

CHAPTER-VI

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Major Findings-

Genesis of popular religious creed Vaiṣṇavism of modern India may be traced in the Viṣṇu-Sūktas of the Ṛgveda. The term 'Surayaḥ'¹ as occurred in one stanza of the Viṣṇu-Sūkta signifies sectarian devotees of Viṣṇu or a class favoured by Viṣṇu. In the Ṛgveda Viṣṇu is said to be one of the manifestations of Sun. When the sun reaches at the zenith of the sky in the mid-day, it is called Viṣṇu. At that time the sun looks smallest but it is the most powerful. This natural phenomenon gives rise to the mythology of the pauranic conception of Vāmaṇa, the dwarf god of an incarnation of Viṣṇu. The germ of Vāmana avatāva of Viṣṇu may be traced in the Brāhmanical literature also. The Talavakāra Brāhmana says, 'Vāmaṇa is Viṣṇu- 'Vāmaṇo Vai Viṣṇu.'² It is, therefore, presumed that the Viṣṇu-cult, the most popular religion of modern India assumed definite shape in the age of Brāhmanas.

Likewise, in the Upaniṣadic period Viṣṇu's 'Parama-Pada' is glorified. In the Kāthopaniṣad it is said that the progress of human soul is like a journey, the goal of "which is Viṣṇu's 'Parama-pada', the abode of eternal bliss.³ In the Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra Viṣṇu is described as govinda, the cow-keeper and Dāmodara- a herdsman.⁴

However, in the Vedic period the Aryans tried to satisfy Viṣṇu by means of sacrifice. But this sacrificial religion is quite different from the later religion dominated by Bhakti and Prasād. Of course, the origin of Bhakti doctrine may be traced in the Upaniṣadic period. The Śvetāśvataropaniṣad teaches 'Parā Bhakti' Supreme devotion to God first.⁵

Likewise, an early reference to Bhakti-doctrine may be traced in one rule of Pāṇini for the formation of the words 'Vāsudevaka' and 'Arjunaka'.⁶ The word 'Vāsudevaka' means a person whose object of Bhakti is Vāsudeva and the word Arjunaka means a person whose object of Bhakti is Arjuna. It is worth mentioning here that Vāsudeva was held in high esteem by the people of Mathurā during the days of Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador in the Maurya court in the fourth century B.C.

The purāṇas generally identify Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa of the Sātvata family as the highest God Hari and represent him as the founder of Bhāgavata-sātvata or Vaiṣṇava dharma characterised by devotion (Bhakti). Originally this religion laid stress upon the idea of a supreme God, God of Gods, called Hari or Kṛṣṇa and worshipped him devotedly. The Bhāgavata-dharma is preached first by Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna in the Bhāgavatagītā.

In the chāndogyaopaniṣad also refers to sage Kṛṣṇa, son of Devakī as a disciple of sage Ghora-āṅgīrasa and gives some idea about the

doctrine preached by Ghora-āṅgīrasa.⁷ The same idea is also preached by Kṛṣṇa in the Bhāgavata-gīta.

In the Śatapatha Brāhmana the earliest mention of Nārāyaṇa is met with. He is said to be the performer of a pañcarātra-sastra. Later on, Bhāgvatism is known by the name of the Pañcarātra-āgama. The devotees of Bhāgavatism regard Pañcaratra superior to the Vedas. However, in the Brāhmanas Nārāyaṇa is not identified with Viṣṇu. The earliest identification of Nārāyaṇa with Viṣṇu is met with in the Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra. In a passage of the Taitirīya Āraṇyaka Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu are regarded as one and the same divinity.

Nārāyaṇāya vidmahe vāsudevāya dhīmahi

Tanna Viṣṇuḥ pracodayāt |⁸

Nārāyaṇa was an ancient sage and he was associated with another sage called Nara. According to Nārāyaṇīyā section of the Śāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata, Nārāyaṇa was born as the son of Dharma in the quadruple form of Nara, Nārāyaṇa, Hari and Kṛṣṇa.⁹ In the same Mahābhārata it is said that both Nara and Nārāyaṇa in their next births were born as Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa in Dvāpara.

However, the Bhāgavata religion as preached by Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa is the source of later Vaiṣṇavism.

The theory of Vyūha or Vyūhavāda is absorbed in the Bhāgavatism and in the later Vaiṣṇavism. According to this doctrine Lord Vāsudeva in his supreme aspect is the highest object of devotion. Parabrahma manifests himself first as Vāsudeva. Thereafter, Vāsudeva in combination with Prakṛti expresses himself as Saṅkarsana, the inner soul of all the jīvas. From Saṅkarsana arises pradyumna, the mind or internal sense of all the jīvas and from pradyumna manifests Aniruddha, the ahankāra of all the jīvas. Vāsudeva possesses the six ideal qualities; viz. jñāna, bala, Vīrya, aiśvarya, śakti and tejas and each one of his other Vyūhas contains only two of the aforesaid qualities in turn.

In the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Śāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata, Vāsudeva is identified with the supreme soul and sankarṣaṇa with individual soul. Sankarṣaṇa is also called Baladeva. In later period the devotees of Sankarṣaṇa were merged themselves with those of Vāsudeva. The independent worship of pradyumna and Aniruddha was declined gradually. Besides, the worship of Sankarṣaṇa lost its popularity on account of the increasing attraction for the worship of the avatāras or incarnations of Viṣṇu right from the Gupta period.

One of the characteristic features of the Bhāgavata religion of the Gupta period was the popularity of the worship of the avatāras of Viṣṇu. The number and nature of avatāras are variously given in different

scriptures. First, in the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Śāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata the total number of avatāras was mentioned four, such as, Varāha, Vāmaṇa, Narasimha and Mānuṣa (Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa).⁹ But, later on the number of avatāvas was increased upto six or ten or even more. However, Jayadeva in his Gitagovinda mentions ten avatāras.¹⁰ This list of avatāras as given by Jayadeva is accepted as the most authentic.

Vaiṣṇava upaniṣads

The seed of Indian religion and the development of Indian philosophies are based on the upaniṣads. It is, therefore natural that the root of Vaiṣṇavism also can be traced in the upaniṣads. There are some upaniṣads which primarily deal with the mystery of Viṣṇu and his different avatāras. These Vaiṣṇava Upaniṣads are fourteen in number and they are (1) Avyaktopaniṣad, (2) Kalisantaranopaniṣad, (3) Kṛṣṇopaniṣad, (4) Garuḍopaniṣad, (5) Gopālatāpinī-Upaniṣad, (6) Tārasāropaniṣad, (7) Tripādvibhuti- mahānārāyanopaniṣad, (8) Dattātreyopaniṣad, (9) Nārāyanopaniṣad, (10) Nṛsimha-tāpinī-upaniṣad, (11) Rāma-tāpinī-upaniṣad, (12) Rāma-rahasy-uapaniṣad, (13) Vāsudeva-upaniṣad and (14) Hayagrīva-upaniṣad.

The tenets of the different sects of the Vaiṣṇavism are based on these fourteen Upaniṣads. In fact, the later Vaiṣṇava -sects develop in different parts of India basing on these fourteen Vaiṣṇava -Upaniṣads.

Vaiṣṇavism in the South

By the second century B.C. Bhāgavatism spread far beyond the confines of Mathurā. According to the records of the different inscriptions, the worship of Vāsudeva is found in Mahārāstra, Rājputāna and central India. Likewise, the influence of Vaiṣṇavism was very much developed in the far south by the Ālvārs or Vaiṣṇava -devotees. Their devotional songs constituting the Vaiṣṇava Prabandham of four thousand verses in classical Tamil are looked upon as Vaiṣṇava -Veda. The Ālvārs sang in praise of Nārāyaṇa and Kṛṣṇa. They also sang the eulogies of the avtāras like Rama, Balarāma and Vāmana. According to the Vaiṣṇava tradition there were twelve Alvārs. All the Ālvārs appeared to have flourished before the early Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas. The prominent Ācāryas were Nāthamuni, Pundrikākṣa, Yamunācārya and the famous Rāmānujācārya. Rāmānuja gave a new turn to Vaiṣṇavism by his viśistādvaitavāda. According to Rāmānuja the supreme deity is to be called Nārāyaṇa. Rāmānuja travelled throughout India to popularise his teachings and established monasteries in various places to keep his teachings alive. The Vaiṣṇava -Acārya after Rāmānuja was Madhva or Anandatīrtha. According to him, the supreme spirit is Viṣṇu. Thus the old Bhāgavata system was replaced by Pure Vaiṣṇavism. It is worth-mentioning here that both Rāmānuja and Madhva discarded the 'Gopi'

episodes of Vaiṣṇavism. But these elements came into prominence in the system of Nimbārka.

Vaiṣṇavism in Orissā

Bhāgavatism was there in ancient Orissā between the second century B.C. to the first century A.D. as it is proved by the Ghoshemdo stone Inscription of the second century B.C. where Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa has been described as Bhagvat or Supreme being. By the passing of time, Bhāgavatism spread to Kalinga. Under the imperial patronage Bhāgavatism flourished in Orissā in the 5th century A.D. Saṅkarṣana and Vāsudeva kṛṣṇa came to be known as Balarāma and Jagannātha respectively. During the reign of Māṭhara dynasty in the 5th century A.D., Vaiṣṇavism spread in Orissā through the active patronage of the kings of that dynasty. Jagannātha is a very ancient God in Orissā as He is mentioned in the Utkala Khanda of the Skandha purāna. Subhendra is mentioned first by Varāhamihira in his Vṛhatsamhita as Ekanamśā standing in between her brothers Balabhadra (Balarāma) and Kṛṣṇa.¹⁰

In the subsequent period different dynasties, such as, Sailodbhava dynasty (7th century A.D.), Bhaumakāra dynasty (8th and 9th centuries A.D.) Gangā dynasty (11-12 century A.D.) ruled some parts of Orissā. Some of the kings of aforesaid dynasties were Vaiṣṇavas. Mādhava Varma though a devotee of Śiva, introduced himself as Chakradhara

Bhagavan Madhava. Queen Tribhuvana Mahādevī of Bhaumakāra dynasty introduced herself as parama vaiṣṇavī. Choda Gango Deva of the Ganga dynasty constructed the puruṣottama temple (Jagannāth temple) at Puri on the sea-shore. During his time Vaiṣṇavism spread rapidly in entire Orissā. Puri became a centre of Vaisavism due to the patronage of Gānga kings. Jagannātha is regarded as Viṣṇu. Rāmānuja came to Puri in the 12th century A.D. He made Jagannātha exclusively a Vaiṣṇava deity. He introduced Pañcarātra system and Śrī-cult in the Jagannāth temple. In fact, long before the arrival of Śrīcaitanya at Puri, the Vaiṣṇava -sects made Puri a seat for the propagation of Vaiṣṇavism.

Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal

The Bengal Vaiṣṇavism followed the Bhāgavata tradition. The Bengal Vaiṣṇavism has its own origin and hence it is not the sub-branch of any other four Vaiṣṇava - sects of India. The Bengal Vaiṣṇavism has two characteristics features, viz. Bhakti or emotional mysticism and the other is Rādhā-kṛṣṇa cult. Śrīdhara Swāmī is the founder of emotional mysticism in Bengal. The joint worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa was there among some sects before Śrīcaitanya. Lakṣmana sena and his successors were Vaiṣṇavas. Jayadeva, the court poet of Laksana composed Gītagovinda. It is a lyrical poem of melodious padāvalis. This devotional lyric populated Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult among the common people in Bengal. The Gitagovinda

is the earliest work in which ten Avatāras of Kṛṣṇa are mentioned. With the melodious songs and devotional feeling Bhāgavata emotionalism revived. Therefore, next to Bhāgavata, Gītagovinda becomes the second sacred scripture of Vaiṣṇavism. To the followers of Śrīcaitanya the Gītagovinda is regarded as one of the sources of religious inspiration of caitanyism. The Gītagovinda inspired the Bengali poet candidās and the Maithilī poet vidyāpati in writing the poems of devotional sentiment of Vaiṣṇavism. Śrīcaitanya was very much influenced by their heart reading Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa lyricism.

Mādhavandrapuri was the pioneer of the pre-chitanya Bhakti movement otherwise called Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult in Bengal. His disciples in Bengal were Ísvarapuri and Advaita. In fact, Mādhavandrapuri was the Ādi-Sutradhāra of the Bhakti-rasa in Bengal. From Mādhavandrapuri his disciple Ísvarapuri inherited it. Again, Ísvāra-puri transmitted it to his disciple Śrīcaitanya. Śrīcaitanya's followers developed this cult into a full grown system of its own.

Vaiṣṇavism in Āssām

Vaiṣṇavism was not unknown in Āssām before the advent of Śankaradeva. But it was not so popular because Āssām is traditionally a land of Śāktism and tāntrism. The two famous books, viz, Kālikāpurāna and yoginītantra give the vivid descriptions of the system of worship of

different Gods and Goddesses. But these two books at the closing glorify Viṣṇu with the assertion that Viṣṇu is the supreme divinity. At the very closing of the yoginītantra, Hayagrīva Mādhava, a form of Viṣṇu of Manikut is glorified. There are also other temples of Viṣṇu in different parts of Āssām and these are (i) Viṣṇu-temple on the top of the Matsadhvaja mountain, (ii) Viṣṇu-temple on the citravaha mountain, (iii) The temple of Pāndunātha, (iv) Viṣṇu temple in the region known as Dikhar basini where Viṣṇu is worshipped as Vāsudeva.

It merits mention here that Vaiṣṇavism which prevailed in Āssām before Śankaradeva's neo-Vaiṣṇavism was of the nature of Pañcarātra Vaiṣṇavism since Viṣṇu was in the form of Vāsudeva. During that period Viṣṇu is worshipped according to the system of Kālikāpurāna. But Śankaradeva's neo-Vaiṣṇavism is pure Bhāgavatim based on the Gita and Bhāgavat Purāna. Śankaradeva initiated Bhakti movement in Āssām being influenced by the teachings of Rāmānuja.

Vaiṣṇavism in ancient sylhet and Cāchār-

In ancient Sylhet Vaiṣṇavism was not unknown as it is evident from the records of the different copper plates of sylhet. The Nidhanpur copper plates of Mahārāja Bhāskara Varman (7th century A.D.) mention a temple of Viṣṇu (Vāsudeva). For the maintenance of the Bali-caru-satra of the temple deity Viṣṇu (Vāsudeva) a vast portion of land was

donated.¹¹ Similarly, we find mention in the Kālāpur copper plate that sāmanta Maruṇḍanātha (7th century A.D.) constructed one temple of Anantanārāyana (Viṣṇu) in sylhet and for the maintenance of the Bali-caru-Satra he donated land.¹² At present in Pañca Khanda area (in the village of Supātalā) there exists the temple of the ancient deity Vāsudeva (Viṣṇu). The Bhāterā copper Plato II of Īśnadeva (eleventh centry A.D.) mentions that king Govinda keśavadeva erected one stone made temple of kṛṣṇu (Viṣṇu), the enemy of Kāmsa in Sylhet.¹³ Similarly his son Īśānadeva also constructed one temple of Viṣṇu, the enemy of Madhukaṭabha.¹⁴

So from the aforesaid records it appears that the people of ancient Sylhet were Vaiṣṇavas. Their Vaiṣṇavism was of the form of Pañcarāra Vaiṣṇavism since Viṣṇu was in the form of Vāsudeva.

In ancient time Cāchār is called Heḍamba Kingdom. The kings of that dynasty were śāktas in early stage. But in the life of Dimāsās the influence of Vaiṣṇavism spread gradually in later stage on account of the cultural friendship with Manipur. In subsequent years, the kings of that dynasty adopted the title Nārāyaṇa with their name. The king suradarpanārāyana had in possession a family conch-shell with the imprint of ten avatāras of Viṣṇu. During his reign Brhadnārādīya purāna was translated into Bengali by his court-pandit Bhuvaneśwar Vācaspati.

Vaiṣṇavism in Manipur

Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa -cult spread in Manipur on account of the influence of Caitanyaism. But Vaiṣṇavism was not new in Manipur. Kings of Manipur were all Vaiṣṇavas right from ancient time. An inscription of 799 A.D. begins with the invocations to Hari, Śiva and Durgā.¹⁵ The invocation to Hari shows that Vaiṣṇavism was the main religion in Manipur during that period. King Kayamba of the 15th century A.D. received a holy disc of Viṣṇu from the ĩai-ing and it was worshipped in a temple of the royal palace. During that period Manipuri were Vaiṣṇavas belong in to Viṣṇu-swāmī sect. the king charairongba in about 1698 changed the Viṣṇu-Swāmī sect of Vaiṣṇavism and introduced Mādhavacaria sect of Vaiṣṇavism in Manipur. The king Bhāgyacandra (1777 A.D.) and his people were influenced by Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism.¹⁶

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the illustrious Vaiṣṇava apostle of medieval Bengal was born on the 18th February, 1486 as the son of Jagannāth Miśra and Śacīdevī of Navadwip. Jagannāth Miśra was originally a native of Dākādakṣin, śrīhaṭṭa Jagannāth Miśra was the son of Upendra Miśra and Śobhādevī. He came to Navadwip for higher studies and ultimately settled there. He married Śacīdevī, the daughter of Nīlāmbar chakravarty. Śacīdevī gave birth to eight daughters one after

another, but they all died in their infancy. Thereafter, a son named Viśwarūp was born to them. In the mean while, Jagannāth Miśra with his wife came to Dākā-dakṣin to meet with his parents. During their stay at Dākādakṣin Śacīdevī became pregnant. They came back to Navadvīp where Śrī Caitanya was born in the evening during the lunar eclipse that occurred on the Phālgunī full moon day.

Śrī Caitanya was born in a hut under a Nim tree. Hence, he was named Nimāi. Śacī's father Nīlāmbar Chakraborty identifying his physical signs named him Viśwambar as he would save the mankind. Some people named the newly born son as Gaurāṅga for his bright complexion. Many interesting stories have been recorded regarding the childhood days of Nimāi. He was extremely wicked and turbulent in his childhood. His schooling started ceremonially at the age of five. In the school Nimāi became the leader of the students and engaged in the notorious activities alongwith his classmates. He used to take bath in the Ganges with his naughty classmates and disturbed the other bathers.

Nimāi's elder brother Viśwarūp was getting his schooling under Advaita Ācārya. He was eight to nine years older than Nimāi. Viśwarūp was very handsome, brilliant and religious minded. When the Preparation of his marriage ceremony was going on, Viśwarūp left home in order to get ride of the troublesome worldly life and became an ascetic. It was a

great shock to his fond parents. Nimāi consoled his parents saying that he would look after them as a true son. Then Nimāi devoted himself to studies. But his parents were not at all satisfied. They stopped his studies and removed him from the school. Nimāi was not at all happy with the decision of his parents. He spent most of his time with the association of naughty boys. The neighbours and relatives insisted upon Jagannāth to send Nimāi again to school. His Upanayana ceremony was performed when he was 8 years old. He was then admitted to the Tol of Gaṅgādās Paṇḍit. Within a short time he earned reputation as an intelligent student and mastered Sanskrit grammar, kāvyas and rhetoric. He also studied Smṛti and Jyotish under Viṣṇu Mīśra, Darśana under Sudarśan Paṇḍit and Veda and Bhāgavata under Advaita Ācārya. At the age of 16 Nimāi completed his studies and was awarded the title, 'Vidyāsāgara'. He composed one 'Tīkā' named 'Vidyāsāgarī Tippanī' on the Kalāpa Vyākaraṇa.

His father Jagannāth Mīśra died when Nimāi was only eleven years old. Their financial condition was not sound. So after the completion of his studies, Nimāi took up the profession of teaching. He set up a Tol in the house of Mukunda Sanjaya. Soon he earned reputation as a teacher. In the mean time, Nimāi married Lakṣmī Devī, the daughter of Vallabhācārya.

The bathing ghats of the Gaṅges were the centres of discussion on various topics. Nimāi used to go there in the afternoon with his students and challenged to dispute with him on any topic. One day a Digvijayi Pandit named Keśava Kāśmiri came to Navadwip. He was believed to be the son of Goddess Saraswatī. He challenged Nimāi in discussion. In reply Nimāi said that he was only a grammarian. So the Paṇḍit could easily vanquish him in discussion. But before doing that the paṇḍit should narrate the majesty of the Gaṅges beautified by the twilight. The Digvijayi paṇḍit then started reciting the hundred of verse glorifying the dignity of the Gaṅges. Nimāi praised the Paṇḍit but requested him to explain any portion of the recited stanzas. The Paṇḍit became annoyed and said that what came out from his mouth became flawless on account of the blessing of goddess Saraswatī. Nimāi then quoted one stanza and showed different defects in it. The Digvijayī Paṇḍit admitted his defeat.

As it is said earlier, Nimāi's financial condition was not sound. So he went out to East Bengal to earn money by teaching students in grammar. There he taught students his own Vidyāsāgarī Tippani on the Kalāpa Vyākaraṇa. From there he went to Śrīhaṭṭa to meet his grand parents. He fortunately met them at Burungā in Śrīhaṭṭa. He came back to Navadwip with good amount. During his stay in East Bengal his wife

Lakṣmi-Devi died by a snake bite. Thereafter, Nimāi in order to please his mother married again Viṣṇupriyā, the daughter of Rajpandit Sanātana.

After a few days, Nimāi went to Gayā to offer oblations to the manes of his deceased father. There he happened to meet Īśvarapuri who initiated him to Kṛṣṇa-mantra. Then he returned to Navadwip with his companions.

The people of Navadwip noticed a great change in Nimāi after his return from Gayā. He was always found brooding over Kṛṣṇa. the Vaiṣṇavas were glad to know Nimāi Pandit's conversion to Vaiṣṇavism. Nimāi met with his teacher Gangādās Paṇḍit who advised him to devote himself to classes. Accordingly Nimāi from the very next day started going to his Tol and went on teaching the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa but his students could not follow his lecture. His teacher rebuked him and instructed him to teach grammar properly in the class. At this, Nimāi continued to teach grammar for about four months but thereafter gave up teaching in the Tol.

One day Nimāi came to meet with Advaitācārya. On seeing Nimāi, Advaitācārya began to chant, the name of Hari. Advaitācārya then suggested to all Vaiṣṇavas to perform Saṁkīrtan with Nimāi, Nimāi gladly agreed to the proposal.

Nimāi started samkīrtan in every house of Navadvīp. Gradually Śrīvās, Murārīgupta and Nityānanda joined the Samkīrtan party of Nimāi.

The Vyāsapujā was an important festival of the Vaiṣṇavas. It was celebrated in the house of Śrīvās. On that occasion, Nityānanda performed as the chief priest. When Nimāi appeared in the festival, Nityānanda garlanded him. Instantly Nimāi assumed the form of six-armed Viṣṇu and delighted all. Advaita Ācārya then prayed to Nimāi to distribute Bhaktī irrespective of caste and creed, sex or education. Śrī Gaurāṅga then made up his mind to preach his tenets to all irrespective of caste and creed. His close associates went to every house of Nadiyā and asked them to worship Kṛṣṇa. In course of time, many people were converted to Vaiṣṇavism. But there were oppositions. Jagāi and Mādhāi, two brothers were rouble-makers. But ultimately they also embraced Vaiṣṇavism. After a good deal of troubles.

The Samkīrtan party grew stronger and stronger day by day. But strict privacy was maintained at the early stage. Śrī Gaurāṅga then started nagar Samkīrtan in which he took the lead. One day Kāzi of Navadvīp heard the sound of Samkīrtan. He ordered his men to stop the Kīrtan. The news of Kāzi's order enraged Nimāi terribly. He asked Nityānanda to inform every one to participate in the Nagar Samkīrtan. Many people of Navadvīp came out to participate in the Samkīrtan. The whole procession

of kīrtan was led by Advaita Ācārya, Haridās Thākura, Śrīvas, and Gaur-Nityānanda. When the procession reached the house of Kāzi, he (Kāzi) fled away out of fear. But in the long run he came out and bowed down before Nimāi. So Kāzi finally lifted his order and allowed performance of Kīrtan in navadvīp without any hindrance. So with the chastisement of the Kāzi, Śrī Gourāṅga ended his navadvīp-līlā.

When Keśava Bhārati, an eminent Vaiṣṇava saint came to Navadvīp. Śrī Gourāṅga met him and prayed for initiation to his order. Keśava Bhārati agreed and fixed a date for his initiation at Kātwā. On the day of his initiation a barber shaved his head and then Śrī Gourāṅga took ceremonial ablution in the waters of the Gaṅges. He then took his seat near his Guru. Keśava Bhārati initiated him to Gopāla mantra and named him as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. At that time he was only 24 years of his age.

After initiation Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya came to Śāntipur and thereafter at Navadvīp. After his return Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya expressed that it was not proper for an ascetic to live in his birth place. So he had to go elsewhere for preaching his tenets. Mother Śacidevī advised him to live at Nīlāchal (Puri). But before that he should go to Dākādakṣiṇ to meet his grandmother Śobhādevī. Accordingly Śrī Caitanya went to Dākādakṣiṇ to meet his grand mother. At that time Upendra Miśra, his grand father was no more. At the request of his grand mother Śrī Caitanya installed at

Dākādakṣin his two images viz. two armed Śrī Kṛṣṇa playing Murali and Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

From Dākādakṣiṇ Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya went to Hājo in Āssām to visit Hayagrīva Mādhava temple. From Hājo Śrī Caitanya went upto sadiyā to have a holy bath in Paraśurām Kuṇḍa and Brahma-Kuṇḍa. Then he started his return journey through East Bengal to Śāntipur and finally he started to Nilāchal with his followers Nītyānanda, Dāmodar, Jagadānanda and Mukunda. On seeing the top of the Jagannāth temple of Puri from distance he was overwhelmed with joy. He ran to the Jagannāth Temple like a bumble bee to embrace the idol but fell in estasy. The priests of the temple apprehending violation of the sancity of the deity lifted him to throw out elsewhere. But Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma came forward for his rescue. He with his men carried Śrī Caitanya to his house Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, the Vedantic scholar realised that the young handsome ascetic was not an ordinary personality.

Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma was delighted to known his close relationship with the family of Śrī Caitanya, since Sārvabhauma's father was the classmate of Nīlāambar chakrabarty. He had a great respect for Caitanya's father Jagannāth Miśra. Sārvabhauma wanted to teach Śrī Caitanya the Vedānta philosophy. Śrī Caitanya agreed to learn Vedanta from Sārvabhauma. Sārvabhauma then started teaching for long seven

days. Śrī Caitanya listened his teaching without making any comment. On the eighth day Sārvabhauma asked him whether he could understand. Śrī Caitanya replied that he could not follow. Hearing this, Sārvabhauma became annoyed. Śrī Caitanya then said that Sārvabhauma's explanation of Vyāsa-sūtras puzzled him. The meaning of the Vyāsa-sūtras is as clear as the sun-light. But Sārvabhauma's explanations have covered it up with his fancied interpretation.

After staying at Puri for a few months Śrī Caitanya decided to travel south India. At the time of his tour Sārvabhauma requested him to meet Rāi Rāmānanda, the governor of Rājmahendra, a true Vaiṣṇava. On the day of his tour the temple priests offered him a garland of Śrī Jagannāth. On the way Śrī Caitanya danced and sang Kīrtan. After crossing a long path, Śrī Caitanya reached Rajmahendri on the bank of the Godāvarī. He took holy ablution in the waters of the Godāvari and engaged in Nāma Samkīrtan. At that time Rāi Rāmānanda came there to take his bath in the Godāvari. Rāi Rāmānada noticed a handsome monk chanting name. He instantly bowed down at the feet of the monk. Śrī Caitanya embraced him and asked him, 'Are you Rāmānanda?' Rāi Rāmānanda replied, 'I am indeed that vile slave of a 'Sūdra'. In the evening they sat in discussion in a solitary place. The discussion between Rāi Rāmānanda and Śrī Caitanya as recorded in the Caitanyacaritāmṛta

and Caitanyabhāgavat is a precise treatise in the history of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. However, Śrī Caitanya advised Rāmānanda to give up worldly life and spend the rest of his life at Puri with him.

Śrī Caitanya then proceeded further towards south and after visiting several holy palces he reached at Rāmeśwaram. Thereafter, he arrived at Śrīrangam in Tricināpalli and stayed in the house of Venkaṭabhaṭṭa for four months. Gopalabhaṭṭa Goswāmī, the son of Venkaṭabhaṭṭa was in his good books. Incidentally he was one of the six Goswāmīns of Vṛndāvana. However, in Śrīrangam Śrī Caitanya immersed the Tāmil people singing the name of Hari.

Śrī Caitanya again met with Rāi Rāmānanda at Vidyānagar and handed over him two manuscripts viz. Brahmasamhitā and Kṛṣṇakarnāmṛta.

Śrī Caitanya then returned to Puri with Rāi Rāmānanda after about one year. When the news of Śrī Caitanya's safe return to Puri from South was communicated to Śacī Advaitācārya and other followers decided to go to Puri to meet Śrī Caitanya. They went to Puri at the occasion of Ratha-yātrā festival. At the Rathayātrā festival Mahāprabhu Śrī Caitanya danced and sang the name of Hari in front of Śrī Jagannātha's chariot alongwith his followers from Navadvīp.

After two years of his return to Puri from South Śrī Caitanya wished for a pilgrimage to Vṛndāvana. Accordingly Śrī Caitanya left Puri with group of his followers and reached at Śāntipur. There he stayed, in the house of Advaitācārya. Mother Sacīdevī came to see her son. This was the last meeting of Śrī Caitanya with his mother. From there Śrī Caitanya went to Ramakeli and met two brothers Sākara Mallik and Dabirkhās. Later on, they became famous as Sanātana Goswāmī and Rūpa Goswāmī and established Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava School at Vṛndāvan. However, at Rāmakeli a vast crowd gathered round Śrī Caitanya. So Sanātana requested Śrī Caitanya to go back to Puri. So Śrī Caitanya returned to Puri and staying there for four months, he again started for Vṛndāvan in autumn. This time he followed the hazardous path through Jharkhanda forest and gradually reached at Varanasi. There he met with Tapan Miśra. On his way to Vṛndavan Śrī Caitanya rolled on the way several times out of extreme joy. His first task at Vṛndāvan was to discover Rādhākuṇḍa and Śyāmakuṇḍa. He also paid his homage to Gopala Kṛṣṇa on the summit of Govardhan hill. The people of Vrindāvan and Mathurā realising the divine power of Śrī Caitanya assembled in large number for initiation. Śrī Caitanya's followers suggested him to leave Vṛndāvan for his safety. So Śrī Caitanya reluctantly agreed to leave Vṛndāvan for Prayāga. On the way, a group of Pāṭhān soliders came in

contact with him and became his ardent devotees. One of the converts was renamed as Rām Dās.

In Vārānasi Śrī Caitanya had to face a critical problem. The Vedāntins of Vārānasi invited Śrī Caitanya at a conference. Śrī Caitanya accepted the invitation. In the conference Śrī Caitanya indicated the fault of Śankara's monistic philosophy. In the discussion Prakāśānanda Saraswatī accepting his defeat resorted to the feet of Śrī Caitanya. Five days after the meeting, Śrī Caitanya left for Puri and arrived at thereafter in absence of about ten since then he never left Puri.

The Caitanyacaritāmṛta records that when Śrī Caitanya came back to Puri from Vṛbdāvan he was 36 years of his age. He past his last 12 years in extreme devotional ecstasies like that of Rādhā. Lively and Passionate conversation on Kṛṣṇa-līlā with Rāi Rāmānanda, Swarupadāmodar was dear to his heart. Sometimes, devotional songs and poems of Jayadeva, Cadidās, Vidyāpati were melodiously sung by him with Swarūpa dhāmodar and Rai Rāmānanda.

As days passed by, devotional passion overtook Śrī Caitanya. He became incapable of taking care of himself. Swarupa Dāmodar and Rai Rāmānanda looked after him with loving care. But even then he came out and fell down in the temple gate like the shape of a tortoise. Sometimes, he was found lying near the main gate of Śrī Jagannāth Temple stretching

his body. In such a state of emotionalism one day Śrī Caitanya recited his self-composed eight stanzas popularly called 'Śīkṣāṣṭakam' in Sanskrit and explained the significance of Nāma-Mahātmya to Swarupa dāmodar and Rāi Rāmānanda. After that there is no account recorded anywhere about the life of Śrī Caitanya.

Śrīkṛṣṇa Caitanya was never desirous to build up a cult or sect consciously nor did he deliver any lecture publicly for this effect. If such a cult or sect gathered itself round him it was because of his attractive personality and powerful appeal of his unalloyed devotion. He never composed anything for his Vaiṣṇavism except eight slokes popularly known as Śīksāstaka. But on many occasions he advised his followers on numerous subjects. He instructed Advaita to redum the downtrodden, the woman folk and the illiterates. Although Śrīcaitanya was not conscious of the fact that he had initiated a social movement, yet he worked like a social reformer. During the caturmāsya at Puri he advised his followers to have enough of self-control over the worldly desire.

Śrīcaitanya first preached his theory of 'Acintya Bhedābheda Tattva' to Sanātana Goswāmī at Vārānasi. To śrī-caitanya Kṛṣṇa is the Sun and Jīva is the sun's rays.

Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyā Vinod classified the teachings of Śrī Caitanya into ten separate principles. These were the basic instructions of

Śrī Caitanya to his followers. Among these principles the followings are the most important-

1. Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate reality.
2. Kṛṣṇa is all-powerful
3. Only by chanting the name of Hari one can be released from Māyā.
4. Jīva and Jaḍa are both separate and again both are same with Hari.
Jiva is bheda as well as abheda from Hari.
5. Devotion to Hari or Kṛṣṇa is only sādhanā for Jīva.¹⁷

Śrī Caitanya also advised his follower to be liberal to other's religion and should not hurt any other's sentiment. One should observe non-violence at any cost and should lead a pure and simple life. Śrīcaitanya observed these principles throughout his life. Therefore, the life and activities of Śrīcaitanya were the guiding principles for his followers.

According to Rādhā Govinda Nath, an eminent scholar of Gandīya Vaiṣṇavism Śrīcaitanya wrote personally the eight Śloka popularly called Śikṣāṣṭaka. Towards the later part of his life at Puri, Śrī-caitanya enjoyed these Śloka along with two of his friends Swarpa Damodar and Rai Rāmānanda.¹⁸ The subject matters of these eight Śloka are nothing but the ardent devotion towards Kṛṣṇa. Hence, devotion of Kṛṣṇa is the essence of Śrīkṛṣṇacaitanya's Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

It is, therefore, over this super structure the Gandīya Vaiṣṇavism was built by the followers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

The entire teachings of Śrī-caitanya's Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism were compiled by ṣaḍ Goswāmīs (six goswāmīs) of Vṛndāvana. Their works contain the whole teachings and theology of Śrīcaitanya's Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. They simply complied the basic tenets of caitanyaism as directed by Śrīcaitanya himself. Sanātana Goswāmī and Gopāl Bhatta wrote the ritualism and devotional practices of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in their famous book called Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. Rūpa-Goswāmī depicted the theory of Rasa of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in his two famous books styled 'Bhakti-rasāmṛta sindhu' and 'Ujjvala-nīlamani'. He propounded Bhakti as a Rasa and produced ultimately a systematic Bhakti Rasa Śāstra. His Vaiṣṇavatosinī, a commentary on the tenth chapter of the Bhāgavatapurāna, is a unique contribution to the literature of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Rūpa Goswāmī's nephew and disciple Jīva Goswāmī composed six sandarbhas which dealt with the mystical and metaphysical dogmas of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

The five Vṛndāvana Goswāmīs, Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj Goswāmī , the author of the Śrīcaityanycaritāmṛta, Raghunāth Das Goswāmī, Kavikarnapura, Vṛndāvan Das and also Viswanāth Chakraborty and

Baladeva Vidyābhusan actually produced the religious and philosophical doctrines of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism otherwise called Bengal Vaiṣṇavism .

The philosophy and the theology of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is based on the Upaniṣads, Brahmasūtras and the Bhāgavata Purāna. According to Śrī Caitanya, Bhāgavata is the essence of the Vedānta, since the Bhāgavata is replete with Bhakti Rasa.

Śrī Caitanya's Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is a protest against Śankara's Monistic philosophy. The school of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism advocates the doctrine of Ācintya-bhedāvāda or the doctrine of inscrutable identity and difference. In Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism Rādhā is the highest manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's chit power and the delight (Ānamda) of Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā is the Hlādinī or Ānadna of Kṛṣṇa.

According to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism Lord Kṛṣṇa is to be approached only through devotion based on love and that is why, it is said that Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu introduced Rāgānugā Bhakti or the devotion of loving attachment.

To Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism , Kṛṣṇa of Braja is the Eternal Reality or Para Brahma Kṛṣṇa is the Pūrna Brahma Kṛṣṇastu bhagavān Svayam'.¹⁹ According to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school Kṛṣṇa in Dwarka is Pūrna, in Mathurā purnatara while in Braja or Vṛndāvana is Pūrnatama, the most loving God of Caitanya school. The supreme reality of Kṛṣṇa of Brajalila

is endowed with three types of Śakti, viz. Swarūpa Śakti, Jīva śakti and Māyā Śakti. Again Swarupa Śakti is of three attributes, viz. Sat, Cit and Ānanda. Among these three attributes, Ānanda or Bliss is the best. Rādhā is the Ānanda of Hlādinī Śakti of Kṛṣṇa. However, all the Śaktis of Kṛṣṇa are Acintya or unthinkable. The link between the God and the true devotee is the Madhura-Bhakti- the best amongst the different types of Bhakti.

In the Bhāgavata purāna Kṛṣṇa is described as supreme reality. Likewise, Jaydeva also in his Gītagovinda eulogized Kṛṣṇa as the supreme God and the source of all incarnations. To Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism prema-Bhakti or loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa is the only means for getting salvation. But salvation to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is unlike the Mukti as advocated by the Monist or nirvāna as propounded by the Buddhist. Hence, according to Caitanyaism one has to serve Kṛṣṇa sincerely in order to be liberated from the worldly bondage. Therefore, there is no other way but to chant the name of Kṛṣṇa constantly only to be emancipated.

According to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, Rādhā is the ideal and the best devotee of Kṛṣṇa since she worshipped Kṛṣṇa with Premabhakti and to Rāi Rāmānanda Rādhā's Prem or love to Kṛṣṇa is the best amongst all the Gopis of Braja. Rādhā is the highest revelation of Kṛṣṇa's cit Śakti. Rādhā

is the personified form of devotional feelings. Rādhā is the part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. She is the same as Kṛṣṇa.

To the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, Śrīcaitanya embodies in him the quintessence of both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and is both the realiser and the realized in the same personality. To them Śrīcaitanya is worshipped as the dual incarnation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. According to Śrīcaitanya his complexion is not fair, but it appears fair due to its contact with Rādhā. Śrī Caitanya was both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This is the ideal of Vṛndāvan School. Externally Śrī Caitanya assumed the features and emotions of Rādhā, but internally he was Kṛṣṇa. Hence, the Vaiṣṇavas of Vṛndāvana later on accepted the practice of worshipping the images of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The Navadvīpa Vaiṣṇavas also recognized the rituals and theology of Vṛndāvans school of Vaiṣṇavas and finally this gave the foundation of entire system of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

Another notable contribution of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava s is the Nāma Saṁkīrtan. Everybody was welcomed to Nagar Saṁkīrtan irrespective of the caste or creed. This is the real contribution of Śrī Caitanya to the religious life of the country.

The term 'Bhakti' is first met with in the Śvetāśvataropaniṣad where it is said that the Upaniṣadic meaning is revealed to that high-souled one who has intense devotion for God and also similar devotion for preceptor-

Yasya deve parā bhaktiryathā deve tathā gurau |

tasyaite Kathitā hyarthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ ||²⁰

In the context of the characteristic of Bhakti the divine sage Nārada in his Bhaktisūtra says 'sātvasmin paramapremarūpā.'²¹ i.e. Bhakti is of the nature of intense love for God. It is of the nature of love which reaches its highest perfection. It is the highest end. Love for God is similar to the love for near and dear ones. This Bhakti is not only of the nature of love that reaches its acme of perfection but it is also of the form of nectar- 'amṛtsvarūpā ea.'²² According to Śāṅḍilya the most perfect attachment to God is Pārā Bhakti Parā anurakti- complete surrender. Śāṅḍilya says- 'ātmaratyavirodhena'.²³

Therefore, in consequence of Bhakti or devotion the love for Kṛṣṇa is attainable. The state of sincere love is Prema or love. Hence, Bhakti or devotion is the means and devotion itself is the end. The pure devotion or Śuddhābhakti is the only denotative principle for the attainment of love for Kṛṣṇa. In defining pure devotion or Śuddhābhakti Rūpagoswāmi writes in his Bhaktirasāmṛta sindhu thus- anyābhilāsitāśunyam jñānakarmādyanāvṛtam/ ānukūlyena Kṛṣṇānuśīlam bhaktiruttamā||²⁴ i.e. in pure devotion there should not be any desire except the ordent wish for one's own upliftment for the sake of rendering service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, nor there should be any sacred rite except the worship to Kṛṣṇa, nor there

should be knowledge and action in their respective forms. Being devoid of all these, rendering service to Lord Kṛṣṇa with all the sense organs accepting only those which are conducive to devotion, is called pure devotion or Śuddhābhakti.

According to Rupagoswāmī the pure devotion or Śuddhābhakti by nature is of six categories viz. (i) Kleśāghnī (ii) Śubhādā (iii) Mokṣalaghutākṛt (iv) Sudurlabhā (v) Sāndrānandaviśeṣasvarupā and (vi) Śrīkṛṣṇākarsinī. Compare- kleśāghnī śubhadā mokṣalaghutākṛt sudurlabhā| sāndrānandaviśeṣātmā śrīkṛṣṇākarsinī ca sā ||²⁵

i.e. (i) Kleśāghnī- Pure devotion alleviates all sorts of toils and evils.

(ii) Śubhadā- Pure devotion is source of happiness in all respects.

(iii) Mokṣalaghutākṛt- Pure devotion excels even the conception of liberation.

(iv) Sudurlabhā- Pure devotion is very hard to achieve.

(v) Sāndrānandaviśeṣasvarupā- Pure devotion is of the nature of bliss.

(vi) Śrīkṛṣṇākarsinī- Pure devotion attracts Śrīkṛṣṇa even.

Under different circumstances, Bhakti is again of three categories viz. Sādhana Bhakti, Bhāva bhakti and Premabhakti.

Sādhyaabhāvabhakti when accomplished by sense-organs is called Sāadhan bhakti, Prema bhakti is the particular state of Svarūpaśakti.

Therefore, by any means inclining the mind towards Kṛṣṇa is called Sādhana bhakti.

Sādhana bhakti is of two kinds viz. (i) Vaidhi (formal) and (ii) Rāgānugā (loving attachment). Rūpagoswamī writes-

Vaidhī rāgānugā ceti sādhanābhidhā²⁶|

The devotion which arises in accordance with the direction of the scriptures is called Vaidhī (formal) Sādhana bhakti. One should always recollect Viṣṇu- this is injunction; one should not forget Him- this is prohibition. All other injunctions and prohibitions are included within the basic injunction and prohibition. A devotee is neither attached to worldly life nor detached in it. For the maintenance of his worldly life he performs the mundane duties and being devoted he engages himself in pure devotion.

In accordance with the disparity of regard, the devotees are of three types, such as, Kanistha or inferior, Madhyama or moderate and uttama or superior.

The person who worships Kṛṣṇa devotedly but has no regard for the other devotees of Kṛṣṇa or other things related to Kṛṣṇa is an inferior devotee. His devotion may be slackened by the adverse criticism.

The person who is not thoroughly conversant with the Śāstras but has great regard is a Madhyama or mediocre devotee. And the person

who is both devoted and thoroughly conversant in the śāstras, is an *uttama* or superior devotee.

There are nine marks of devotion or *Bhaktyanga* and these are (i) Śravaṇa or listening to the name of God, (ii) Kīrtan or chanting his name, (iii) Smarana or recollection of God, (iv) Pādasevan or serving God, (v) Arcan or worshipping, (vi) Vandana or saluting God, (vii) dāsya or servitude, (viii) Sakhya or friendship, and (ix) ātmanivedan or self-surrender to Him. Of course, Śravaṇ, kīrtan and Smaran are the main marks of devotion. Other marks are included within these three marks of devotion.

However, Rūpa Goswāmi in his *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* mentions sixty-four marks (*angas*) of devotion. Among these the first ten are the initial marks and they are (1) resorting to the feet of Guru, (2) begetting lores being initiated into Kṛṣṇamantra from Guru, (3) Serving Guru, (4) leading noble path, (5) eager to know religious doctrines, (6) sacrificing any worldly object for pleasing Kṛṣṇa, (7) rising in holy places, (8) Plain living, (9) Observing Ekādaśī, (10) respecting holy trees like banyan etc.

Therefore , next ten marks or *angas* of *Bhakti* are prohibitory and these are (11) To keep aside the persons who are not devoted to Kṛṣṇa , (12) not to initiate any person who is incompetent, (13) not to construct any big temple, (14) not to go through various scriptures, (15) not to

behave duplicity, (16) not to be over-powered by sorrows and sufferings, (17) not to neglect other gods, (18) not to do any work to trouble the living creatures, (19) not to undertake any work that may be offensive in servitude or in chanting his name, (20) not to tolerate regard or jealousy regarding Kṛṣṇa or devotees of Kṛṣṇa .

The aforesaid twenty marks of Bhakti are said to be the doors to enter into the path of Bhakti (devotion).

The other forty four categories of Bhakti are respectively as follows-

- (21) holding the marks of Vaiṣṇava on the body;
- (22) decorating the letters of the name of –Hari on the body;
- (23) carrying the floral garland etc. offered to Hari;
- (24) dancing before the idol of God;
- (25) saluting idol of God by prostration;
- (26) standing with devotion seeing the Rathayātrā of God;
- (27) following the idol of God;
- (28) visiting the temple of God;
- (29) going round the temple of God;
- (30) worshipping;

- (31) cleansing the utensile of god;
- (32) singing lonely the name of God;
- (33) Singing the name of God along with the devotees;
- (34) Chanting mentally the name of God;
- (35) self-surrender;
- (36) reading eulogy;
- (37) tasting the offerings to God;
- (38) drinking water of the feet of God;
- (39) Smelling the fragrance of incense;
- (40) touching Śrīmūrti;
- (41) seeing Śrīmūrti;
- (42) seeing the ceremony and greeting of Śrīmūrti by waving lamps
before Him;
- (43) listening His name;
- (44) hoping for the grace of Śrīkr̥ṣṇa;
- (45) recalling His name.
- (46) Meditation;
- (47) servitude;
- (48) friendship;

- (49) offering himself to Śrīkr̥ṣṇa ;
- (50) offering the most favourite thing to Śrīkr̥ṣṇa
- (51) endeavouring everything for pleasing God;
- (52) resignation to Śrīkr̥ṣṇa in all ways;
- (53) serving Tulasi.
- (54) studying the Bhāgavata;
- (55) living at Mathurā;
- (56) serving Vaiṣṇava ;
- (57) performing ceremonies in accordance with one's capabilities;
- (58) observing Kāttika-Vṛta;
- (59) observing janmāṣṭamī;
- (60) serving the feet of Śrīmūrti devotedly;
- (61) discussion the Bhāgavata along with devotees;
- (62) association with like-minded persons;
- (63) singing the name of God; and
- (64) residing at Mathurā, the birth place of Śrīkr̥ṣṇa.

Among these sixty four marks, the following five are the most important, viz. (1) association with noble-minded persons (2) singing the name (3) listening the meaning of the Bhāgavata, (4) residing at Mathurā, and (5)

serving the Śrīmūrti. Since these marks (angas) are the most important, they have been repeated again and again. Among these five angas, singing His name is the most important.

As stated earlier sādhan-bhakti is of two types, viz. (i) Vaidhi (formal) and (ii) Rāgānugā (loving attachment). We have already discussed the features of Vaidhi Bhakti in detail. The characteristic features of Rāgānugā bhakti has been served as follows. Intense absorption of mind in respect of the desired object is called 'Rāga' or attachment. Rūpa Goswāmī writes-

Iṣṭe svārasikī rāgaḥ paramāviṣṭatā bhavet |²⁷

When the devotion towards Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa -bhakti) is replete with loving attachment, it is called 'Rāgātmikā Bhakti' or devotion imbued with loving attachment. Rūpa Goswāmī writes-

Tanmayī yā bhavedbhakti sātra rāgātmikoditā |²⁸

In simple language, the loving thirst towards Kṛṣṇa is Rāgātmikā Bhakti. The devotion which is seen among the dwellers of Braja is Rāgātmikā Bhakti and the devotion which is in conformity with the Rāgātmikā Bhakti is called 'Rāgānugā Bhakti or the devotion of loving attachment. Rūpa Goswāmī writes-

Virājanīmabhivvyaktam brajavāsijanādiṣu |

Rāgātimikāmanuṣṛtā yā sā rāgānugocyate ||²⁹

The 'Rāgānugā Bhakti' is noticed among the associates of Śrīkṛṣṇa in Vṛidāvana. The spontaneous devotion of the dwellers of Braja towards Kṛṣṇa is called Rāgānuga Bhakti. It may be mentioned here that the marks or angas of the vaidhi bhakti are also noticed among the Rāganugā devotees.

Rāgānugā Bhakti is again of two types- kāmarupā or of erotic nature and sambandharūpā or of the nature of relation. The term 'kāma' signifies thirst for enjoyment of the nature of erotic sentiment. This kind of longing for the service of Kṛṣṇa is seen only in Braja and this is revealed only through Braja-gopis. The love of Brajānganās (Brajagopis) towards Kṛṣṇa is so divine that the term 'Kāmabhāva' or 'sentiment of lust' is used for our realization. Kṛṣṇadās kavirāja in his caitanyacaritāmṛta has shown the difference between sentiment of lust of the gopis and the common amorous sentiment. One's desire for cardinal pleasure is called 'Kām', whereas one's wish for getting Kṛṣṇa's favour or delight by sense-organs is called 'Prem'

From the feeling of fatherhood of Kṛṣṇa there arises the devotion in the nature of relation; Nanda and Yaśodā have this type of sambandharūpā Rāgātmikā Bhakti.

Rāgānugā Sādhan bhakti is again of two types viz. 'Kāmānugā' and 'Sambandhānugā.

Following the foot-steps of Braja-gopis the service of God is called 'Kāmānugā Bhakti. Kāmānugā is also again of two categories, such as 'Svakīyā' and 'Parakīyā'.

The devotees who are attracted to Kṛṣṇa under the sentiment of parental love (or -Vātsalya-rasa) or under the sentiment of friendship, their, devotion is known as 'Sambandhānugā Bhakti.' Their duty is to follow the foot-steps either of Nanda Mahārāj or Suvala of Śrīkṛṣṇa and Suval was the bosom friend of Śrīkṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.

We are closing our discussion of this section here by glorifying the chanting the Mahāmantra the Nāma Sakīrtan since it is the most important anga or mark of devotion. The devotee being free from sin should sing the name of Kṛṣṇa incessantly along with noble devotees. Śrīmanmahāprabhu has directed to chant the Name constantly whether in taking food or at the time of sleep or in wakeful state. In the Caitanyabhāgavata the direction of Śrīmanmahāprabhu is recorded thus-

'hare Kṛṣṇa hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa hare hare|

Hare Rāma hare Rāma Rāma Rāma hare hare||

Prabhu kahe kahilām ei mahāmantra |

Ihā japa giyā save Kariyā nirvandha ||

Ihā haite sarvasiddhi haive savār |

Sarvakṣaṇ vala ithe vidhi nāhi ār' ||³⁰

Love for Kṛṣṇa -Kṛṣṇapremā and the sentiment of devotion-Bhakti-rasa

All works are done if any person devotes himself to Kṛṣṇa. This feeling is called devotion or Śraddhā. When attraction for veneration becomes intense, it is called emotion or love and in turn when love becomes deep, it is called 'Prema'. It makes the heart completely soft and rouses longing for the person of love.

Samyañmasṛ ṇitasvānto mamatvātīśayāñkitaḥ |

Bhāvaḥ sa eva sāndrātmā budhaiḥ premā nigadyate ||³¹

When the heart gets attachment to adorable Kṛṣṇa, there awakes prema (love). For the sake of gradual intensity of fondness, 'Prema' gets some successive states as affection (Sneha), attachment (rāga), love (Pranay) etc. Melting of heart is 'sneha' deep affection is 'rāga' and profound faith is 'Pranay'.

The permanent feeling ('Sthāyibhāva is the love for Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa - rati).

The sentiment of devotion (Bhaktirasa) reveals itself through the combination of Vibhāvas (the elements which excite) Anubhāvas

(Ensuaunts), Sātivikabhāvas (Pious feelings) and Vyabhicāribhāvas or Sancaribhāvas (transient subordinate feelings) with the 'Sthāyibhāva Kṛṣṇa rati' permanent feeling of love for Kṛṣṇa.

The permanent feeling, such as, love for Kṛṣṇa is of five types, viz. Śānta (calm), dāsyā (Servitude), Sakhya (friendship), Vātsalya (tenderness) and Madhura (Pleasant). Vibhāva or excitant means the condition by which love for Kṛṣṇa is developed. Vibhāva is of two types, viz. Ālamvana and uddīpana. Again Ālamvana is of two kinds, viz. Viṣaya- ālamvana and Āśraya ālamvana. The person relating to whom the love is evoked is Visaya ālamvana and the devotees of love are āśraya-alamvana. The objects which excite the feeling of love are Uddīpana Vibhāva. All the memorial objects of sports of Kṛṣṇa are Uddīpana Vibhāva. The external manifestations by which emotion is indicated are called Anubhāvas. Dancing, singing etc. are pious feelings or Sāttvika- bhāvas. There are eight Sāttvika bhāvas, such as stambha or dullness, sveda or sweating etc. These Sāttvitabhāvas are of five classes, such as smoky, kindled, racy, inflamed, and illuminated.

The vyabhicāribhāvas or Sañcāribhāvas are 33 (thirty three) in number, such as (i) nirveda (ii) viṣāda (iii) dainya etc.

The permanent feeling (Sthāyibhāva) is of three categories, viz. Sāmānya or common, svaccha or clear and Śāntādi (i.e. Śānta or calm) etc.

The five principal permanent feelings are Śānta, dāsya, Sakhya, Vātsalya and Madhur or Ujjvala. Hence, there are five sentiments of devotion, viz. Śānta, Dāsya, Sakhya, Vātsalya and Madhura.

The attribute of Śānta is the wisdom relating to Kṛṣṇa. In Dāsya there is the virtue of affection over and above that particular attribute of Śānta. Besides, servitude predominates in Dāsya. In Sakhya there is the feeling of confidence apart from the attributes of Śānta and Dāsya. In vātsalya there is the predominance of tender feeling in addition to three attributes the three sentiments- Śānta, Dāsya and Sakhya. In Madhura there is the service by all the limbs without any hesitation. Besides, there are the attributes of the aforesaid Rasas. Hence, Madhura-rasa is considered to be the best.

Śānta-bhakti rasa- The viṣaya-ālamvana of the Śānta-bhakti-rasa is Nārāyaṇa assuming the form of a human being called Śrīkṛṣṇa endowed with the attributes like calm, subdued, Pure, self-restrained (Vaśī) etc. the sages like Sanaka and others and the wise and the devotees are āśraya-ālambhava of the sentiment of Śānta. The association with the noble men who reside in the forests or in the holy places are the Uddīpana Vibhāva

of this sentiment. Anubhāvas are the sight at the tip of the nose, efforts like a saint etc. The Sāttvikabhāvas of this sentiment are stambha, sveda, romānca, svarabheda etc.

Dāsyā-bhakti-rasa- sentiment of servitude.

The Viśaya- ālamvana of this sentiment is Śrīkṛṣṇa who is endowed with the attributes like divinity, omniscience, kindness etc. The four types of devotee like faithful devotee, dependent devotee attendant devotee and follower are the āśraya-alamvana of the sentiment of servitude. The uddīpana vibhāvas are dust of foot, food offering to Śrīkṛṣṇa etc. obedience to Śrīkṛṣṇa or faithful to Śrīkṛṣṇa is the Anubhāva of the Dāsyarasa.

Sakhyā-Bhakti-Rasa or the sentiment of friendship-

Viśaya-ālamvana of the Sakhyā-Rasa is Śrīkṛṣṇa who is learned, wise, well-dressed, blissful etc.

Āśraya-ālamvana of this kind of sentiment is the four kinds of friends who are affectionate, faithful, devoted to God and helpful to others. They are called Suhr̥d, Sakhā, Priyasakhā and priyanarmasakha respectively. The Anubhāvas of the sentiment of friendship are playful fight, lying on same-bed etc. The transitory feelings of the sentiment of friendship are joy, pride etc.

Vātsalya-Rasa- The Viṣaya-ālamvana of this type of sentiment is Śrīkṛṣṇa possessing softness of limbs, modesty, all good features etc. Āśraya-ālamvanas are Nanda, Yaśodā, Rohinī, Upānanda of Braja and also Vāsudeva, Devaki and others of Mathurā. Uddīpana Vibhāvas are smile, soft and sweet utterances, playful efforts of childhood etc. Anubhāvas are smelling of head, blessings etc. The sthāyibhāvas or permanent feeling is filial love of this type of sentiment.

Madhura-Rasa- Ujjvala-Rasa or pleasant sentiment-

The Viṣaya-ālamvana of the Madhura Rasa is Śrīkṛṣṇa who is endowed with the merits of the sweetness of beauty (Rupamādhurya), of the melodious note flute (Venumārdhurya), of gracefulness of sportive activities (lilāmādhurya), of elegance of love (Premamādhurya). Āśrayaālamvanas of this sentiment are lady loves (Preyasīgana) and the Uddīpana Vibhāvas are sonorous sound of flute, vernal season, monsoon cloud etc. Anurbhāvas are glancing, sweet smile etc. The permanent feeling of the Madhura-Rasa is sweet love. In this type of sentiment all the stages of love are present.

There are also seven subordinate sentiments of the doctrine of Bhakti and they are hāsya (mirth), Adbhuta (wonderful), Karuna (pathos), Raudra (terrific), Bhayānaka (dreadful), Vira (heroic) and Vobhatsa (Odious). The sthāyibhāvas or basic emotions of these sentiments are

laughter, wonder, sorrow, anger, fear, enthusiasm and abhorrence respectively.

Śrīkr̥ṣṇa, the hero of the Madhura-Rasa is complete at Dwāarakā, more complete at Mathurā and the most complete at Braja. In the nature of his forlic activities. He is Dhirodāttā, Dhīralalita, Dhiroddhata and Dhīraprasānta.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the crest-jewel of the heroines. She is possessing many attributes. She is lovely (Madhurā), tender-aged (Kīśorī), beautiful eyed (cancalnetrā), beaming faced, bloomind with youth, meck, shy, affectionate, sublime, foremost amongst the lady-loves of Kṛṣṇa and so on.

Śrī Gaurāṅga was converted into Vaiṣṇavism there was a small group of Vaiṣṇavas in Bengal. They regularly performed kīrtan secretly in their houses. This kīrtan party in Navadwip was exclusively private for fear of Kāzi and for the hostile attitude of the Pāṣaṇḍis. But when Śrī Caitanya was converted to a devotional Vaiṣṇava, he advised his followers in Navadwip to perform kīrtan fearlessly. By degrees, Śrī Caitanya made the kīrtan very popular among the common people of Navadwip. Thus Śrī Caitanya started Nagar Samkīrtan. Śrī Caitanya's kīrtan party was open for all irrespective of caste and creed. One day Kāzi of Navadwip hearing the sound of Samkīrtan became very furious. He

ordered to stop Samkīrtan. In protest against the order of Kāzi, Śrī Caitanya firmly started Nagar Samkīrtan. In that Sagar Samkīrtan almost the whole of Navadwip participated. The leaders of the Śamkirtan were Advaitācārya, Yavan Haridās, Śrī Caitanya, Nityānanda, Śrīvās and Candra Śekhara. They were all in the front of the Samkīrtan. As a result, Kāzi out of fear withdrew his order. So with the defect of Kāzi, Śrī Caitanya's Navadwip līlā practically came to an end.

During the next Rathayātrā festival Advaita declared that Śrī Caitanya was the embodiment of all the incarnations of Viṣṇu. But Śrī Caitanya became annoyed with Advaita and decided to go to Nīlāchal leaving Navadwip for the rest of his life.

After the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya, Nityānanda spread Kṛṣṇanāma among all the people irrespective of caste and creed.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism spread in entire Bengal by different leaders and it took different forms. The followers of Gaura Paramyabadiś accepted Gaura as a separate God. They had separate Bhajan. The Goswāmīs of Vṛndāvan took the path of Śrī Caitanya. To them Kṛṣṇa is the God and to get Him they accepted the path of Gopīs of Braja. At present the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is the combination of Navadwip School and the Vṛndāvan School. The Vṛndāvan School constructed the superstructure of philosophy by composing huge literature of Gauḍīya

Vaiṣṇavism. Nityānandi spread Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal in the 16th century and Vīracandra increased the number of Caitanya cult while Narottamadās brought the compromise between Navadwip School and Vṛndāvan school of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

Caitanyaism became so popular among the mass people because of its religious freedom, social equality and above all of its universal love of humanism. That is why, a large number of Muslims, Buddhists, Śākats and Nāthayogis of Bengal were deeply influenced by Caitanyaism.

Śrī Caitanya's influence on Bengali Padāvali literature is tremendous. During the life time of Śrī Caitanya some of his devotees became by writing Vaiṣṇava padas. When Śrī Caitanya went to Nīlāchal his devotees of Bengal became dejected for his separation. Some of them composed songs with the title 'Gauracandrikā'. Murāri Gupta wrote first the 'Caitanya-jīvanī-Kāvya in Sanskrit. Narahari Sarkar Thākur was said to be the first Padakartā about Gaurāṅga. The Ghosha-brothers, such as, Govinda Ghosh, Mādhava Ghosh and Vāsudev Ghosh were the renowned Padakartās. Among them the youngest Vāsudev Ghosh became famous composing Vaiṣṇava padas. 'Nimāi sannyāser pālā' by Vāsu Ghosh is full of Pathos. Apart from them, Yadunandan, Govinda Ācārya, Vāsudeva Datta and others were also noted. Caitanyadeva's contemporary Padakartās. After the disappearance of Caitanyadeva there appeared the

renowned Padakartās. They were Balanāmdas, Jnānadās, Kavi Rāyśekhara and Govindadās.

Balarāmadāsā's Padas of the Vāsalya sentiment are very impressive. Jñānadās composed Padas in both Brajabuli and Bengali. He initiated the style of Candīdās. His Padas are matchless in Vaiṣṇava literature. Govindadās followed the style of Vidyāpati, the noted Maithili poet. Govindadāsā's best padas are written in Brajabuli.

Orissā is a neighbouring Hindu state of Bengal. Śrī Caitanya lived for long 18 years for the rest of his monastic life at Nīlāchal. Many of his followers came to Orissā alongwith him from Bengal and settled in Orissā. Besides, every year during the Ratha-yātrā festivals many devotees from Bengal used to come to Śrī Caitanya at Nīlāchal. They used to stay for a long time at Puri in order to perform the Cātur-māsya-vrata. Many Oriyā devotees also came in with the Caitanyapanthis at Puri. As a result, a small Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava group came into existence at Nīlāchal. The first groups of devotees at Puri were Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, Rāi Rāmānanda, Swaropa Damodar, Kāśī Mīśra and others.

During Śrī Caitanya's long stay at Puri from 1515 to 1533 his Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism secured royal patronage and gradually it became the religion of common people. King Pratāpa Rudra of Orissā was influenced

by Śrī Caitanya's devotional personality and finally became his devotee. So for the sake of royal patronage, the other devotees of Nīlāchal used to serve Śrī Caitanya with 'Dāsya-bhakti'. They were Kāśi Miśra, Paramānanda Puri, Bhavānanda Roy and many others.

Śrī Caitanya visited different parts of Orissā and flooded the entire kingdom with love and devotion. At present kīrtan is very popular in all parts of Orissā.

Śrī Caitanya had great influenced on the literary activities in Orissā. The Vaiṣṇavas of Orissā considered Śrī Caitanya as the incarnation of Śrī Jagannāth. However, Oriyā Vaiṣṇava literature was highly influenced by the philosophical thoughts of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. The noted Oriyā Vaiṣṇava poets of the 16th century were Rāi Rāmānanda, Mādhavī Dāsī, Kānai Khuntia, Narahari Senā, Balavām Dās and others. Kānai Khuntīā in his book styled 'Mahābhāva Prakāśa' depicted the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Rādhā Tattva.

The change in the outlook of Vaiṣṇava poets of Orissā Commenced right from the 17th century. Padāvalīs on Kṛṣṇa-līla, Vṛndāvan-līlā, Gopī bhāva etc. were written in this period. The books like 'Rasa Kallola' and Gopī bhāva delineating Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-Tattva were written in the 17th century. The theme of the 18th century Oriyā Vaiṣṇava poems was Mathurā līlā and Dwārakā-līlā. Besides, in the beginning of the 18th

century the influence of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism over Oriyā Vaiṣṇava literature started with Dina Kṛṣṇa Dāsa's, 'Rasakallola'. Some of the prominent Oriyā Vaiṣṇava writers of the 18th century were Kavi Bhūpati, Paṇḍit, poetess bṛndāvati Dāsī, Laksman Miśra, Dāśarathi Das, Kṛpāsindu, Nārāyan Deo, Nīlakanṭha Bhanja etc. Besides, some Campū Kāyas were also written by the Oriyā Vaiṣṇava poets in the 19th century. These Campūkāvyas are the best examples of the influence of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in Orissā.

Unlike Orissā, Caitanya's faith was never very much wide-spread in Āssām. But Caitanyaism was not unknown in Āssām. According to tradition, Caitanya remained sometimes as an ascetic in a cave near Hājo. Jayānanda wrote in his 'Caitanya Maṅgal' that Caitanya stayed some days at Hājo and there is a cave called 'Caitanya Gaumphā' at Hājo. There is a temple of Hayagriva Mādhava at Hājo. Hari Bhārati, grandfather of Rāmakanta was probably a follower of Caitanyaism. According to Rāmakānta, Haribhārati practiced the names of Hari or the Ṣolanāma of Hari. These sixteen names signify the sixteen names of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Besides, the followers of Caitanyaism established a few Ākhrās of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in different parts of Āssām. At present these Akhras are known as Kalābāri Satra, Tamolbari satra, Kahuātali Satra and Nārāyanpur Satra (situated in Kāmṛūp district). There are also a

few more satras in Nowgong and Gopalpara districts. However, Śrī Caitanya introduced Samkīrtan and the study of the Bhāgavata at the Hayagriva Mādhava temple. Dāmodaradeva, the founder of the Damodara Vaiṣṇava sect in Āssām had a meeting with Śrī Caianya and was influenced by him. Bhaṭṭadeva Kaviratna, the disciple of Damodaradeva in his book styled ‘Sat Sampradāya Kattā wrote that Damodaradeva spread Caitanyaism in Āssām.

Jayānanda in his book ‘Caitanya Mangal’ wrote that Nimāi went to East Bengal to visit Śrīhaṭṭa, his father’s birth place. Achyota Charan Choudhury Tattwanidhi in his book ‘Caitanyer Āssām O Purbāñchāl Parikramā also wrote that at his mother’s order Caitanya again went to, Śrīhaṭṭa to meet with his grand-mother Śobhādevī at Dāccā Dakṣin. However, at Dāccā Dakṣin popularly called Gupta-Vṛndāvan there is a temple with dual images of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya. Now these images are installed at Śrīkonā of Cāchār District. At Dāccā Dakṣina some of Śrī Caitanya’s prominent devotees were Rāmadās, Mādhavadās, Jñānavar and Kalyānavara. They spread Caitanyaism in Śrīhaṭṭa, Kāchhār (Cāchār) and Maimanshing.

During the post Caitanya era particularly in the 17th, 18th and the 19th centuries the Caitanyaism remained uninterrupted in Śrīhaṭṭa and Cāchār areas through the establishment of the Rādhākṛṣṇatemples and

Mahāprabhu Akadās and in the compositions of the Vaiṣṇavite devotional scriptures.

Vaiṣṇavism is very popular among the lower classes of people of this area. In Barak valley also there are numerous Ākhḍās wherein the Vaiṣṇavite tradition is faithfully followed. Among these Ākhḍās, the Bāraigraam Ākhḍās is famous. At Śālgangā also there is one noteworthy temple known as ‘Śrī Rādhā Ballabh Rāi Kālāchand Āśram.

In this context, Śrī Śrī Bhavaneśwar Sādhu Thākur Mandir of Tārāpur, Silchar is worthy to be mentioned. It is a famous vaiṣṇava temple of the Biṣṇupriyā Manipuri Society.

The influence of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in Manipur is tremendous on account of the patronage of the powerful kings of Manipur. The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa- cult spread in Manipuri due to Caitanyaism king Charāirongba was the first king of Manipur who was formally initiated into Vaiṣṇavism. He patronized devotional Kīrtan. His son Garibniwaz was also a famous vaiṣṇava king in Manipur, Garibniwaz was influenced by Bengali Padāvalī Kīrtans. It is to be noted that his daughter was the first Manipuri woman who visited Vṛndāvan.

King Jayacandra Elias Bhāgyacandra and his subjects were initiated into Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism by Santadās Bābāji, a famous

Vaiṣṇava saint of Narasingha Tillā Ākhadā of Sylhet. It is a historical fact that during the reign of Jayacandra, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism became the state religion of Manipur. The king Jayacandra is said to be the morning star of the neo-Vaiṣṇavism (Caitanyaism) in Manipur which shows its dawn with King Gambhir Singh and reaches its climax in the reign of king Candrakīrti. Vaiṣṇavas of Manīpur give emphasis to know three things, such as, Śrīmadbhāgavatam, Caitanyacaritāmṛta and Lord Śrī Caitanya to have proper appraisal of the Gītagovinda.

It merits mention here that the Śrīmadbhāgavatam the Viṣṇupurāṇa and the Gītagovinda were translated into Manipure language during the reigns of king Gambhir Singh and Candrakīrti. Besides, the Caitanyacaritāmṛta and the Bengali Padāvalis and lyrics were also translated into Manipuri language.

The most striking thing to be noted here that during the reign of Gambhir Singh, Thākur Bhakti Siddhānta is said to have composed a Sanskrit work on music and dance styled ‘Śrīkrṣṇa-rasa-samgīta-Samgraha’. There is also another Sanskrit work on Manipuri dance called ‘Govinda-Samgīta-līlā-vilāsa’ which is attributed to king Jayasingha kind Jayasingha is said to be the father of ‘Rāsa-līlā’. He introduced the Mahārāsa as a form of worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa with the accompaniment of music and dance.

To conclude, it may be said that Vaiṣṇavism in Manipur is nothing but Caitanyaism. It is rapidly spread as a state religion of Manipur due to the patronage of the powerful kings of Manipur. Therefore, in their festivals, customs, manners, dance, music, and kīrtan the influence of Caitanyaism is noticed.

Śrīkṛṣṇa Caitanya's Bhakti movement is not only a religious movement but it was also a socio-cultural movement because it deeply influenced the socio-cultural life of the people of Eastern India particularly of the two states Bengal and Orissā. Caitanyaism is a devotional religion as it is based on humanism, socialism and religious liberation. Love for all, sympathy for all are the unique features of Caitanyaism.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya's devotional religion took place in the sixteenth century but its influence continued till the seventh and the eighteenth centuries in the states of Bengal and Orissā. The Renaissance of the nineteenth century in Bengal was only meant for the educated people. It did not influence on the village life of Bengal. But the influence of Caitanya movement moved all irrespective of caste and creed and ultimately crossing the boundaries of Bengal it spread in the neighbouring states of Eastern India.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is basically the religion of man. In Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism man is the living image of God. Therefore, humanism, socialism and religious liberalism are the basic tenets of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

So in the light of these fundamental doctrines a discussion on the contemporary relevance of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism has been launched in this chapter entitled ‘contemporary relevance of the Bhakti movement of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya’.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism teaches selflessness and service to mankind. We see when Sanātan Goswāmī met with Śrī Caitanya at Kāśā, he (Śrī Caitanya) instructed him (Sanātanā Goswāmī) to be free from worldly desire. Being devoid of selflessness one should serve mankind in distress. This ideal of Caitanyaism is quite relevant even in the present days. The love for mankind made Śrī Caitanya the leader of the suffering people. Hence, Śrī Caitanya is said to be the symbol of compassion.

In Śrī Caitanya’s Bhakti movement there is no room for communalism or narrowness. Śrī Caitanya was not against caste system but his Vaiṣṇavism raised him for above the caste system. His samkīrtan party was open for all irrespective of caste and creed. Besides, one needs to be neither a Paṇḍit, nor a saint or a high class Brahmin to embrace Vaiṣṇavism. Even a non-brahmin can become a preceptor for Brahmin

disciple. In the worship of Kṛṣṇa there is no distinction in respect of caste and creed. The glaring examples to this point are the two close followers viz. Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrīla Haridas Thākura. Nityānanda popularly called Nitāi was an Avadhūta and Śrīla Haridās Thākura was a Muslim. The Vaiṣṇava religion which is propagated by Śrī Caitanya was above communalism. It was not confined to a particular section of the people. Śrīla Haridās Thākura was appointed Ācārya though he was born in a Muslim family. He was loved by all Vaiṣṇavas. Likewise he had great respect for all Vaiṣṇavas. Hence he was the preceptor and the most pious and devoted Vaiṣṇava. Advaita Ācārya, though belonging to a high class Brahmin offered Śrāddha Pātra to Yavana Haridās during the Śrāddha ceremony of his mother.

Yavana Haridās spread vaiṣṇavism. Rāmānanda Basu and other noble men of Kulingrām accepted the discipleship of Yavana Haridās.

Nityānanda, the other close follower of Śrī Caitanya introduced the 'Ciḍāmahotsava and brought democracy in Vaiṣṇavism thereby.

It is said elsewhere that Śrī Caitanya rescued Kāzi of Navadvīp. Not only had that while coming back from Vṛndāvan Śrī Caitanya blessed 'a group of Pāṭhān soldiers.' Śrī Caitanya's devotional religion was so peaceful and divine that it has a powerful appeal to attract even non-Hindus. A large number of Muslim, Buddhists, Śāktas and Nātha-Yogis

of Bengal were deeply influenced by the Caitanya movement. Besides, many Christian people are also attracted by Caitanyaism. Now-a-days many I.S.K.O.N temples have been established in the major cities of the world. This proves the influence of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and contemporary relevance of this devotional religion.

Śrī Caitanya's Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was a protest against the Brahmanical tyranny and Hindu Orthodoxy. Samkīrtan was the method of his devotional movement. It was open for all. Hence, it released the man from Brahmanical tyranny and Hindu orthodoxy. His Vaiṣṇavism was against the ritualistic customs of the then society. His samkīrtan, therefore, established religious equality of common people. He advocated that all are equal before God. This tradition is still continued even today.

Śrī Caitanya always encouraged education. He taught Sanskrit grammar to students in his tol. It is said that on his first visit to Śrīhaṭṭa, his ancestral home he taught his own Tikā named 'Vidyāsāgarī' on the Kalāp Vyākaraṇa to students of East Bengal and thus he gave inspiration to young learners to learn Sanskrit grammar because grammar is said to be the very face of the Śāstras.

Besides, wherever he went he explained the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, the scripture of the Vaiṣṇavas. According to Śrī Caitanya the Bhāgavata is the essence of the Vedānta. The four vedas are said to be the curd while

the Bhāgavata is the cream. Among the commentaries on the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, Śrī Caitanya preferred to Śrīdharaswāmi's commentary on the said purāna. He advised all the vaiṣṇavas to recite or to listen the recitation of the Bhāgavata. Even now the Bhāgavata is the holly scripture of the Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrī Caitanya directed his close followers particularly to Advaita Ācārga and Nityānanda to redeem the illiterate masses of Bengal from the clutches of the medieval Bahmanical tyranny and also advised them to spread his devotional religion among the womanfolk.

After the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya in Nilāchal, Nityānda spread Kṛṣṇanāma among all the people irrespective of Brahmins or caṇḍālas. Thus the teachings of Caitanyaism help to extend universal fellow feelings. That is why; Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is so popular among the common people of Eastern India till today.

In this context, the contemporary relevance of the marks of Bhakti (Bhaktyaṅga) deserves to be mentioned.

To Vaiṣṇavas, the tulasi is very holy. It is regarded as the holy lotus-fruit of Kṛṣṇa. Hence, service to Tulasi is glorified in different Purāṇas.

Mahāprbhu Śrī Caitanya had high regard for Tulasi. He kept Tulasī by his side when he was seated for counting God's name. Mahāprabhu did not take his food without going round Tulasi with devotion and without pouring water on it. This kind of service to Tulasī as practiced by Śrī Caitanya is followed by all the pious-minded Vaiṣṇavas even today.

Besides, the devout Vaiṣṇavas hold the marks of Tilaka on the forehead or upon the bridge of the nose. They also hold the garland of Tulasi by their neck. This practice of bearing the Vaiṣṇava-marks on the body or holding the wreath of Tulasi by the neck is still followed by devout vaiṣṇavas even today. The devoted people also even at present drink 'caraṇāmṛta' and partake 'Naivedya' with devotion. It is believed that one who is unable to perform any religious rite also attains the supreme bliss by simply drinking 'caraṇāmṛta'. Even now-a-days people eagerly look at 'Ārati' or waving of lights, conch etc. before the God and smell the fragrance of the offered incense and of the flowers. Even in the modern age, the devoted Vaiṣṇavas observe the Vaiṣṇava-ceremonies like Śrīkṛṣṇa's Janmāṣṭamī, Rāmnavamī, Jhulan-jātrā, Ratha-yātra, Dolyātrā, Ekādaśīvrata, Cāturmmāsya Vrata, Kārttika-vrata and so on.

During Ratha-yātra ceremony at Purī, a large number of followers of Mahāprabhu Śrī Caitanya used to go to Purī with a view to meeting with Mahāprabhu and also to participate at the car-festival of Lord

Jagannātha. In the car-festival Śrī Caitanya with his followers danced and sang the name of God shouting Hari, Hari, Jaya Jagannātha. While dancing Śrī Caitanya recited numerous Sanskrit verses as a mark of his deep love for God. He also said in a stanza that he was neither a saint, nor a king; neither a Vaiśya nor a śudra. He was neither a house-holder nor a Vānaprasthin. But he was a slave of the slave of the lotus-feet of gopis.

Even in the present days, people zealously celebrate Rathayātrā Mahotsava with devotion. On that occasion people dance and sing the name of God. During Rathayātrā ceremony Manipuri devotees recite the Daśāvātāra-stotra of the Gītagovinda by Jayadeva.

According to Rūpa Goswāmī the Harivāsarasammāna or Ekādaśīvrata is one of the initial marks of devotion. The ‘Ekādaśī tithi’ is also known by the name Harivāsara, Mādhava tithi, Vaiṣṇava tithi, Harerdina etc. There are twenty-four Ekādaśīs in twelve months and another two Ekādaśīs in Puruṣottammāsa or Adhimāsa. So there are all total twenty six Ekādaśīs. These Ekādaśī tithis are to be observed by every Vaiṣṇava abstaining from food-on that tithi. A devout Vaiṣṇava has the opportunity to recall the name of Śrī Govinda. That is why, it is mentioned in the Citanyacaritāmṛta that Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu entreated his mother Śacī Devi to observe Ekādaśī. Henceforth, in complying with the request of Śrī Caitanya, Śacī Devi observed Ekādaśī Vrata abstaining

from food. So it is the pious duty of all mortal human beings to observe Ekādaśī in order to attain piety and to remember the name of Śrī Govinda. It is seen that even now the devout Vaiṣṇavas observe the Ekādaśī vrata abstaining from food.

During the Ratha-yātrā festival a large number of Śrī Caitanya followers from Navadvīp went to Nilāchal to meet with Mahāprabhu and to participate in the Chariot festival of Śrī Jagannātha. After the festival they remained thereat for another four months in order to observe the ‘Cāturmmāsya-vrata’ with Mahāprabhu right from bright Dvādaśī tithi of the month of Āṣāva to bright Dvādaśī tithi of the month of Kārttika. This Cāturmmāsya-vrata is to be observed by every Vaiṣṇava or else he will incur sin. In the Cāturmmāsya-vrata there are injunctions and prohibitions regarding taking food.

In the month of Śrāvaṇa the vegetable food is prohibited, curd in Bhādrapada, milk in Āśvin while non-vegetarian food is prohibited in the month of Kārttika. Of course, now-a-days the rigidity of the prohibition of taking food is somewhat loosened. Even now the Cāturmmāsya vrata is observed by the religious minded men particularly by the devoted Vaiṣṇavas.

The Ūrjjā vrata or otherwise called Dāmodara vrata is to be performed in the month of Kārttika i.e. in the last month of the

Cāturmmāsya vrata. The Dāmodhara Vrata is also called Ūrjjavrata or Kārttika Vrata or Niyamamāsa. This Ūrjjāvratā is regarded as one of the sixty four marks of the devotion or Bhaktyaṅga as mentioned by Rūpa Goswāmī in his Bhakti-rasā-mṛta sindhu. Those persons who are unable to perform the Cāturmmasya, they must observe Niyamamāsa or Kārttika vrata. The observance of the Niyamamāsa is obligatory for all even though observed the Cāturmmāsya vrata.

Kārttika māsa is very holy to Vaiṣṇavas as this māsa was favourite to Kṛṣṇa. In this month one should not take non-vegetarian food like meat and fish. This Niyamamāsa is to be observed by singing the name of God and by listening the noble episodes of Kṛṣṇa. In this month the people belonging to Vaiṣṇava faith should enkindle the sky-lamp or Ākās-Pradīp in the open space outside the room.

The phālgunī Purnimā tithi is very holy to Vaiṣṇavas since on that auspicious tithi Śrī Caitanya was born at Navadvīp. Incidentally it is the occasion for Dolotsava.

Mahāprabhu Śrī Caitanya used to celebrate Dolotsava with his followers singing Kīrtan song. Therefore, people even now observe Dolotsava by singing kīrtan song for Aṣṭaprahar i.e. for whole day and night at a stretch or sometime they sing Kīrtan for 56 prahars or seven days continuously.

In the temple people worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa with devotion. In Ākḥadās we see the Vaiṣṇavas worship the image of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the embodiment of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa alone or along with the image of his close follower Nityānanda and sing their glorifications.

Thus, he hopes the Caitanyaism will not fade away; it will continue for years to come.

Concluding Observation

The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult and the path of devotional love are the distinctive marks of neo-vaiṣṇavism or Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. The joint worship of Rādhākṛṣṇa as the highest object of meditation was recognised as the characteristic features of Caitanyaism. The Caitanyaism is an epochmaking event in the history of Bengal and it greatly influenced the religious life of north-eastern India in different forms.

Śrī Caitanya, the central figure of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was a lover of God, a divine love incarnate who preached men the way of devotional love. Śrī Caitanya preached a new cult of love based on unalloyed devotion, Purity and simplicity and love for humanity too. In short, his very life itself is the best example of the Triumph of faith, devotion and love.

Śrī Caitanya is one of the few saints of India about whom sufficient information is available both from written records and traditional sources. He was possibly the only Hindu saint who has been recognised in his very life time. His devotional activities greatly influenced the socio-religious and political life of India within his life-time. Through his formidable challenges against his religious faith he could influence upon a large number of his followers. In the political sphere he could organise a public disobedience movement in Bengal in the 15th century against the ruling power of the then Bengal.

Śrī Caitanya introduced Kīrtan as the means for unfolding love and unalloyed devotion to Kṛṣṇa. To Śrī Caitanya, the recitation of the name of Hari or Kṛṣṇa- is the best way of realising the love of Kṛṣṇa. Hence in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism Samkīrtan is regarded to be superior to all sacrifices; million horse-sacrifices are but equivalent to a single recitation of Kṛṣṇa's name, which is compared to a wish-yielding tree (Kalpa vrkṣa). Thus writes Kṛṣṇadas Kaviraj-

Samkīrtan Pravarttak Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya |

Samkīrtan-yajñe tñāre bhaje sei dhanya ||

Seita sumedhā ār Kubuddhi samsār |

Sarva yajña haite Kṛṣṇanām-yajña sār ||

Koṭi asvamedh ek Kṛṣṇanām sama ||³²

The Samkīrtan is a unique feature in Hindu religion. The Samkīrtan which Śrī Caitanya introduced was a protest against the old society. Through this powerful Samkīrtan he spread his religion of love and equality over the whole of north-eastern India. The new religion of Śrī Caitanya declared that all are equal before God. His Samkīrtan Party was open for all irrespective of caste and creed. Thus the Caitanya movement of Bengal was not for the Brahmins, but only for the helpless and the deprived mankind. Since Śrī Caitanya had a deep sympathy for the downtrodden. In fact, Śrī Caitanya was the redeemer of the fallen ones and a reformer of the society. The guiding principle of Śrī Caitanya was that even a caṇḍāla should be held higher than the Brahmana if he has devotion for Kṛṣṇa. Thus Bṛndāvan Das writes in his Caitanyabhāgavat-

Caṇḍāl caṇḍāl nahe,-

Yadi Kṛṣṇa bale |

Vipra Vipra nahe,-

Yadi asatpathe cale |³³

The teachings of Śrī Caitanya help universal fellow feelings. The special feature of Śrī Caitanya was that he maintained the deep relation

with people of all caste and creed. He had no dogma to eat in the house of weavers, milk-man and others. Thus, in Caitanyaism the so-called outcaste, untouchable and Muslims were entertained without prejudice. Thākur Yavan Haridās, a devout Vaiṣṇava was born in a Muslim family. When Śrī Caitanya embraced him outside the temple of Śrī Jagannāth, Thākur Haridās said, ‘My Lord, please do not touch me. I belong to a low caste. I am inferior, untouchable and unworthy.’ But Śrī Caitanya replied, ‘I have become pure by touching you. The virtue which you have acquired is not even to me.’

In this context, we may cite another instance of Sanātana. He arrived at Nīlāchal from Mathurā and taken shelter in the abode of Thākur Haridās. When Śrī Caitanya embraced him, Sanātana became ashamed because of his lower caste. To this Śrī Caitanya replied that in love and devotion to Kṛṣṇa there cannot be any caste-bar, since God is for all.

Nīcajāti nahe Kṛṣṇabhajane ayogya |

Satkula vipra nahe bhajaner yogya ||

Yei bhaje sei baḍa, abhaktahīn chār |

Kṛṣṇabhajane nāhi jāti-kulādi-vicār ||³⁴

To the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism Śrī Caitanya is worshipped as the dual incarnation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Caitanya said to Rāi Rāmānanda, ‘You know my true features ‘Lilā’ and ‘Rasa’, hence, I displayed my form to you. My complexion is not fair; but it appears fair on account of its contact with the body of Rādhā who touches none except Kṛṣṇa. I concentrate on her emotional feelings with heart and soul and hence I relish the delicious sweetness of Kṛṣṇa-

Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj writes in his Caitanyacaritāmṛta-

Gaur aṅga nahe, mor Rādhāṅga sparśan |

Gopendra suta vinā Tricho nā sparśe anyajan ||

tñār bhāve bhāvita āmi kari ātmaman |

tave nij mādhyararas kari āsvādan ||³⁵

However, the Caitanyaism teaches three things- simple living with minimum possible of means, disregard of caste-barrier and the spirit of forbearance. The patience and the powers of endurance of the vaiṣṇavas can be compared to the fortitude of the trees. Thus a true Vaiṣṇava should be more humble than grass, more forbearer than tree, respectful even to those who are not worthy and always chanting the name of Hari. Compare-

Ṭṛṇādapi sunīcena taroriva sahiṣṇunā |

Amāninā mānadena kīrttanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ ||³⁶

Almost in all cases Śrī Caitanya behaved like a real teacher imparting knowledge to his followers and taking part in the festivities and feasts and so on.

The vaiṣṇavas during Śrī Caitanya's time never raised an uproar in protest for their food and other necessary commodities. They always remained satisfied with whatever they could procure. Ṭhākura Yavana Haridās and Prabhu Nityānanda, an Avadhuta were the glaring examples of true Vaiṣṇavas.

People belonging to all communities take part in Samkīrtan along with the image of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu or with the photograph of 'Gaur-Nityānanda' even today.