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Syamananda Prakas

CHAPTER 1

All glories to Sri Caitanya and Nityananda Prabhu. All glories to Advaitacandra, and all the devotees of Ma a use he is a perfect reresentative of God, I honor him as I would the Supreme Lord Himself. (Paramesta Paratpara)

I worship the feet of Sri Gauridas Pandit Thakur. Like a dog, I eagerly wait to eat the remnants of his food life after life. I worship Sri Nityananda and Sri Caitanya, taking refuge under Their lotus feet.

Once Gauridas Pandit Thakur, the spiritual master of Hridayananda Goswami, bestowed his mercy upon Sri Shyamananda by ordering him to go to Vraja. Upon receiving this instruction Shyamananda immediately became indifferent to the affairs of this material world. He eagerly approached his guru, Hridayananda Deva, requesting permission to leave for Vraja at once. His spiritual master kindly consented and Shyamananda left for Vrndavana.

Sri Shyamananda Goswami settled in Vraja, living with Sri Jiva Goswami, who was very affectionate towards him. Shyamananda spent his days and nights listening to the rasa-lila of Sri Radha Krsna, tasting the essence of its madhurya rasa. Totally absorbed in these loving pastimes, he completely forgot all bodily demands.

He fully engaged in the service of Kanaka Kunja, cleaning and worshiping it every morning. He served the lotus feet of Sri Jiva and spent the rest of his time hearing the pastimes of Radha Krsna.

Once, while listening to such pastimes, his mind became so deeply absorbed in divine love that he fell unconscious in the kunja. It appeared that his breathing had stopped and no signs of life were visible in his body. Seeing him in this condition Sri Jiva was panic-stricken. Lifting the body of Shyamananda, Jiva quickly carried him to his house. A long twenty seven hours (tritya prahar) passed before Shyamananda regained consciousness and sat up. He then fell at the feet of Sri Jiva, took the dust from his lotus feet and placed it on his head. Greatly relieved, Sri Jiva happily offered Syamananda prasadam.

Cherishing a hope within his mind, Shyamananda asked Sri Jiva, "Oh Goswami, kindly fulfill my desire. Please tell me how I can attain the mercy of Radha Krsna."

Sri Jiva lovingly advised Shyamananda, explaining the five types of rasa, particularly the madhurya rasa. Inspired by Shyamananda's submissiveness, Sri Jiva went on to explain frankly that bhava and bhavasraya are the same (?) (imagination and love based on imagination)(?). These explanations fully satisfied the heart of Shyamananda. Sri Jiva then instructed Shyamanada regarding the practice of austerities and the methods of raganuga worship (bhajan)(?).

By the mercy of Jiva Goswami, who had taken shelter of Sri Rupa, Shyamananda began worshipping Radha Krsna continuously. Day by day he became increasingly absorbed in devotional service. His mind was inspired (uddipana) by love (raga) and he fell into a trance of spontaneous devotion (ragatmika) (?). With his body, mind and words he engaged in the service of Radha Krsna and the kunj. He was always preoccupied with the thought of observing the divine pastimes of Radha Krsna. Externally, he expertly practiced religious austerities, while internally he lovingly served their Lordships, along with Sri Rupamanjari.

Inside the Kalpa Kunja Kutir in Vrndavana, Radha Krsna daily perform rasa-lila. Those who are not qualified (palite-amaika, non-vedic-avaidika, or non-brahmanas and causeless-ahaituki persons.?) are unable to perceive this reality, but see only the illusory energy of the Lord.

One day Radha and Krsna, along with their sakhis, were dancing and singing joyfully within the kunj. Holding one another's hands Radha and her sakhis made a circle around Krsna. They danced delightfully, and Krsna, whose beauty charms Cupid himself, danced along with them while other sakhis sang and played musical instruments.

When Sri Radha danced, Krsna observed with great joy. Sometimes she danced, and other times she enjoyed watching her sakhis dance. The perfection of the eyes is to see these divine amusements, which are all meant for the pleasure of Krsna. While Radhika danced on and on, unknowingly, one of her ankle bells (nupura?) became loose and fell to the ground. Neither she, nor her sakhis, noticed it. After dancing, Radha and Krsna went to bed and relished loving pastimes throughout the night, as the sakhis observed (stealthily?) through the windows. Upon awaking at dawn, the sakhis requested Radha Krsna to get up from bed. After some time Radha reluctantly arose. Fearful of the chastisement of her relatives she quickly started for her house. The sakhis also returned to their homes, unaware of the lost ankle bell. Sri Radha had planned this incident just to show her mercy to Shyamananda.

In the morning Shyamananda Goswami went to perform his regular daily service to the kunj (nikunj?). He took darshan, paid his obeisances, and began cleaning under the desire tree (kalpataru). There he found the golden ankle bell.

The entire surface of the kunj was glowing due to the ankle bells' effulgence. Its brightness overshadowed the glittering of a golden mirror(?). It seemed as if the sun itself had appeared there personally. Seeing this, Shyamananda fainted on the spot. Sometime passed before he regained consciousness, then taking the ankle bell in his hand he placed it on his head. Immediately his throat choked up with emotion and all the symptoms of ecstasy appeared in his body. Overwhelmed with love, he kissed the ankle bell and clasped it to his heart, then again fell unconscious on the ground of the kunj.

After considerable time he again came to his senses and began calling the names of Radha Krsna. Running frantically here and there he searched for their Lordships. Unable to find them, he was filled with distress. Mad with love, he cried out desperately, "When shall I see Radha Krsna." Eventually he pacified himself, tied the ankle bell around his neck, and continued cleaning the kunj.

Meanwhile, after entering her room, Radha was perturbed to find one of her ankle bells missing. Thinking that she may have dropped it in the kunj, she ordered Lalita to go there and search for it. Lalita Sundari, in the disguise of an

old lady hurried to the kunj.

Upon seeing Shyamananda, Lalita asked his name, and he replied "Dukhini Krsnadasa". "Have you seen the ankle bell of my daughter-in-law?" Lalita inquired. "She came to the Jamuna to fetch water and due to her carelessness one of her precious golden ankle bells fell from her foot in this kunj. If you have found it please return it and I will gladly reward you."

"Tell me frankly", Goswami asked, "Where do you live and what is your name?"

"I am Radha dasi", Lalita replied, concealing her identity. "I belong to a Kanoj brahmana family of Vraja."

Hearing this Goswami admitted, "Thakurani, I did find an ankle bell, but it cannot be yours. It must belong to Sri Radha, because the moment I touched the ankle bell I felt as if I was falling deep into the ocean of love of God. My heart swelled with ecstatic love and I fell unconscious. No ordinary ankle bell could induce such feelings. Now listen to me, this ankle bell surely belongs to Sri Radha. If you insist that it belongs to you I will certainly return it, but first I want to see where you live. I will show the ankle bell to the inhabitants of your village and they must identify it as yours. If they will act as your witnesses, I will immediately give it back. Otherwise I shall wear it myself until I am able to return it to the feet of the rightful owner.

Hearing this, Lalita finally confessed, "You are right. I have tried to deceive you. This ankle bell certainly belongs to Srimate Radharani. I am very pleased with you, ask any boon for yourself and I will happily grant it, afterwards I will take the ankle bell. The daughter of Vrsabhanu will also be extremely pleased with you for finding her ankle bell."

Goswami earnestly replied, "O Thakurani, I must know your real identity. Only after you have revealed your true self to me will I ask my boon.

Taking Goswami to a secluded place Lalita confessed, "I am Lalita, a maidservant of Sri Radha. Listen to me Dukhini Krsna das, you are anxious to see my real form, but such a revelation will certainly be too much for you to bear."

"By your mercy anything is possible," he protested.

Submitting to his desire Lalita agreed, "Alright Krsna das, I shall reveal my real self. Close your eyes."

Goswami shut his eyes, then Lalita ordered, "Look at me Krsna das." Opening his eyes Goswami witnessed the extraordinary beauty of Lalita. Overwhelmed with ecstasy he fell on the ground unconscious. Sri Lalita devi lovingly helped him to come to his senses, and Goswami bowed to her feet with tears in his eyes. Holding the feet of Lalita on his head he smeared the dust from her lotus feet over his entire body. Fully under the control of divine love, he cried incessantly, unable to speak a word.

Seeing his state of mind, Lalita gently touched his body, pacifying him. Satisfied by Goswami's devotional sentiments, Lalita said, "Krsna das ask any type of boon from me." "I have nothing to ask for", Goswami said. "I only want to be your servant and in this way serve Radha Krsna."

Lalita kindly fulfilled his desire saying, "You shall certainly attain the association of Radha Krsna, but you cannot serve their Lordships in this feature. You must prepare yourself mentally as a confidante of Radha to have her darshan. Come with Sri Rupamanjari to the kunj and observe the rasalila of Radha Krsna. Then you can witness all of our true identities. For the remainder of this life stay

with Sri Jiva and go on tasting the essence of the rasalila. At the end of your life you will attain the lotus feet of Sri Radhika. Now, accept this eternal mantra of Radha Krsna. Whenever you chant this mantra you will be able to see their Lordships." Showering her mercy upon him, Lalita gave Goswami the mantra practiced by herself. Immediately upon reciting the mantra within the kunj pure love arose within the mind of Goswami. Filled with joy he fell at the feet of Lalita. She put her feet on his head, then taking him on her lap, blessed him heartily.

Goswami then went to a particular spot in the kunj where he had previously cleared the grass and dug a hole using a small spade(?). In that hole he had hidden the ankle bell, along with the spade, covering them with a cloth. Upon removing the cloth he found that the spade had been transformed into gold by the touch of the ankle bell. Delighted, Goswami brought the ankle bell to Lalita carrying it on his head. He placed it before her and fell prostrate on the ground offering obeisances.

Taking the ankle bell in her hand Lalita Sundari quickly placed it to Goswami's head saying, "Let the touch of Sri Radhika's feet be on your head." Again she touched the ankle bell to his forehead, suddenly two vertical lines appeared on his forehead, and from the touch of the pinnacle of the ankle bell a dot appeared in the middle of the tilak.

Goswami fell on the ground bowing to the feet of Lalitadevi. "From today", Lalita said, "You will be known by the name Shyamananda. Having attained the mercy of the lotus feet of Shyama (Radha) you have become extremely fortunate. Now return to your kunj and do not tell anyone, except Sri Jiva about this incident, otherwise you will not live long."

Overwhelmed with love Goswami again bowed before Lalita, crying helplessly. Lalita consoled him and took her leave. She walked a few steps, then suddenly disappeared from the kunj.

Goswami frantically began roaming from kunj to kunj crying loudly, "Where is Lalita." Filled with ecstatic love he eventually returned to his kunj and fell at the feet of Sri Jiva Goswami.

By the touch of Sri Lalita, the complexion of Shyamananda had been transformed into a wonderful golden color. His beauty had increased to such an extent that the entire world would certainly be enchanted by his appearance.

"Where have you been for so long", Sri Jiva inquired curiously, "and how has your complexion become golden?"

Shyamananda replied, "My lord, I have been in my kunj. It is only by the mercy of your lotus feet that my complexion has changed."

"You have become so beautiful," Sri Jiva said with wonder. "What is that sign on your forehead? Who painted it there? Your body is filled with love and your eyes are full of tears. Previously you wore tilak like the temple of Sri Hari(?), who has given you this new tilak? You are definitely hiding something from me Shyamananda, but I am not deceived. I know you have received the mercy of Krsna, or maybe the mercy of Sri Radhika, because I see the mark of her feet on your forehead. Now you must explain everything to me.

"It is your mercy which has caused these tears of love and ecstasy in my body", Shyamananda insisted. "The mark of your grace is the tilak on my forehead. Please show me your mercy so that I may attain the spiritual realm.

Syamananda had hidden the golden spade under a cloth in his room, suddenly

Sri Jiva noticed it and inquired: "What is under that cloth? Show me and I'm sure I will understand everything.

Shyamananda uncovered the cloth, revealing the golden spade. Astonished, Sri Jiva asked, "How is it possible that the iron spade has become gold?"

"I shall tell you confidentially," Shyamananda softly replied, as I was forbidden to tell anyone except you. Saying this he took Sri Jiva to a secluded place and whispered the whole story in his ear. Filled with happiness Sri Jiva placed Shyamananda on his lap saying, "Today I have become your property. Because you have received the favor of the daughter of Vrsabhanu, you have now become the most fortunate devotee."

Bowing at the feet of Sri Jiva, Shyamananda lovingly requested him not to reveal this incident to anyone. "Say only that by the grace of my spiritual master everything has taken place."

Concealing Shyamananda's secret, Sri Jiva simply told everyone that due to the wish of Shyamananda's guru from now on Krsnadas would be known as Shyamanada, and his tilak shall be known as Shyamanandi.

"I am a captive of your love," Shyamananda told Jiva. "By your mercy I found the ankle bell, and by your mercy I was able to see Sri Lalita devi and receive the mantra."

By the grace of the lotus feet of Shyamananda I received the ability to write this book. Meditating on Sri Rupamanjari, I have described the first chapter in a nutshell.

CHAPTER 2

All glories to the lotus feet of Shyamananda, by his mercy I have been empowered to write this book.

Seeing the golden complexion and beautiful mark of tilak on Shyamananda's forehead, the people began to talk: "By the mercy of Sri Jiva, Krsnadas has received the name Shyamananda and become famous in Vrndavana. He is the disciple of Sri Hridayananda Goswami, but now he has left his original guru and taken shelter under the feet of Sri Jiva."

These conversations amongst the Vrajavasis came to the ears of all the Vaisnavas. Criticising Sri Jiva they said: "How can Sri Jiva do this? He has accepted Shyamananda as his own disciple. Is there any law in the scriptures which allows such behavior? Sri Jiva is a great sage, most probably he has done it unconsciously. If he comes to know what we are discussing certainly he will respect our opinions"

Others said: "This cannot be done by Jiva Goswami." Yet all of the Vaisnavas were afraid to directly question Sri Jiva. Rather, they simply judged him according to the rumors circulating.

Some Vaisnavas who traveled from Vraja to Gauda met Hridayananda Goswami and informed him: "Duhkini Krsnadas has left your refuge and taken shelter at the feet of Sri Jiva Goswami. He has given Krsnadas the name Shyamananda das, and

changed his tilak, calling it Shyamanandi.

Hearing this Hridayananda was furious: "Sri Jiva has accepted my disciple as his disciple," he roared. "Neither Caitanya Mahaaprabhu nor Nityananda Prabhu have ever done such a thing, but now Sri Jiva is proving himself superior to Them? I shall make him understand the mistake he has made."

Saying this he called his disciples and ordered them: "Five to ten of you go to Vrndavana, bind up Duhkini Krsnadas and bring him back here to me. However, if Sri Jiva tries to free him, then leave Krsnadas there in his care. If this situation arises give my letter to Jiva Goswami and bring his reply to me. Ask Krsnadas why he has done this. How dare he ignore me and accept another guru. Ask him if he has attained Krsna by the mercy of Jiva Goswami. If the answer is yes, then we shall all go to Sri Jiva and accept him as our spiritual master also. I have never heard of such behavior amongst the disciples of Mahaprabhu. Advaita Acarya left his own son, but Mahaprabhu never accepted him. These topics are clearly explained in the scriptures. (something missing)

"Once Mahaprabhu rejected Chota Haridas. Bereft of his spiritual master, Chota Haridas decided to commit suicide by jumping into the Jamuna. This is the method of Mahaprabhu's religion. I have never seen or heard of anything like this. It is explained in the scriptures that we must reject the association of superficial persons who outwardly pose as devotees. If I am such a non-Vaisnava guru then it is good that Krsnadas has left me. I shall arrange a debate with all the Vaisnavas regarding this matter. If it is proven that I am a non-Vaisnava, then I shall surely take refuge in Sri Jiva. Now go to Vrndavana as quickly as possible and bring Sri Jiva's reply, then I will understand the truth. If I am correct, I shall visit all the holy places of Gauda and gather all the Vaisnavas together, then we will all go to Vrndavana for the judgement." Saying this he ordered his disciples to leave for Vrndavana immediately.

After a long journey they finally reached Vraja and brought the letter to Sri Jiva. Keeping the letter in front of himself, Sri Jiva paid his sincere obeisances. He embraced all the Vaisnavas and inquired, "Who has sent this letter?"

"It was written by Hridayananda Goswami," they replied. Be merciful to us and read it immediately.

Sri Jiva requested them to finish bathing, be seated and take prasadam.

"We have already bathed and eaten," they replied abruptly. Please read the letter without delay."

Assuring them that he would read the letter at once, Sri Jiva insisted that they wash their hands and feet and be comfortably seated.

Accepting the order of Sri Jiva, they washed and took their seats.

After silently reading the letter, Sri Jiva smiled and told them: "Listen to me, Hridayananda Goswami has written this accusing letter, but I assure you I have not made Krsnadas my disciple. I respect Hridayananda as a great scholar, I am not even qualified to be his disciple. I cannot bear his anger. Sri Gauridas Pandit Thakur is my spiritual master and has always affectionately treated me like his servant.

By the grace of Hridayananda, Krsnadas came to Vraja. He stayed with me in order to relish the topics of Srīmad Bhagavatam. I allowed him to stay here only because it was the order of his guru. The mind of Krsnadas has become

completely purified by hearing the pastimes of the Lord, and his respect for his spiritual master has doubled. Love can only be revealed in the heart of one who is pure. Who has said that Krsnadas has become my disciple? Bring him here!"

"Two sannyasi's from Vraja came to Gauda," they replied, "and reported that Krsnadas had left Hridayananda and accepted you as his guru. The Vrajavasis also say that by your mercy Krsnadas painted the tilak named Shyamanadi and received his new name, Shyamananda. Hridayananda was astonished to hear this and has written this letter to find out the truth."

"Call everyone together," Sri Jiva said. "Now we shall find out whether this story is true or false. If it is proven to be true then certainly I am guilty."

Protesting, the devotees replied: "We believe you. We want to hear the truth from you only, then we shall report to Goswami."

Replying sweetly, Sri Jiva said: "Listen, and I shall tell you everything. One day I asked Krsnadas, 'Who has given you this name.' He explained to me that by the grace of Hridayananda Goswami, he accepted his new name."

"Now let me tell you about Krsnadas. He always serves Radha Krsna and the kunj, and listens intently to Srimad Bhagavatam. He chants lacs of holy names throughout the day and night. He regularly takes darshan of Sri Govinda, takes prasadam, and serves the devotees daily. He constantly sings the glories of Radha Krsna, always remembering Their eternal pastimes. Krsnadas stays in my kunj and cleans it daily, absorbed in the service of Radha Krsna. One day Krsnadas had a dream which he revealed to me. In his dream Hridayananda appeared before him while he was busy cleaning the kunj. Krsnadas offered him a seat made of grass, and Goswami asked Krsnadas what he had been doing. Krsnadas humbly replied that, according to his order, he was living in Vraja and serving the kunj, keeping the lotus feet of his spiritual master in his mind. Hearing this Hridayananda was very happy and told Krsnadas that he was extremely fortunate to be engaged in that way, as Radha Krsna eternally reside in the kunj. Hridayananda explained that even great personalities like Brahma, and other demigods, pray for the precious opportunity to serve the kunj. Thus he advised Krsnadas to remain in the kunj and carry on with his duties, in this way eventually he would have the darshan of Radha Krsna. He told Krsnadas that: "Shyama Shyam (Radha), being pleased with your service will give you the name Shyamananda." Blessing him, he placed his feet on the head of Krsnadas and immediately a new tilak spontaneously appeared on his forehead. Hridayananda Goswami then circumambulated the kunj and entered into it. From the day that Krsnadas told me this story I have taken the order of Hridayananda as supreme, and called Krsnadas, Shyamananda. Not understanding what actually took place, the people in general only guesd what had happened."

The devotees were relieved to hear this explanation, and happily recorded the words of Sri Jiva in a letter. Sri Jiva then requested that they confirm this story with Krsnadas. Coming before them Krsnadas bowed at their feet and verified the words of Sri Jiva. "I hold the lotus feet of Hridayananda Goswami on my head," Krsnadas said. "He is my lord and master. It is his order that I live with the Vaisnavas and associate with the devotees of Mahaprabhu. While in Vraja, I have spent many days with Sri Jiva Goswami, listening to Srimad Bhagavatam and topics related to Krsna. Sri Hridayananda Goswami is my last resort and the life of my life, and I regard Sri Jiva like my guru. I desire to spend the rest of my life serving

Radha Krsna, the kunj, and the feet of all the Vaisnavas. I want to have darshan of the kunj daily and serve Sri Vrajamandala, Sri Govindadev, and Sri Hridayananda Goswami. My life, body, and mind are fully absorbed in this ecstasy. By the grace of my guru's guru I am enjoying the pleasure of the darshan of the Rasastahli. My mind has become soothed by seeing the Yamuna and the Kadamba. My daily worship and meditation is the lotus feet of Sri Hridayananda Prabhu. Not knowing this, people have made false accusations, without proper understanding.

Hearing this, all the devotees happily embraced Shyamananda. Sri Jiva then fed all the Vaisnavas sumptuous prasadam.

In the morning Jiva gave them a letter for Sri Hridayananda Goswami, and bade them farewell. After visiting the sacred places of Vrndavana, the devotees started for Gauda.

By the grace of the lotus feet of Sri Shyamananda, I received the ability to write this book. Remembering the lotus feet of Sri Rupamanjari, I have described the episode of chapter two in short.

CHAPTER 3

Eager to sing the glories of Sri Shyamananda, I continue writing this book.

The devotees first circumambulated Vraja then happily started their long journey home, carrying the letter of Sri Jiva. Reaching Gauda, they immediately handed the letter to Hridayananda.

Goswami read the letter and thoughtfully considered its contents. "What Sri Jiva has written may not be correct," he said. "I cannot understand him. When did I appear in Shyamananda's dream? I do not remember such an incident. I have not given the name Shyamananda. How absurd that I know nothing about it. Perhaps, out of fear, Krsnadas has made up this ridiculous story. Are we expected to believe that his dream has become reality, and what we have witnessed with our own eyes is illusion? These are all deceiving talks. The whole world knows that dreams are meaningless, no one pays any heed to dreams. This is a trick of Sri Jiva, surely he has taken my Krsnadas. Now he is afraid of me and has written this deceiving letter. I shall go to Vrndavana with all of the Vaisnavas and prove it to everyone."

In an angry mood he started for Gauda to request the mahantas to accompany him to Vraja. Along the way Goswami asked his disciples, "What kind of tilak did you see on the forehead of Krsnadas?"

"We saw the tilak drawn like the temple of Hari, with a dot in the middle of it (?)," they replied.

"Jiva has given his own mark," Goswami said, "and to avoid the offense he has placed a dot in its middle. The name of that type of tilaka is Sri Radhavallavi. Now I know who they are worshipping, and it is certain that Krsnadas has taken refuge in Sri Jiva."

Speaking in this way, he entered Gauda and addressed the mahantas, "Please be kind and accompany me to Vrndavana, as Krsnadas has ruined my life. If you do not go I shall commit suicide before you to save my prestige. You can take

advantage of this opportunity to see Vrndavana, and at the same time my purpose can also be served."

The Mahantas agreed to go to speak with Sri Jiva, and taking their chief disciples with them they started for Vraja. Along the way they passed the house of Gauridas Thakur and also brought his chief disciple along with them.

After a long journey the mahantas reached Vrndavana. Arriving at Dhira Samira, near the bank of the Yamuna, they took bath, cooked, and took prasadam. Afterwards they blissfully performed nama-sankirtan along the bank of the Yamuna. Meanwhile Hridayananda sent one of his disciple to inform Sri Jiva of their arrival.

Sri Jiva hastily came before the Vaisnavas and offered his obeisances falling flat on the ground. All the mahantas embraced Sri Jiva. Some of them paid their respects, while others offered their blessings.

"This is a very auspicious day," Sri Jiva said happily. "Although I am the most insignificant person, today I am blessed with the association of so many great sages. It is certainly a wonderful day for me."

The mahantas requested Sri Jiva to be seated and inquired about his well-being.

"There are always waves of happiness flowing in Vraja," Sri Jiva replied. Because Radha Krsna perform Their pastimes here the atmosphere is surcharged with spiritual bliss, thus Vrndavana is the ideal resting place for all devotees.

Shortly afterwards Shyamananda arrived there and offered his obeisances to the feet of his spiritual master, as well as the mahantas.

Sri Hridayananda Goswami asked Shyamananda, "To whom is Duhkini Krsnadas bowing?"

"Prabhu," Krsnadas said with surprise, "I am bowing to your feet, as well as all the saintly persons here."

Hridayananda replied curtly, "You are relating to me having the name and tilak given by me, why are you bowing to others?"

"Prabhu," Shyamananda said, "By your mercy I have received the name Shyamananda and this new tilak."

"Listen to me," Goswami said, "Dreams cannot be accepted as fact. Acting without my approval you have become the servant of others and deceived me by sending a false letter."

"But I have not deceived you," Shyamananda protested. "Everything written in the letter is true."

"I shall wash off your tilak," Goswami said, "and see whether it spontaneously reappears on your forehead. I shall wipe the name Shyamananda from your body and let us see if it again appears written in the same place. If this happens then you will receive my blessings, otherwise I shall reject you."

Bowing to the feet of his guru, requesting his permission, Shyamananda replied: "In the presence of all of you I shall prove that this name and tilak is authorised. If I am unable to do so then I am guilty of a very serious offense."

Hridayananda Goswami then gathered all the mahantas of Sri Vrjamandala under the kalpataru in the Rasasthali of Sri Vrndavana. The mahantas took their seats and called Shyamananda before them. Falling prostrate on the ground, Shyamananda offered his obeisances.

"Who is your guru," the mahantas asked, "And from where did you get your name?"

"Sri Hridayananda Goswami is my master," Shyamananda said, "And I am his servant."

Listen to us Krsnadas," they replied. "Dreams are always false. If you are found guilty of this offense you will lose the association of devotees, and the opportunity to attain salvation. If the Lord is angry with someone, his guru can save him, but if his guru becomes angry with him, no one can save him. Now tell the truth, and we shall protect you. Don't lie before all these saintly persons. Otherwise, you will certainly suffer the miseries of hell for as long as the sun and moon exist. This is the infallible verdict of Vyasa in the Srimad Bhagavatam. If you have secretly accepted another guru, tell us about him. We shall be kind enough to save you from this offense. You will prove yourself to be an imposter if you lie about your name and tilak."

"Whether you are right or wrong I know within my own mind," Shyamananda replied. "Please allow me one or two more days to think about my answer." Remembering his spiritual master, Shyamananda then sat down and became fully absorbed in a blissful state of deep meditation. Chanting the mantra given to him by Lalita, he felt the presence of Sri Radhika within his heart. His soul, mind, life and knowledge entered into siddha (accomplishment)(?), and within his spiritual body he entered the temple of Sri Radha. Sitting on the doorstep of Her room he began to cry. The sakhis of Sri Radha asked why he was crying. Bowing to them Shyamananda explained, "I am a Vrajavasi named Kanakamanjari. I am the maidservant of Lalita. I spent the whole day and night with Thakurani, then when I returned home and tried to enter my house my husband tried to beat me, so I ran away in fear and came here. Go tell Lalita to save my life by giving me her darshan." Filled with anxiety he bowed again, crying helplessly.

The sakhis went to Lalita and reported, "One maidservant of yours has come here crying in great distress. Previously she stayed in your house with you, then when she returned home her husband tried to beat her."

"Bring her here," Lalita ordered. "I am preparing the betel leaves now."

One of the sakhis called her in and Kanakamanjari found herself in the presence of Sri Radha. Radhika was sitting on a cot eating betel leaves as Lalita prepared them. Sri Rupamanjari massaged her legs, and Champaklatika fanned her with a camara.

Overwhelmed with ecstatic love, Kanakamanjari fell flat on the ground. Thakurani ordered the sakhis to lift her and Lalita took Kanaka on her lap. Holding the feet of Lalita she began to cry. Sri Radha affectionately called Kanakamanjari and placed her lotus feet on her head. Kanaka fell unconscious on the feet of Sri Rupamanjari, who then pushed her under the lotus feet of Radha.

"Be kind to me Thakurani," Kanaka cried, "I am your maidservant. Give me shelter under your reddish feet."

"Why are you crying so helplessly," Radha asked. "What is your name? Who do you serve? Where do you live, and who are your parents?"

"My name is Kanakamanjari. I have always cherished the hope of receiving the dust of your feet. I am a Vrajavasi, and the maidservant of your maidservant, Sri Rupamanjari. She is my father, mother, master, and caretaker. She has bestowed loving devotion upon me, and by her mercy I received the darshan of Lalita. Now, by the grace of Lalita, I am able to see your lotus feet."

"Oh supreme goddess, listen to my story then you shall understand why I am

crying. I am the disciple of Sri Hrdayananda Goswami. Previously I carried the mark of his grace, in the form of a tilak, on my forehead. By his merciful order I came to Vraja, where I stayed with Jiva Goswami. Sri Jiva helped me immensely by explaining the wonderful pastimes of Radha Krsna in Vraja. Tasting only a drop of your nectarean pastimes, my mind fell deep into the ocean of love. When I was thirsty for the water of your love, Sri Jiva helped me to drink the nectar. He advised me that my ultimate goal should be to attain the grace of your feet. For that reason he put me under the care of the gracious feet of Sri Rupamanjari."

"Relishing the sweetness of your lotus feet, I served the kunj daily. Although I am the most helpless and worthless person, you bestowed your kindness upon me by intentionally dropping your ankle bell in the kunj. You sent Lalita to retrieve the ankle bell and she mercifully appeared before me. She was so pleased to have found the ankle bell that she blessed me saying that the mark of your ankle bell should be on my forehead. Touching the ankle bell to my forehead a mark was permanently painted there. She told me, 'My Shyama will be extremely happy to get back the ankle bell, therefore from today, you shall be known as Shyamananda.' She asked me what boon I would like and I requested to become the maidservant of Radha Krsna. She agreed, but forbade me to tell anyone except Sri Jiva. Otherwise, she said, I would lose my life."

"Still today I am carrying the mark on my forehead and I have not told anyone, but seeing this mark my guru misunderstood and thought that I had rejected him. He asked about my new name and tilak and I said that he had appeared to me in a dream and changed my name and tilak. I explained that in the dream he had asked me why I had not come to see him. I replied that because I was fully engaged in serving the kunj, and absorbed in remembrance of Sri Radha, I had not found time to meet him. Hearing this my Prabhu became very happy and advised me to carry on with my duties. Bestowing his mercy upon me, he told me that through serving Radha Krsna and the kunj I would certainly attain the darshan of Shyama Shyam. Thus he gave me the name Shyamananda. Blessing me he put his foot on my head. After circumambulating the kunj he entered into it and took his seat."

"I told Goswami that the mark of his lotus feet had become my tilak, but he did not believe it. He became very angry, saying that I had ignored my real name and tilak and followed a dream. 'I know nothing about this dream,' he said. 'If you want to be my disciple accept my mark and tell everyone that your name is Krsnadas and nothing else.'

I told Goswami to personally wipe the tilak from my forehead and he replied, 'I shall wash your tilak and see whether it spontaneously reappears. I will also wipe off the name Shyamananda and see whether it is spontaneously written again. Then your name will be acknowledged and you will receive my mercy.'

"Hearing this I accepted his order, bowing to his feet. Goswami then told me, 'I must prove your name and tilak to all the mahantas, otherwise I shall commit suicide.'

"Calling together all the mahantas from Gauda and Vraja, Goswami formed a society in the Kalpakunj of the Rasasthali in Vrndavana. He requested me to appear before them to prove the truth. The mahantas strongly advised me to speak truthfully, otherwise I would be cast out from the association of devotees and suffer the miseries of hell."

"I asked them to wait patiently and I began meditating on your lotus feet. In my meditation my mind and soul traveled here. Now I have attained the great fortune of seeing your lotus feet. I am ignorant, worthless, and wicked but your grace will help me to cross over this ocean of birth and death. Oh Thakurani, please be merciful to me, save me from the harassment of the mahantas. Show me how I can satisfy your feet, as well as the feet of my spiritual master. Now I have told you both the cause of my crying and my desire."

Lalita and Sri Rupamanjari both requested Radharani to be merciful to Shyamananda. Holding the hands of Kanakamanjari, Lalita pushed her on the feet of Radha, who mercifully placed her feet on the head of Kanaka.

Sri Radha called Suvalachand (Subala?) and told him everything: "Krsnadas, the servant of your servant, has taken refuge under my feet. He always serves the kunj and has dedicated his life and soul to me. By your order I have accepted him."

"It is my great fortune that one of my servants has become your maidservant," Suvala said. Even I am always desirous of becoming your maidservant."

Hearing this Sri Radha was very pleased and pushed Kanakamanjari on the feet of Suvala. Kanaka bowed to his feet and Suvala took her in his lap. Blessing her Suvala said, "You are extremely fortunate as you have received the love of Radha Krsna and become a favorite maidservant of Radha."

Radha ordered Suvala to give Shyamananda the tilak and prove it before the society of mahantas. She also requested him to write the name Shyamananda on the chest of Krsnadas, and to tell the mahantas that by his grace Krsnadas attained the mark of Sri Radha's feet as his tilak and the name Shyamananda, by which he should be known in the world.

Suvalachand happily painted the mark of the feet of Sri Radha on Krsnadas' forehead, placing a dot in the middle. He wrote Shyamananda on the chest of Krsnadas and advised him to say everyday, "Pandit Thakur, in the form of my guru has favoured me."

"When you are asked to prove the sanctity of the name and tilak," Suvala said, "Just remember me and the name and tilak will spontaneously appear on your body."

Hearing this Shyamananda fell at the feet of Suvala. Placing his feet on the head of Shyamananda, Suvala blessed him and took his leave.

After offering obeisances at the feet of Sri Radha, Lalita, Visakha, Sri Rupamanjari, and the other sakhis, Shyamananda stood before Sri Radha with folded hands. Drinking in the nectar of her beautiful face, he was unable to check the tears of ecstasy flowing from his eyes. Shyamananda humbly requested Radha to help him to dedicate his life, body and soul to her reddish lotus feet.

The image of love, Sri Radha, assured him that he would always have her blessings. Radhika advised him to tour Orissa with Rasika Murari and afterwards return to Vraja. Shyamananda then took his leave and one of the sakhis accompanied him for some distance.

Meanwhile the mahantas in Vrndavana were astonished to see Shyamananda's body become lifeless. Doubts began to pierce their hearts and they wondered if they had committed a great offense. Overcome with lamentation they rolled on the ground crying.

Only Sri Jiva could understand what had taken place. Consoling them Jiva suggested, "Everyone begin nama-sankirtan, Shyamanand will certainly come to

life again.

The mahantas eagerly began chanting the holy name: "Govinda, Shyamasundara, Kamala Lochana."

After sometime Shyamananda regained consciousness and sat up reciting the name of Sri Hridayananda. Greatly relieved the mahantas cheered loudly, chanting the name of Hari. When Shyamananda opened his eyes fully they requested him to proclaim his verdict.

"It is my opinion," Shyamananda replied, "that Gauridas Pandit Thakur, in the form of my spiritual master, has mercifully appeared before me in a dream. If I am a sincere servant of my guru's feet then I shall prove the sanctity of this name and tilak before your eyes."

The mahantas then painted the tilak like the temple of Sri Hari on Shyamananda's forehead, placing a dot in its middle, and wrote the name Shyamananda on his chest. Praying to Sri Krsna Caitanya to maintain the prestige of His devotee, they requested Hridayananda to preside over the mahanta society and wash the tilak off with water.

Goswami anxiously brought a water pot, while Shyamananda happily called out to Sri Gauridas Pandit to come and save his reputation. In the presence of everyone Sri Hridayananda Goswami washed off the tilak, as well as the name Shyamananda from his chest.

Shyamananda loudly called to Sri Lalita Thakurani to save him, and immediately the tilak and name spontaneously reappeared in their proper places, even brighter than before. The mahantas were astonished, and Hridayananda hung his head in shame.

Holding the hands of Shyamananda the mahantas joyfully called out the name of Hari. Some of them kissed and embraced him, while others shouted the name Shyamananda. Someone said that for the first time a dream has become reality, and another said that Suvalachanda has shown special mercy to Shyamananda, making him his companion. Someone else said that Shyamananda has pleased Shyama (Radha) and thus has thus attained this name.

Shyamananda offered his obeisances to all the mahantas, and fell at the feet of Hridayananda. Filled with joy Goswami placed Shyamananda on his lap and lovingly kissed his face again and again. Accepting Shyamananda as the best of his disciples he decided to keep his precious association always.

The mahantas then took bath, cooked and offered the food to Krsna.

Meanwhile Shyamananda came before Sri Jiva falling prostrate at his feet. Taking him on his lap Sri Jiva kissed Shyamananda saying, "I dedicate myself to you, for you are not merely a devotee, you are my life and my life has become a captive to your love." Sri Jiva advised Shyamananda to stay with Hridayananda Goswami and serve his lotus feet.

Although I have no qualification, by the mercy of the lotus feet of Shyamananda, I have received the ability to write this book. Assisted by the remembrance of Sri Rupamanjari, I have described the third chapter of Sri Shyamananda Prakash.

EXTRACTS FROM DIFFERENT BOOKS(?)

In the fifth chapter the family life of Shyamananda is discussed. The previous four chapters have dealt with Shyamananda's desire to attain the grace of Krsna. The ninth chapter describes the perfection of Shyamananda's sadhana. And the last, or tenth chapter, deals with the birth of the feeling of madhurya viraha (separation) within Shyamananda. Who could possibly describe the intense desire of Shyamanada by which he attained the opportunity of personally serving Radha Krsna?

When Sri Jiva came to Vrndavana Shyamananda left his body out of separation from Jiva.(?) In the tenth chapter Shyamananda attains his spiritual form and begins to live happily with Sri Rupamanjari. Sri Radha Krsna favoured him and kept him in Their service. Kanakamanjari became a favorite of Lalita, Sri Rupamanjari and all the sakhis.

I have described Shyamananda's attainment of the spiritual abode only in hints, as I have been ordered to do so. I am the most unqualified and ignorant person but due to the grace of Sri Shyamananda Goswami I have written this book and presented it before all the devotees. Although I have no ability to write, by the mercy of my spiritual master this book has been completed.

THE EPISODE OF WRITING THIS BOOK

Oh wise listeners! Hear how this book, Shyamananda Prakash, has come into existence.

One day I met a saint who read the book Bhaktirasamrita Sindhu to me. While listening a deep feeling of indifference towards the material world (vairagya) took birth within me and the desire to go to Vrndavana arose in my heart. Previously I had never found the time to meditate upon the merciful lotus feet of Krsna. My mind had always been preoccupied with sinful activities. My body, mind and life was filled with passion, anger, greed, infatuation, pride, and mundane emotions. Pride gave rise to vanity and jealousy. Thus my life passed in vain. Not a scent of devotion to Krsna entered my heart. Even in the sphere of family life I was a failure. What was the use of such a worthless life? Absorbed in maintaining my wife and children all the golden opportunities of life passed me by. Fully engaged in material activities I found no time to remember the lotus feet of Govinda, or to perform any sadhana. In this way my life passed uselessly and death was quickly approaching.

But after hearing Bhaktirasamrita Sindhu from that saint I began to realise that the lotus feet of Krsna are the only resort for all of mankind. I decided to give up all material attachments and live in Vraja. Although my heart ached to leave for Vrndavana, the opportunity to go did not arise. I became very disturbed and began meditating on Shyamananda Goswami(?). Absorbed in this way I went to bed and fell asleep thinking of Sri Vrndavana Dhama.

In my dream I met some sannyasi's who were going to Vraja and I traveled

along with them. Arriving in Vraja I took darshan of the Jamuna (?), then went to the kunja of Sri Shyamananda Goswami. I washed my hands and feet and sat down in the kunja. After some time Sri Shyamananda, having completed the circumambulation of Vraja, returned to his kunja, and all the devotees there fell at his feet. They washed his feet and happily drank the water. I asked one vairagi who the Goswami was and he replied, "This is Shyamananda Goswami". Hearing his name I shed tears of love. Noticing me, Goswami called me before him and I fell flat offering obeisances.

"Where do you come from," he asked, "What is your name, whom do you serve, and how many devotees are with you?"

"I am Krsnacarana dasa", I said. Please be merciful and allow me to serve you. I came to Vrndavana with four vairagi's who have gone for a tour of Vrndavana. I use to live in Orissa with my wife, but she became a burden to me so I left her and came alone to Vrndavana."

"Your wife must be in a state of depression," Goswami replied. "Who will look after your son? Why have you given up material life and become a vairagi?"

"Prabhu, My wife is also very indifferent to family life", I explained. Out of love for Krsna I have come to Vraja."

"Do not leave your wife," Prabhu said. Return to your home and perform the sadhana of Krsna, along with your wife. What type of sadhana are you doing by leaving a helpless vaisnavi?"

I humbly explained to Prabhu, "I know nothing about sadhana or smarana worship. I have come to you because I have not understood Krsna yet, please be kind and fulfill my desire."

"You will obtain my mercy, as well as the mercy of Radha Krsna, if you obey my order. Now go back to your house and engage, along with your wife, in worshipping Krsna and singing my glories. Write something about my auspicious activities and sing the praises of my devotees."

"But I know nothing about your eulogies," I protested. "I know only the letters but I do not know their meanings.(?) How can I describe your glories?"

"Due to my wish you will be able to understand everything", Prabhu said. "If you remember me everything will become clear to you."

"I am an illiterate and ignorant person", I said. "What can I write? And even if I write, what intelligent man will accept it?"

"My fame is known throughout the three worlds", Prabhu replied. Anyone who does not accept it is guilty of flouting Sri Caitanya. These words cannot be false. After completing the book you should show it to my disciple, Nayananda. He will be very happy to receive a book about me. Out of love for me he will distribute the book. Since the people have confidence in Nayananda they will gladly accept the book. He who sings the glories of Krsna and of myself will attain salvation. He will also get my association as well as the feet of Krsna. Don't hesitate to write this book."

Hearing this I fell prostrate on the ground at the feet of Goswami. He placed his feet on my head and blessed me to attain devotion to Krsna. He went to his kunja and I returned home.

Just then I awoke from my dream, but everything remained crystal clear in my mind. I contemplated my good fortune in having the darshan of Vrndavana in my dream. For a few days I hesitated to carry out the order I had received. Then

again my Prabhu mercifully appeared before me in my sleep. He sat at my head and said, "You have flouted my order. This will only bring harm to you. I was sorry to see your distressed condition so I came here to save you from sin. Begin the work of writing a book in my name and remember that I am always with you. Go take your bath and start the book after worshipping Radha Krsna."

Obeying his order I began writing, meditating on my spiritual master. In this way by the desire and mercy of my guru I received the ability to write this book, otherwise it was not possible.

I fall flat at the feet of Sri Shyamananda Goswami offering my obeisances millions of times. If there is any mistakes in my writing or any incidence of rasavasa I humbly beg forgivemenss. It is impossible for a worthless person like myself to fully describe the glorious qualities of Sri Shyamananda.

I hold the feet of Sri Caitanya and Nityananda and all the devotees on my head. I have sold my head at the feet of Sri Radhamohana, the bestower of love and devotion. Taking the lotus fet of Shyamananda prabhu in my heart I, Krsnadasa, have compiled this book Sri Shyamananda Prakash.