६ ॥
तो जें जें मनीं कल्पित ॥ त्याचे पुरवी सर्व आर्त ॥
कोठें उणे पढो नेदित ॥ स्वयें पुरवीत निजांगें ॥ २०७ ॥
जो भक्तवत्सल श्रीहरी ॥ तो काय एक न करी ॥
श्रवणाची आवडी धरी ॥ तयासि देव शिरीं वंदिती ॥ २०८ ॥
जो श्रीहरीचा प्रियकर ॥ तो सर्वासि मान्य थोर ॥
ऋद्धी सिद्धी तयाचें घर ॥ दाटोनिया रिघती ॥ २०९ ॥
जो श्रीहरीचा सखा ॥ तो वंध तिही लोकां ॥
ऐसा श्रवणाचा महिमा देखा ॥ जो यदुनायक वश करी ॥ २१० ॥
यालागी धरोनि प्रीती ॥ श्रवण करिजे अहोराती ॥
सखा जोढा रमापति ॥ जर्गी कीर्ती वाढवा ॥ २११ ॥
थोर कीर्तीचें महिमान ॥ युगायुर्गी होय जाण ॥
हेचि महिपति म्हणे ॥ कर जोडोनि संतांसी ॥ २१२ ॥

Chapter 12

169. At this the heart of Nama became full of delight and said, 'The Merciful Husband of Rukmini fulfils my longings.'

* * * *

191. The moon should not be compared with the stars, nor Indra (the Lord of the gods) with other gods. A king should never be called an ordinary man. 192. A touchstone should not be called an ordinary pebble. Gold should never be called a common metal. 193. A wish-tree should not be called an ordinary tree. A diamond should never be called an ordinary stone. 194. The sandalwood should never be called ordinary wood. Rice should not be called an ordinary grain, nor *tulsi* plant be called an ordinary vegetable. 195. The silk yellow divine garment (of Vishnu) should not be called ordinary cloth. Not every dark-complexioned person can be divine (like Vishnu) The Son of the wind (*Maruti*) should not be called an ordinary monkey. 196. The vehicle of Shiva (the bull *Nandi*) should not be called an ordinary bull; and the eagle (the vehicle of Vishnu) should not be called a common bird. 197. Mount *Meru* should not be called an ordinary mountain, and soul-knowledge should not be called ordinary knowledge.

अध्याय १२ वा

हैं देखोनि नामयाचें चित्त ॥ तेव्हां जालें स्वानंदभरित
 म्हणे माझे लळे पुरवितो बहुत ॥ रुक्मिणीकांत कृपाळू ॥ १६९ ॥

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नक्षत्रासमान नव्हे चंद्र ॥ सुरासमान नव्हे इंद्र
 नरासमान राजेंद्र ॥ सहसाही म्हणों नये ॥ १९१ ॥
 पाषाणासम परीस ॥ म्हणों नये तयास
 धातुसम सुवर्णास ॥ म्हणों नये सर्वथा ॥ १९२ ॥
 इतर वृक्षासमान ॥ कल्पतरु न म्हणावा पूर्ण
 खड्या सारिखें रत्न ॥ म्हणों नये सर्वथा ॥ १९३ ॥
 काष्ठासमान चंदन ॥ सर्वथा म्हणों नये जाण
 तंडुळ म्हणों नये कण ॥ तुलसी भाजी न म्हणावी ॥ १९४ ॥
 पीतांबर न म्हणावें वस्त्र ॥ दैवत नोहे नीळगात्र
 वानरासमान वायुपुत्र ॥ सर्वथाही न म्हणावा ॥ १९५ ॥
 इतर वृषभासमान ॥ म्हणो नये शिववाहन
 पक्षी न म्हणावा सुपर्ण ॥ इतर पक्ष्यासारिखा ॥ १९६ ॥
 इतर पर्वतासमान ॥ मेरु न म्हणावा पूर्ण
 कीं इतर ज्ञानासमान ॥ अध्यात्मज्ञान न म्हणावें ॥ १९७ ॥

Chapter 13

204. One who hungers after listening, he alone will understand its taste, and as he enjoys it his heart is for ever satisfied. 205. Blessed, blessed are they in the world who have devotion for God at heart. The Lord of the universe comes to their help, and will give them refuge in *Vaikunth* (Vishnu's heaven.). 206. ' Even they will dwell in *Vaikunth*, and will obtain without effort the *Sarupata* salvation: ' such a promise is made by *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart) Himself in the *Bhaktavijaya*. 207. The listener should consider it as true and revere it, and should listen to all the lives of the *bhaktas*. 208. God has a great liking for the lives of His *bhaktas*, by listening to which the nearers will reach the other side of the worldly ocean.

Chapter 14

219. In the twelfth chapter of the *Bhagavadgita* the Lord Shri Krishna has propounded devotion. So the Lord of Pandhari spoke to Rukmini in the fourteenth chapter (of the *Bhaktavijaya*).

Chapter 16

207. Just as the deer is tempted by a song; or the bee by the fragrance of a lotus flower; or as a *chakor* bird is attracted by the moon; 208. or as the *chatak* eagerly awaits the cloud; or as the thoughts of a love-stricken husband are for his beloved.

अध्याय १३ वा

ज्यासी क्षुधा श्रवणाची ॥ त्यासीच लागे हे रुची
सेवितां मनें तयार्ची ॥ तृप्त होती सर्वदा ॥ २०४ ॥
ज्यासी श्रद्धा आहे पोटी ॥ तेचि धन्य धन्य सृष्टीं
तयासीच पावे जगजेठी ॥ ठाव वैकुंठीं देखील ॥ २०५ ॥
तेचि होतील वैकुंठवासी ॥ स्वरूपता पावती अनायासी
ऐसें वचन हृषीकेशी ॥ भक्तविजयीं बोलिला ॥ २०६ ॥
ते मानोनि साचार ॥ श्रोतीं धरावा आदर
भक्तचरित्रें सार ॥ श्रवण केलीं पाहिजे ॥ २०७ ॥
भक्त चरित्राची आवडी ॥ देवासी फार याची गोडी
श्रवण करितां पैलथडी ॥ भवसागराची पावती ॥ २०८ ॥

अध्याय १४ वा

कीं गतिमाजी द्वादशांत ॥ भक्ती सांगे श्रीकृष्णनाथ
तैसें रुक्मिणीस पंढरीनाथ ॥ चतुर्दशाध्यायीं बोलिला ॥ २१९ ॥

अध्याय १६ वा

कीं गायनीं वेधे हरिण ॥ का कमळीं मिलिंद जाण ॥
कीं चकोरही जाण ॥ चंद्रीं वेधे ज्यापरि ॥ २०७ ॥
कीं चातकाचें मन ॥ असंड मेघाजवळीं जाण ॥
कीं कामुकाचा प्राण ॥ कांतेजवळीं सर्वदा ॥ २०८ ॥

Chapter 17

206. These most sanctifying stories of the *bhaktas* of God, if attentively listened to, will always result in the Life of the world (Vishnu) being well pleased with the listener. 207. One who longs for a son should repeat the wish, and he will obtain a son as precious as a jewel by the grace of the Husband of Rukmini. 208. That son will be virtuous, handsome and dutiful to his father. He will be diligent in offering prayers day and night to Shri Hari. 209. This son will live a full term of life. He will be fortunate, glorious, famous and bright by the grace of Shri Pandurang. 210. A pauper will be a wealthy man, a sick person's trouble will vanish, and the sins of a sinner will all burn up in half a moment. 211. He who wishes to have a daughter will have one. He will always obtain victory on the battlefield. The ignorant will have knowledge by listening to this book. 212. An aspirant of *moksha* (liberation of soul) if he hears this book read will obtain *Sayujyata* (salvation as absorption into the deity): *bhukti* (earthly enjoyments), *mukti* (salvation) and *kalyan* (beatitude) will be within his easy reach. 213. If one with love in his heart receives with his ears the sweetness of this, he alone will surely see the other bank of this worldly ocean. 214. Even while conducting a family life he becomes a *videhi* (unconscious of bodily pains and pleasures), and is free from the fear of this dreadful world.

अध्याय १७ वा

भक्तकथा परम पावन ॥ श्रद्धायुत करितां श्रवण ॥
 तयालागी जगजीवन ॥ सुप्रसन्न सर्वदा ॥ २०६ ॥
 पुत्र इच्छा धरोनि मन ॥ कोणी करील आवर्तन ॥
 तयालागी पुत्ररत्न ॥ रुक्मिणीरमण देखील ॥ २०७ ॥
 पुत्र सुलक्षणी सुंदर ॥ पितृभक्त अति उदार ॥
 श्रीहरिभजनीं तत्पर ॥ अहोरात्र सर्वदा ॥ २०८ ॥
 पूर्णायुषी भाग्यवंत ॥ प्रतापवंत कीर्तिवंत ॥
 ऐसा होय दिव्यसुत ॥ श्रीपांडुरंग कृपेनें ॥ २०९ ॥
 दरिद्रियासी होय धन ॥ व्याधिस्थाची पीडा हरण ॥
 पापियाचे दोष दहन ॥ अर्धक्षणीं होतील ॥ २१० ॥
 कन्यार्थियासि कन्या होय ॥ क्षेत्रीं पावे सदा जय ॥
 अज्ञानासी ज्ञान होय ॥ ग्रंथश्रवणें करोनी ॥ २११ ॥
 मोक्षार्थी करील श्रवण ॥ तयासि प्राप्त सायुज्यसदन ॥
 भुक्तिमुक्तीकल्याण ॥ सर्व तोच होय पै ॥ २१२ ॥
 परंतु चिंतीं धरोनि आवडी ॥ श्रवणीं घेइजे येथिची गोडी ॥
 भवसागराची पैलथडी ॥ तेचि रोकडी देखती ॥ २१३ ॥
 संसारीं असतां पाहीं ॥ तो होय विदेही ॥
 तयालागी नाही ॥ चिंता भवभयाची ॥ २१४ ॥

Chapter 19

109. His fate will be marvellous and with him God will be pleased. The goddess of prosperity and success will roll at his feet. Brahmadev and other gods will bow before him.

Chapter 21

216. He Who is extraordinarily liberal, Whose merits the serpent Shesha praises, Whom Shiva contemplates, know ye that He is the Life of the world. 217. He Who is the Father of the god Brahma, Who is the Creator of the movable and the immovable, Who is the Regulator of *Maya* (the primal force of the universe), know ye that He is this Pandurang. 218. He Who is the Regulator of infinite time, Who is the Redeemer of the world-wearied, proud of His *bhaktas*, He is this Pandurang, the Life of the world. 219. He Whose praises the *Puranas* sing. (in describing Whom) the *Vedas* remain silent, Whom Sanak and others contemplate, He is this *Shri Hari*, the Feeder of the universe. 220. He Who is the Espouser of the cause of His worshippers, Supporter of the Pandavas, Who sportively holds the strings of the universe, even He is standing at Pandharpur.

अध्याय १९ वा

ज्यावरि तुष्टेल भगवंत ॥ तयाचें भाग्य अद्भुत ॥
ऋद्धी सिद्धी बोळंगती तेथ ॥ ब्रह्मादिक वंदिती ॥ १०९ ॥

अध्याय २१ वा

जो परम उदार जाण ॥ ज्याचे शेष वर्णी गुण ॥
सदाशिव करितो ध्यान ॥ तो जगजीवन जाणजे ॥ २१६ ॥
जो विधीचा पिता ॥ जो चराचर निर्मिता ॥
जो मायेचा नियंता ॥ तो हा पांडुरंग जाणजे ॥ २१७ ॥
जो काळासी शासनकर्ता ॥ जो भवभ्रमहर्ता ॥
भक्ताभिमान धरिता ॥ तो हा पांडुरंग जगदात्मा ॥ २१८ ॥
जयासी गाती पुराणें ॥ वेद राहिले धरोनि मौन ॥
सनकादिक करिती ध्यान ॥ तो हा जगजीवन श्रीहरी ॥ २१९ ॥
जो भक्तकाज कैवारि ॥ जो पांडवाचा साहकारि ॥
जो लीलासूत्रधारी ॥ तो पंढरपुरी उभा असे ॥ २२० ॥

Chapter 22

214. Where the *bhaktas* of Hari dwell, that place is evidently to be called *Vaikunth* (heaven). That place is holy beyond description. 215. Where the *bhaktas* of Hari dwell, that place is ever highly purifying. The glory of it Indra, Brahma and other gods have described. 216. The country in which the saints live is very holy; such is the wonderful glory of the saints that even the serpent Shesha cannot comprehend it. 217. The village in which the merciful saints live, even the cesspool of that village is as holy and clear as the Ganges. 218. The town in which the saints live is sacred. The road on which the saints walk, that road is highly purifying. 219. Conversing upon the mode of life of the saints, the speaker and the hearer both attain holiness. By listening to stories of saints, salvation is at once obtained. 220. The lives of saints, are highly purifying. They are the highest. Hearing the sketch of the saints' lives, *Vaikunth* (heaven) is obtained. 221. He Who by his ears hears the lives of saints, with him *Chakrapani* (the Holder of the disk, Vishnu) is pleased, and coming with *Lakshmi* (Vishnu's wife the goddess of wealth), He stays at his house. 222. Wherever he goes, Hari goes before and after him. He will allow no difficulty to befall him.

अध्याय २२ वा

जेथें राहती हरिभक्त ॥ तेचि वैकुंठ साक्षात ॥
ते स्थान पुनीत ॥ कोठवरि वर्णाविं ॥ २१४ ॥
जेथें हरिभक्त राहती अखंड ॥ ते स्थळ पावन प्रचंड ॥
तयाचे वर्णिती पवाडे ॥ शक्रादिक विरंची ॥ २१५ ॥
ज्या देशी वसती संत ॥ तो देश पावन बहुत ॥
ऐसा संतमहिमा अद्भुत ॥ सहस्रवदना कळेना ॥ २१६ ॥
जेथें वसती संत दयाळ ॥ त्या गाविंचा वोहळ ॥
तो पवित्र निर्मळ ॥ गंगेसमान जाणिजे ॥ २१७ ॥
जया नगरीं राहती संत ॥ ते स्थान पुण्यवंत ॥
ज्या मार्गीं चालती भक्त ॥ तो मार्ग परम पावन ॥ २१८ ॥
संतांची लीला वर्णितां ॥ पावन होय श्रोता वक्ता ॥
संतकथा परिसतां ॥ मोक्ष जोडे तात्काळ ॥ २१९ ॥
संतचरित्र पावन श्रेष्ठ ॥ संतचरित्रें वरिष्ठ ॥
संतांची ऐकतां गोष्ट ॥ वैकुंठपीठ जोडे पै ॥ २२० ॥
संतचरित्रं ऐकतां श्रवणीं ॥ संतुष्ट होय चक्रपाणी ॥
लक्ष्मीसहित येउनि ॥ त्याचें सद्गनीं राहतसे ॥ २२१ ॥
तो जाय जिकडे तिकडे ॥ हरी तयाच्या मार्गेपुढें ॥
काहीं तयासी सांकडे ॥ पडो नेदि सर्वथा ॥ २२२ ॥

Chapter 23

149. Kabir felt satisfied, and pronounced the blessing: 'May the bride and the bridegroom be happy, and the Husband of Ramā protect them.' 150. One whose heart is at the feet of his *sadguru*, his troubles disappear. To him there is no hindrance. 151. One who has faith in the word of his spiritual *guru*, to him there can never be destruction. The *Parama Purusha* (Supreme Spirit Vishnu) comes in person, and makes provision for him. 152. One who has a liking for his *guru's* advice, his millions of troubles will disappear, and of a certainty he will reach the other shore of the worldly ocean. 153. One who is entirely his *guru's* slave, he obtains with ease all pleasures. Him the Pervader of the universe never neglects. 154. The *bhakta* of a *Shri Guru* is the highest of all. A *bhakta* of a *guru* never sees a calamity. 155. The glory of a *guru's bhakta* cannot be described even by Shiva or Brahmadev. Even Vishnu, who is the Supreme Spirit, bows down to him. 156. God likes a *guru's bhakta*. He is God's rest. Through the service of a *guru*, one surely attains the Husband of Ramā. 157. A *guru's bhakta* certainly fears neither *Kali* (the *Kali-Yuga*) nor *Kala* (death). *Kala* himself bows down to him, then what of others? 158. Blessed, blessed are the *guru's bhaktas* in the world. They are honoured by all the gods. By their sight men are saved. 159. I have sung the praise of *guru's bhaktas* according to my ability. Therefore the listeners should not entertain a doubt in their minds.

अध्याय २३ वा

संतोष पावोनि कबीर ॥ आशीर्वाद देती सत्वर ॥
 म्हणे सुखी असो वधुवर ॥ रमावर सांभाळो ॥ १४९ ॥
 सद्गुरुचरणीं ज्याचें मन ॥ त्याचीं निवारती विघ्न ॥
 तयालागी जाण ॥ कांहीं संकट पडेना ॥ १५० ॥
 ज्यासि गुरुवचनी विश्वास ॥ त्याचा कदा न होय नाश ॥
 आंगें येउन परमपुरुष ॥ साहित्य त्याचें करीतसे ॥ १५१ ॥
 गुरुवचनीं ज्यासि आवडी ॥ त्याच्या नासती विघ्नकोडी ॥
 भवसागराची पैलथडी ॥ ते पावती निर्धारिं ॥ १५२ ॥
 जो अनन्य श्रीगुरुचादास ॥ तो सर्व सुख पावे ज्ञानायासें ॥
 तयालागी जगन्निवास ॥ कदाकाळीं नुपेक्षी ॥ १५३ ॥
 श्रीगुरुभक्त सर्वांत श्रेष्ठ ॥ गुरुभक्त वरिष्ठ ॥
 गुरुभक्तासि संकट ॥ कांहींच न पडे सर्वथा ॥ १५४ ॥
 गुरुभक्ताचा महिमा ॥ वर्णू न शके शिवब्रह्मा ॥
 विष्णु जो का परमात्मां ॥ तो ही तयासी वंदित ॥ १५५ ॥
 गुरुभक्त आवडे देवा ॥ तो देवाचा विसावा ॥
 गुरुभक्तीनें रमाधवा ॥ पाविजेती निर्धारिं ॥ १५६ ॥
 जो गुरुभक्त निश्चयेंसी ॥ तो न भी कळिकाळासी ॥
 स्वयें काळ वंदी त्यासी ॥ मा इतरासी कोण गणी ॥ १५७ ॥
 गुरुभक्त जे असती जाण ॥ तेचि जर्गी धन्य धन्य ॥
 सर्व देवासि होती मान्य ॥ दर्शनें जन उद्धरती ॥ १५८ ॥
 असो गुरुभक्ताची स्तुती ॥ वर्णिली म्यां यथामती ॥
 म्हणोनिया श्रोतीं ॥ विकल्प चित्तों न धरवा ॥ १५९ ॥

Chapter 25

56. Such is the life of Rohidas, highly purifying and pure, which if listened to both day and night, not a particle of bad deeds will remain. 57. If one listens to this with devotion, the Husband of Rukmini is pleased with him, and destroys the snares of his worldly life without a moment's delay. 58. In one's worldly life He never lets calamity approach him; but gives him wealth and fortune, and after death will elevate him to his own position. 59. He is God's great darling, and *Sharangdhar* (the Holder of the *Sharang* bow, Vishnu) is his helper. He (God) accepts him as His own, and greatly increases his reputation. 60. *Shripati* (Vishnu) is pleased with him who has a liking for His saints' lives. He stays by him day and night, and hindrances never trouble him. 61. One who is dear to *Shri Hari*, to him all gods bow down their heads. He dominates over *Kali* and *Kala* (death); and is revered by all.

अध्याय २५ वा

ऐसे रोहिदासाचें चरित्र ॥ परम पावन पवित्र
श्रवण करितां अहोरात्र ॥ दोष अणु मात्र उरेना ॥ ५६ ॥
श्रद्धायुक्त करितां श्रवण ॥ तयासी पावे रुक्मिणीरमण
तोडी त्याचें भवबंधन ॥ अर्ध क्षण न लगता ॥ ५७ ॥
आणि संसारीं असता सदा ॥ कांहीं होऊं नेदी आपदा
पुरवी सकळ धनसंपदा ॥ अंतीं निजपदा नेईल ॥ ५८ ॥
तो देवाचा परम प्रियकर ॥ तयाचा साहकारी सारंगधर
करोनि त्याचा अंगिकार ॥ सत्कीर्ति थोर वाढवी ॥ ५९ ॥
भक्तचरित्रां ज्याची प्रीती ॥ तयास प्रसन्न श्रीपति
जवळी असे अहोराती ॥ विघ्न कल्पांतीं न बाधी ॥ ६० ॥
जो श्रीहरीचा आवडता ॥ तयासी देव वंदिती माथा
चाले कळिकाळावरि सत्ता ॥ तो समस्ता वंच्य होय ॥ ६१ ॥

Chapter 26

102. The loved ones of God are the only fortunate persons. Their fortune is without limit. Blessed are their former births. 103. Blessed and fruitful is their birth, blessed are their family and caste, and blessed is their worldly life. 104. Blessed is their knowledge and blessed is their birth, who have made themselves subservient to Shri Hari alone. 105. Blessed are they who have become the suppliants of God alone. They have saved their ancestors and other men without number. 106. The *bhaktas* of God have in their possession many good deeds. Those who see them are free from the worldly ocean. 107. 'To the *bhaktas* of God the worldly ocean is like a mirage:' such a statement is made in the *Vedas* and *Shastras*. 108. The glory of God's *bhaktas* cannot be described even by Indra and Brahmadev. They become the loved ones of the Supreme Being, and go to *Vaikunth* (Vishnu's heaven). 109. They become the dwellers of *Vaikunth*, and are for ever near *Hrishikeshi* (the Lord of the heart). Their fortune has no limit, indeed. 110. Mahipati places his head at the feet of the saints, both present and future.

अध्याय २६ वा

जे भगवंताचे प्रियकर ॥ तेचि परम सभाग्य नर
त्यांचिया भाग्या नाहीं पार ॥ धन्य जन्मांतर तयांचें ॥ १०२ ॥
धन्य तयांचें जन्म सफळ ॥ धन्य तयांचें यातिकुळ
धन्य तयांचा सकळ ॥ संसार होय जाण पा ॥ १०३ ॥
धन्य तयांचें ज्ञान ॥ धन्य तयांचें जनन
जे श्रीहरीस गेले शरण ॥ अनन्य भावें करोनी ॥ १०४ ॥
जे अनन्य शरण गेले ॥ ते प्राणी धन्य जाले
तयांनीं पूर्वज उद्धरिले ॥ जन तारिले असंख्य ॥ १०५ ॥
जे भगवंताचे भक्त ॥ ते महा पुण्यवंत
त्यांचें दर्शन जयासी होत ॥ ते भवाब्धी तरती हो ॥ १०६ ॥
भगवद्भक्तासी भवसागर ॥ मृगजळवत् साचार
ऐसें हें उत्तर ॥ वेदशास्त्री बोलिले ॥ १०७ ॥
भगवद्भक्ताचा महिमा ॥ वर्णू न शके विडौजब्रह्मा
ते प्रिय जाले पुरुषोत्तमा ॥ वैकुंठधामा ते जाती ॥ १०८ ॥
ते वैकुंठीचे रहिवासी ॥ अखंड जवळी हृषीकेशी
ऐसा तयाच्या भाग्यासी ॥ पार नाहीं पाहतां ॥ १०९ ॥
ऐसे जे भक्त असती ॥ अथवा जे का पुढें होती
तयांच्या चरणावर महिपती ॥ मस्तक भावें ठेवित ॥ ११० ॥

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