

*The
Golden
Volcano
of
Divine Love*



His Divine Grace
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SRI CHAITANYA SARASWAT MATH



A TRAGEDY OF SEPARATION

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

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

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

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

❀ THE HARE KRISHNA MAHĀ MANTRA ❀

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

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

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

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

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

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

❁ THE LORD AND THE FRUITSELLER ❁

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

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

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

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

❀ MOTHER ŚACĪ’S SADNESS ❀

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

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

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

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

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

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

✽ EFFULGENT LIKE THE RISING SUN ✽

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

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

venture to give You the robe of renunciation.”

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

❀ AFFECTIONATE OPPOSITION ❀

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

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

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

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

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

❁ TEARS FROM THE EYES OF MILLIONS ❁

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

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

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

✽ MAHĀPRABHU’S SANNYĀSA ✽

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

✽ THE NECTARINE WORLD ✽

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

Him was diving in the ocean of despair and sorrow.

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



❀ KRISHNA CONCEPTION: UNION IN SEPARATION ❀

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