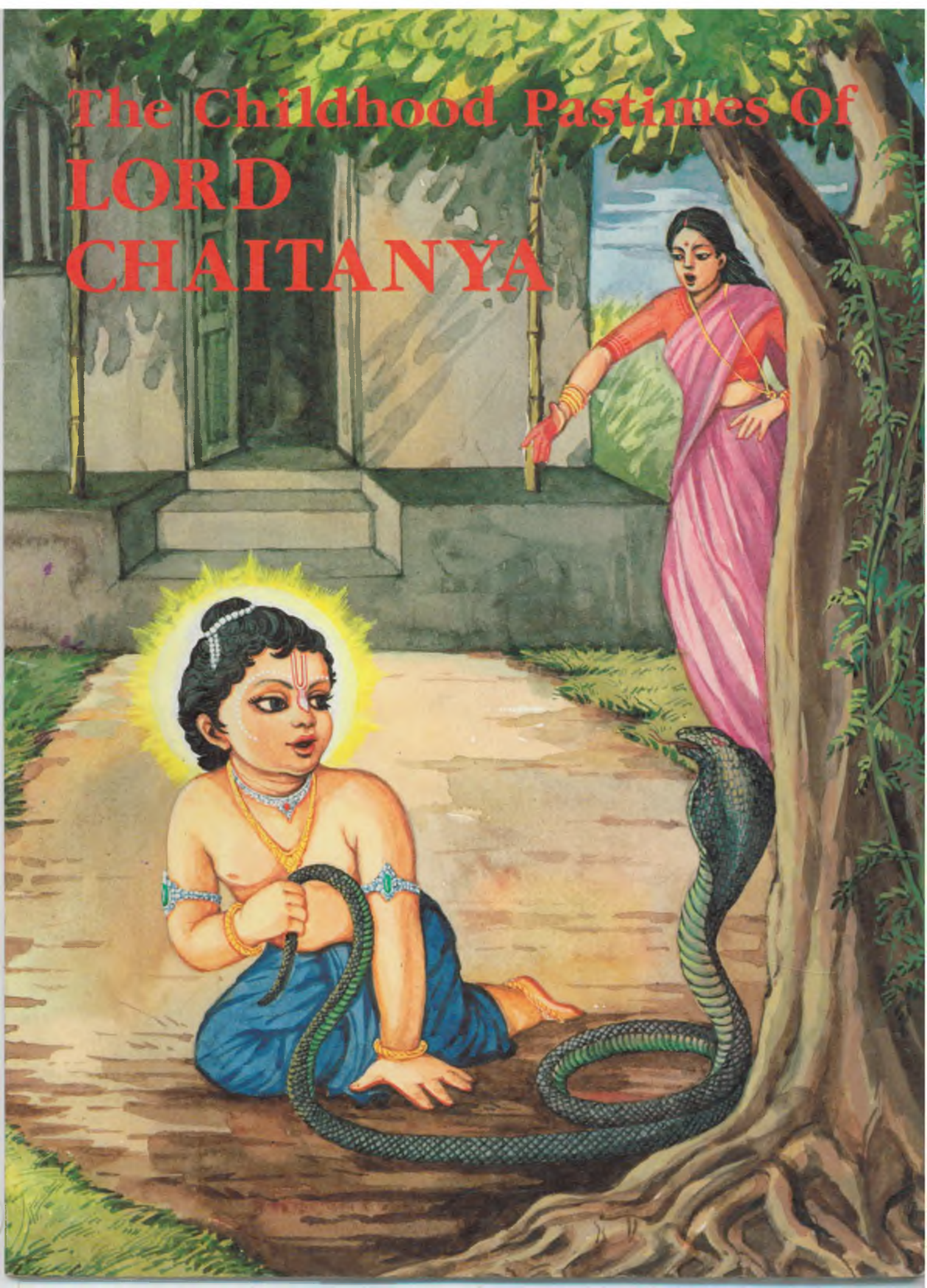


The Childhood Pastimes Of LORD CHAITANYA



The childhood Pastimes of Lord Chaitanya

is based on the Chaitanya Charitamrita by Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj. This Bengali epic has been translated into English by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada Founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

The childhood Pastimes of Lord Chaitanya

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Veda Vision



As retold by Sri Chitraketu Dāsa.

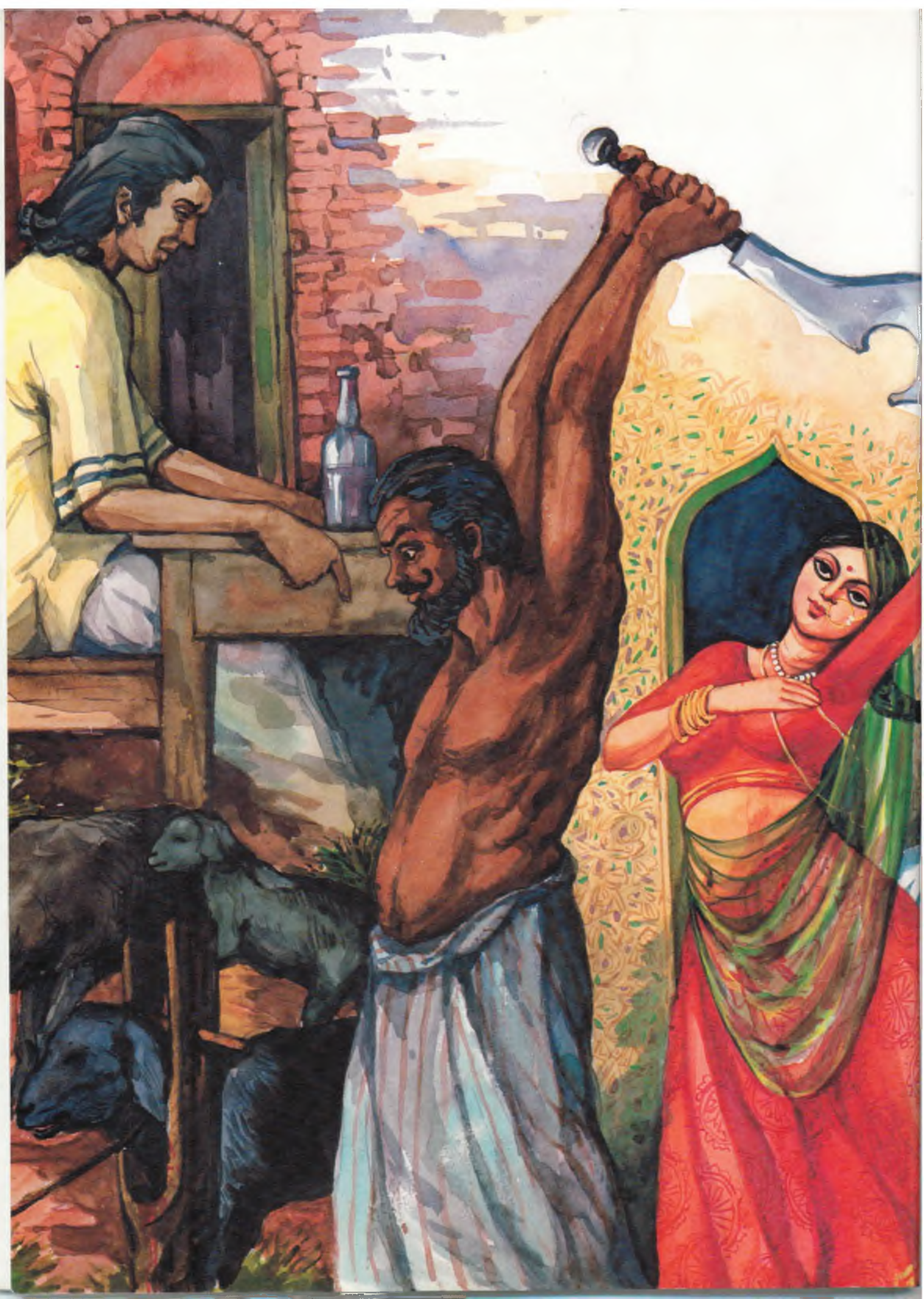
Illustrations by Sri Rupchand Kundu.

PRINTED IN HONG KONG

The Childhood Pastimes Of



**LORD
CHAITANYA**



THE AGE OF KALI

THE AGE OF KALI IS A TERRIBLE AGE,
THE DARKEST OF ALL THE AGES FOUR.
IN THIS AGE THE PEOPLE ARE WICKED,
MORE WICKED THAN PEOPLE WERE EVER BEFORE.

THEY LIKE TO KILL AND CAUSE MUCH PAIN
TO INNOCENT ANIMALS FOR THE TONGUE'S DELIGHT.
THUS DAY BY DAY ARE ANIMALS SLAIN,
AND NOBODY THINKS THAT THIS IS NOT RIGHT.

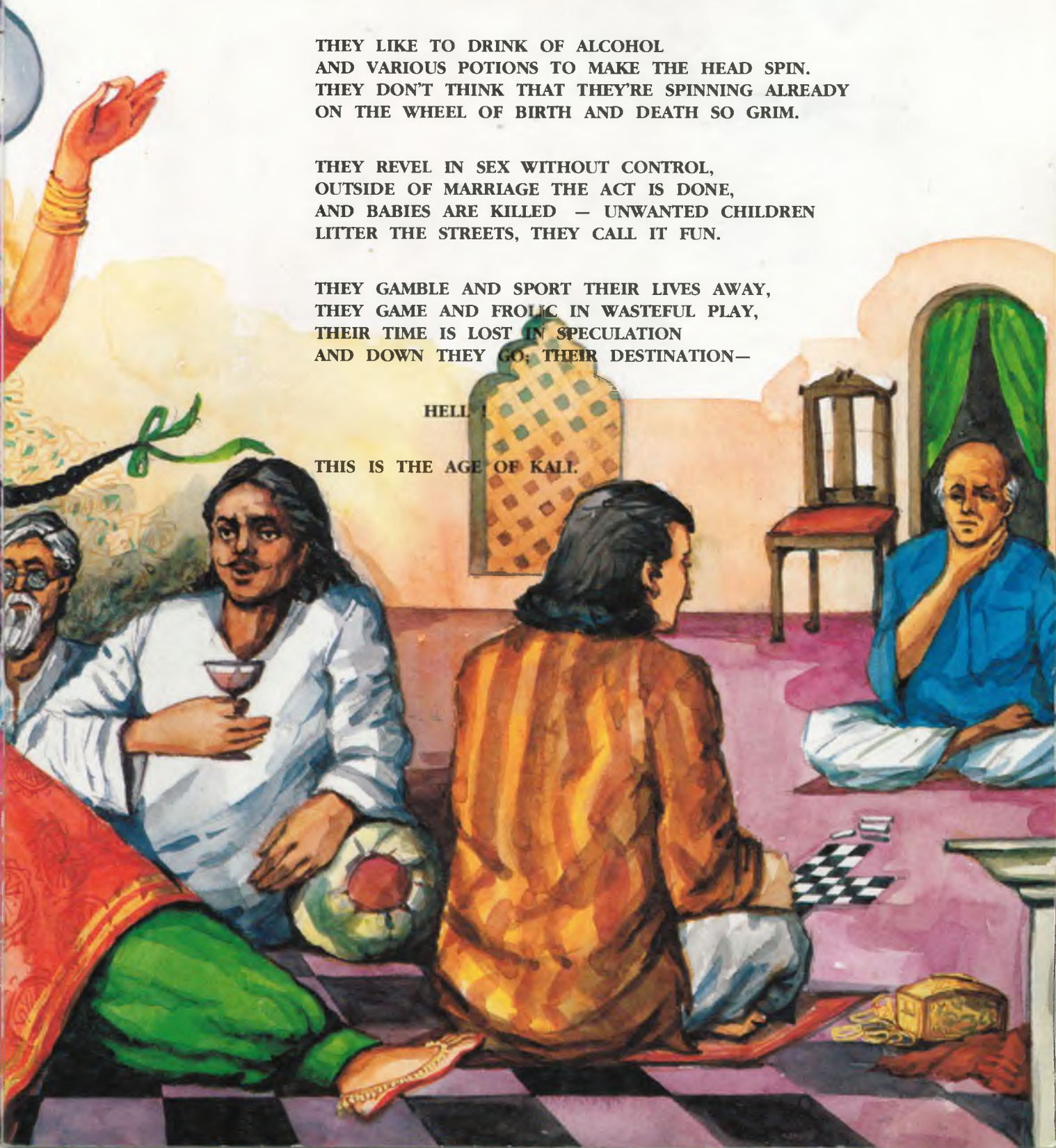
THEY LIKE TO DRINK OF ALCOHOL
AND VARIOUS POTIONS TO MAKE THE HEAD SPIN.
THEY DON'T THINK THAT THEY'RE SPINNING ALREADY
ON THE WHEEL OF BIRTH AND DEATH SO GRIM.

THEY REVEL IN SEX WITHOUT CONTROL,
OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE THE ACT IS DONE,
AND BABIES ARE KILLED — UNWANTED CHILDREN
LITTER THE STREETS, THEY CALL IT FUN.

THEY GAMBLE AND SPORT THEIR LIVES AWAY,
THEY GAME AND FROLIC IN WASTEFUL PLAY,
THEIR TIME IS LOST IN SPECULATION
AND DOWN THEY GO; THEIR DESTINATION—

HELL !

THIS IS THE AGE OF KALI.

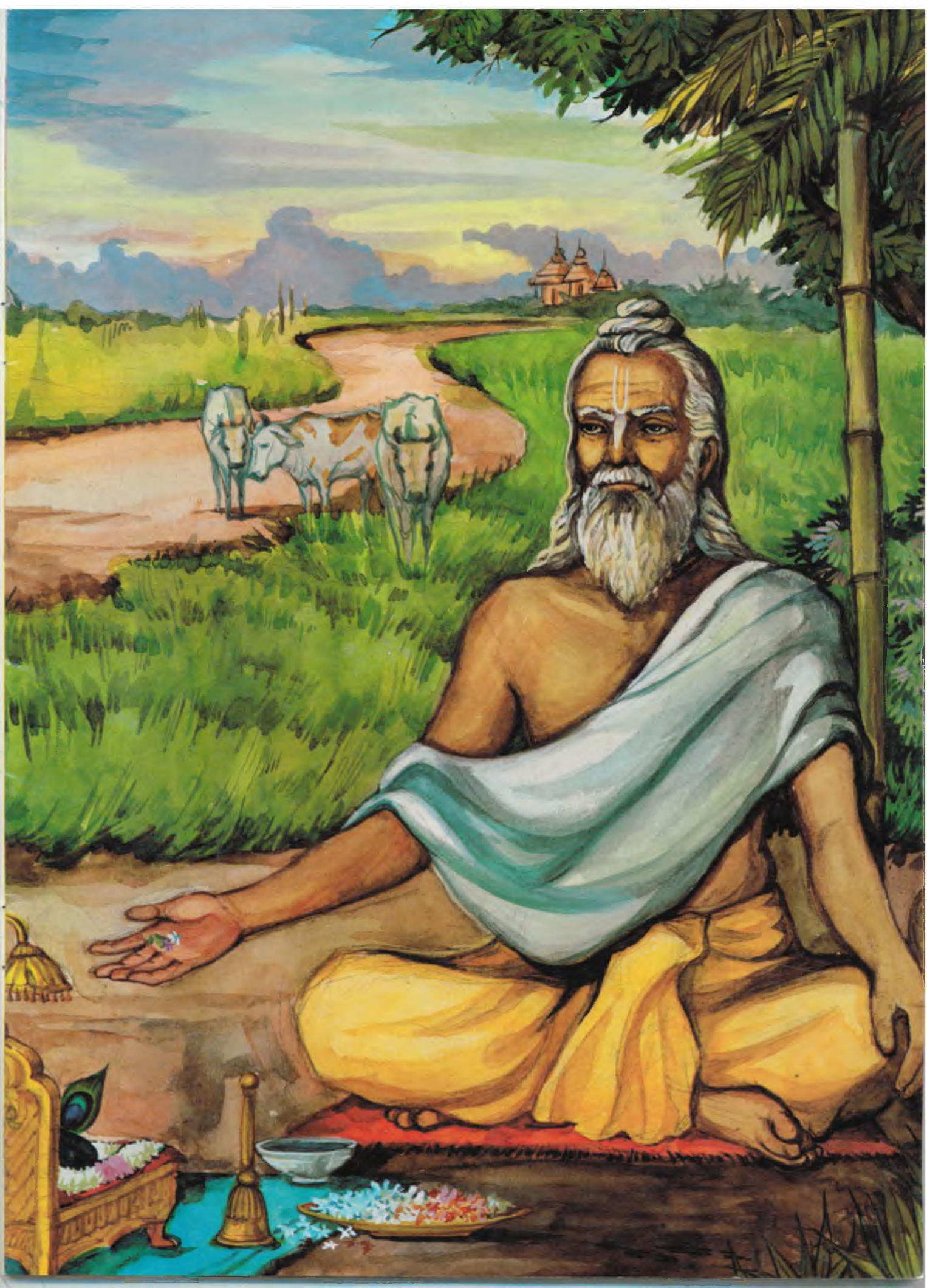


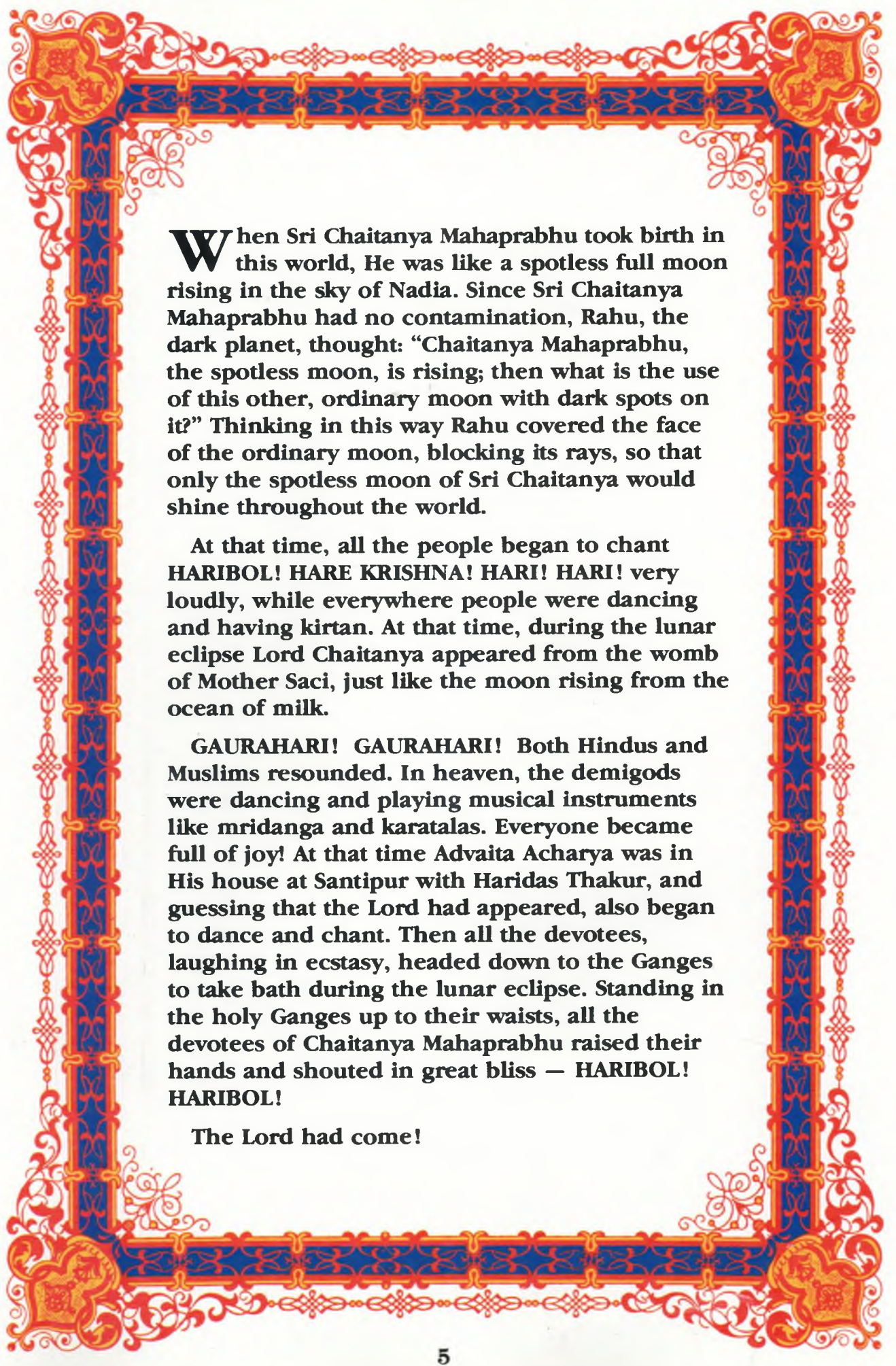
During Advaita Acharya's time in the whole world hardly anyone was chanting Hare Krishna or doing devotional service. Unfortunately everyone was very busy performing all kinds of sinful activities. Whether bad or good, all activities are sinful if they are not in the service of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Advaita Acharya found the people in general to be disinterested in devotional service. Instead everyone was engaged in material activities, which cause one to go round endlessly on the wheel of birth and death. When He saw the sad state of the world, Advaita Acharya was very sorry and wondered how He could help the poor fallen souls to come back to Krishna.

He thought: "If Krishna Himself were to come and show everyone how to be Krishna conscious, then I'm sure everyone will have a change of heart. The only way to go back home, back to Godhead, in Kali-yuga is to chant HARE KRISHNA. If Lord Sri Krishna were to appear Himself and teach this chanting — HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE, HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE — then I'm sure everyone would start to chant. So I'll ask Lord Krishna Himself to come down."

Calling loudly to Lord Krishna, Advaita Acharya offered tulasi buds and Ganges' water in order to please Him.

"My dear Lord, please come down!" He cried. So at the request of Advaita Acharya, Lord Chaitanya appeared.



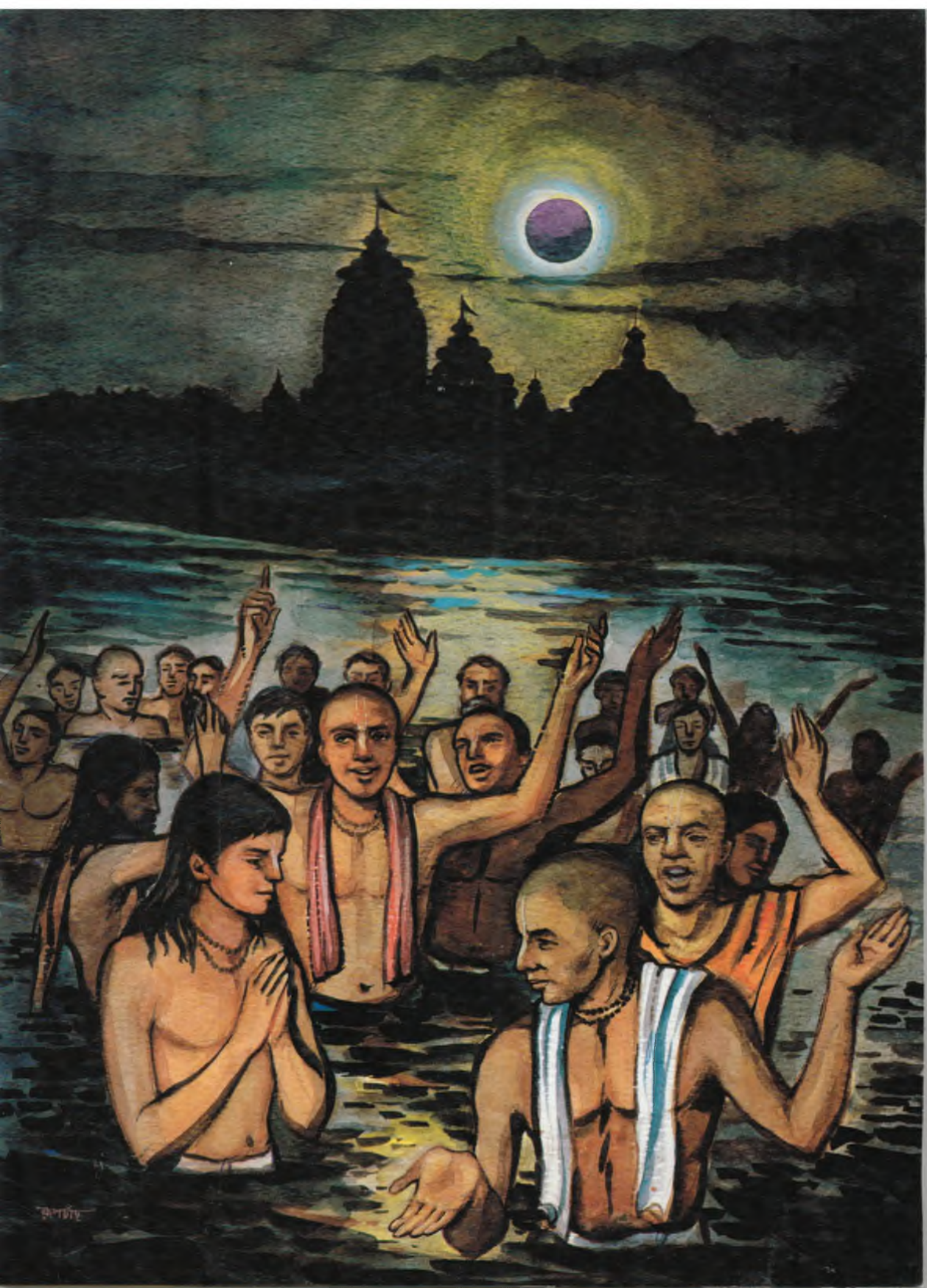


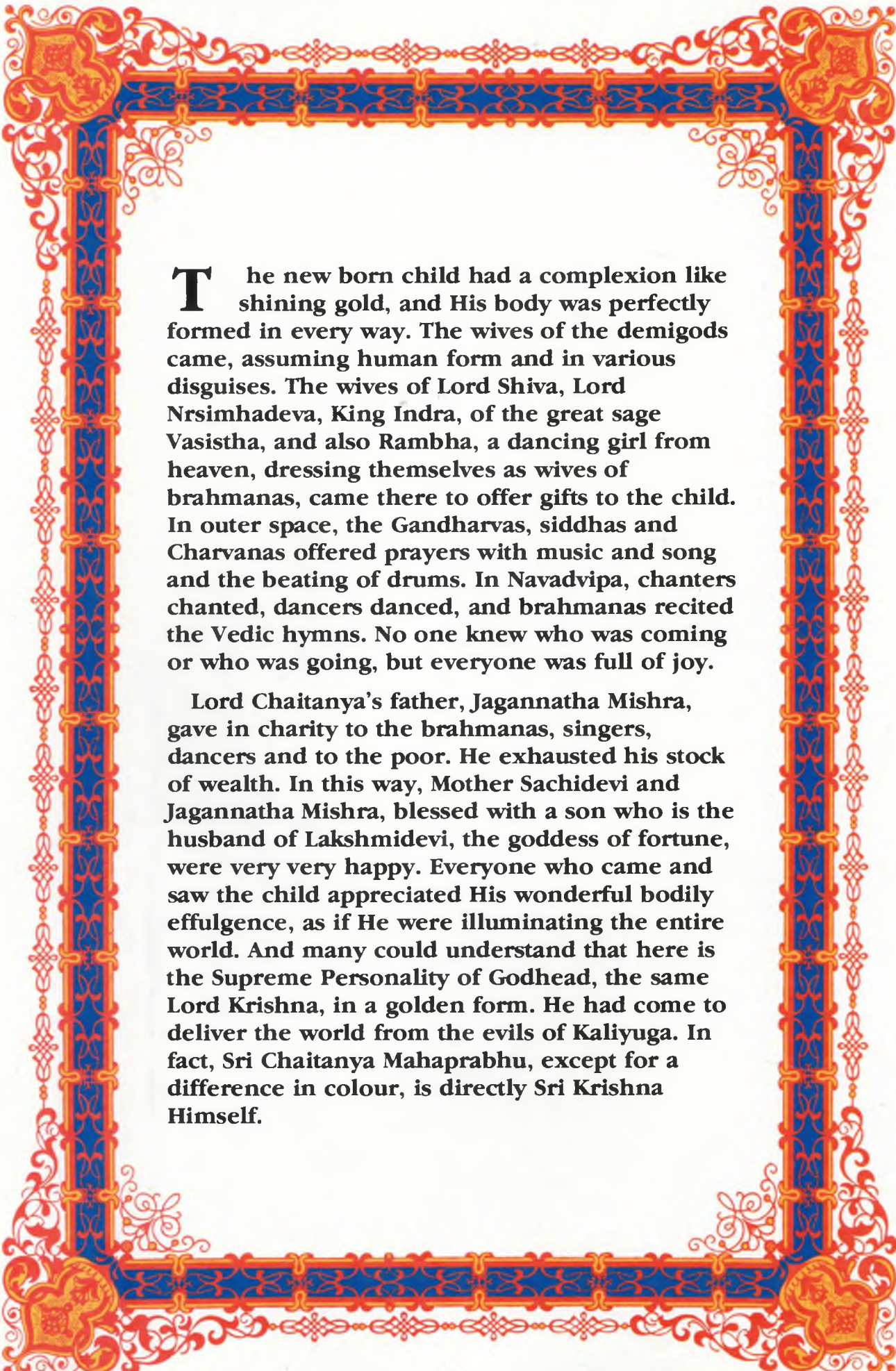
When Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took birth in this world, He was like a spotless full moon rising in the sky of Nadia. Since Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had no contamination, Rahu, the dark planet, thought: "Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the spotless moon, is rising; then what is the use of this other, ordinary moon with dark spots on it?" Thinking in this way Rahu covered the face of the ordinary moon, blocking its rays, so that only the spotless moon of Sri Chaitanya would shine throughout the world.

At that time, all the people began to chant **HARIBOL! HARE KRISHNA! HARI! HARI!** very loudly, while everywhere people were dancing and having kirtan. At that time, during the lunar eclipse Lord Chaitanya appeared from the womb of Mother Saci, just like the moon rising from the ocean of milk.

GAURAHARI! GAURAHARI! Both Hindus and Muslims resounded. In heaven, the demigods were dancing and playing musical instruments like mridanga and karatalas. Everyone became full of joy! At that time Advaita Acharya was in His house at Santipur with Haridas Thakur, and guessing that the Lord had appeared, also began to dance and chant. Then all the devotees, laughing in ecstasy, headed down to the Ganges to take bath during the lunar eclipse. Standing in the holy Ganges up to their waists, all the devotees of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu raised their hands and shouted in great bliss — **HARIBOL! HARIBOL!**

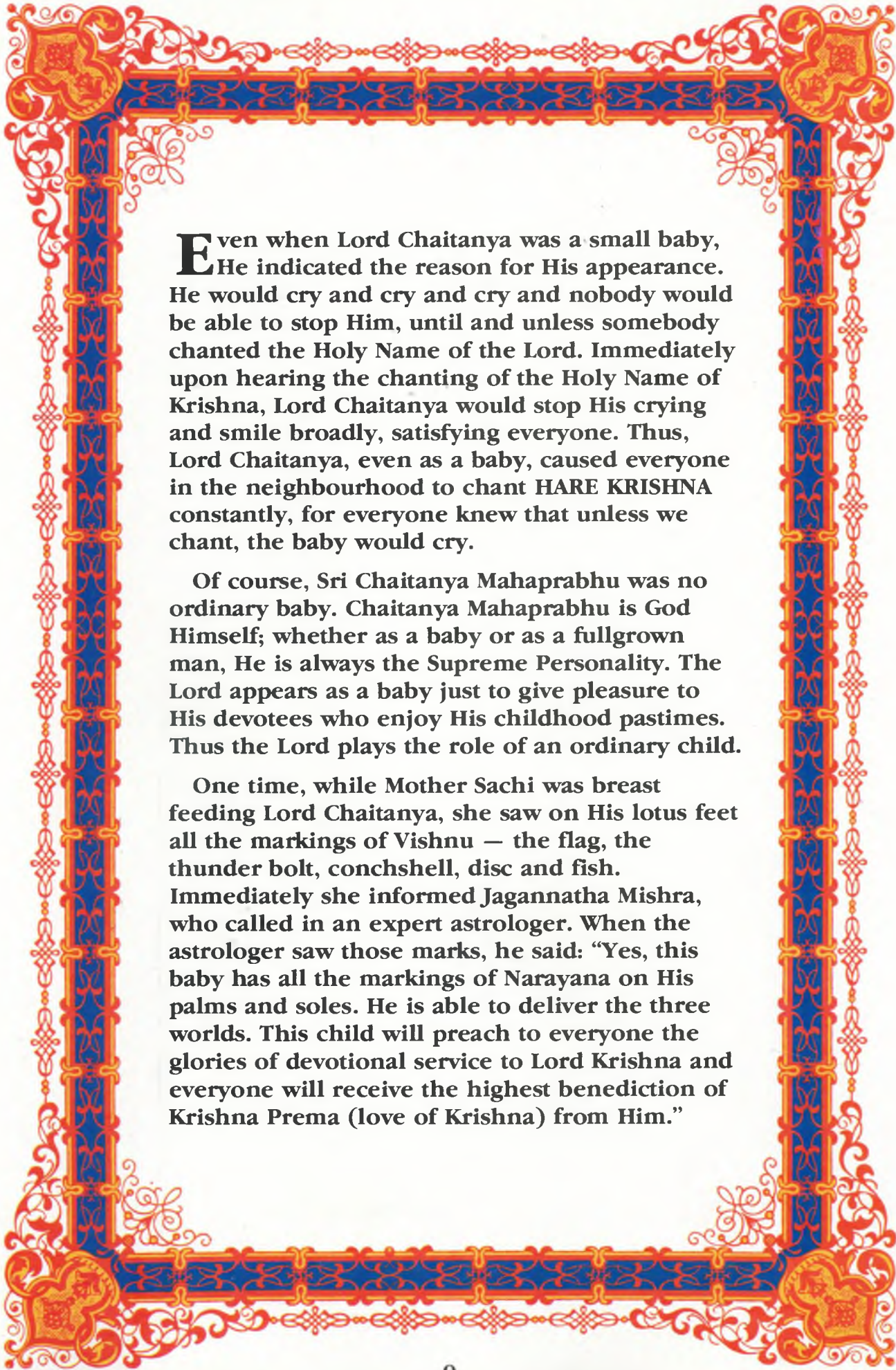
The Lord had come!





The new born child had a complexion like shining gold, and His body was perfectly formed in every way. The wives of the demigods came, assuming human form and in various disguises. The wives of Lord Shiva, Lord Nrsimhadeva, King Indra, of the great sage Vasistha, and also Rambha, a dancing girl from heaven, dressing themselves as wives of brahmanas, came there to offer gifts to the child. In outer space, the Gandharvas, siddhas and Charvanas offered prayers with music and song and the beating of drums. In Navadvipa, chanters chanted, dancers danced, and brahmanas recited the Vedic hymns. No one knew who was coming or who was going, but everyone was full of joy.

Lord Chaitanya's father, Jagannatha Mishra, gave in charity to the brahmanas, singers, dancers and to the poor. He exhausted his stock of wealth. In this way, Mother Sachidevi and Jagannatha Mishra, blessed with a son who is the husband of Lakshmidēvi, the goddess of fortune, were very very happy. Everyone who came and saw the child appreciated His wonderful bodily effulgence, as if He were illuminating the entire world. And many could understand that here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the same Lord Krishna, in a golden form. He had come to deliver the world from the evils of Kaliyuga. In fact, Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, except for a difference in colour, is directly Sri Krishna Himself.

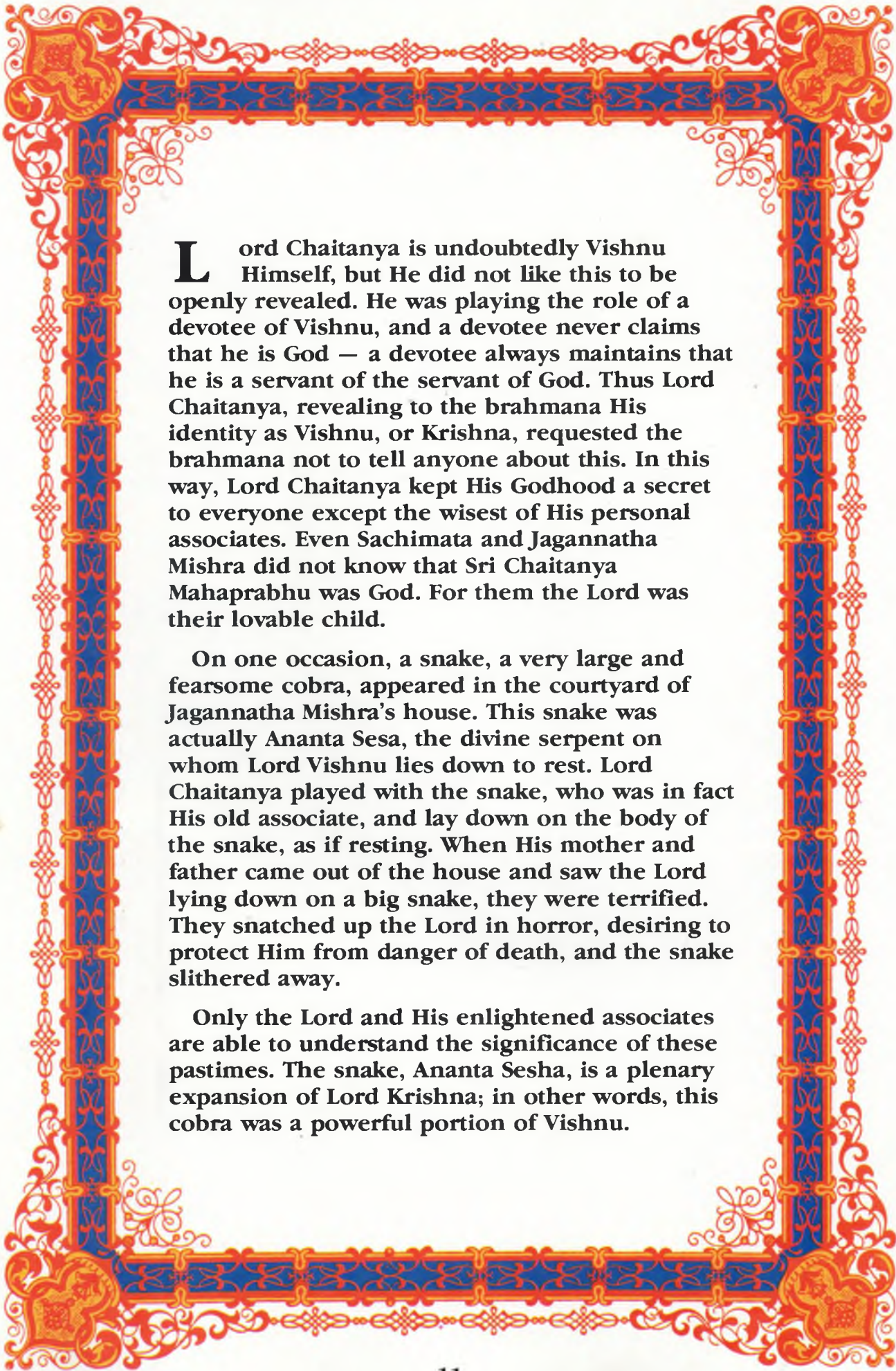


Even when Lord Chaitanya was a small baby, He indicated the reason for His appearance. He would cry and cry and cry and nobody would be able to stop Him, until and unless somebody chanted the Holy Name of the Lord. Immediately upon hearing the chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna, Lord Chaitanya would stop His crying and smile broadly, satisfying everyone. Thus, Lord Chaitanya, even as a baby, caused everyone in the neighbourhood to chant HARE KRISHNA constantly, for everyone knew that unless we chant, the baby would cry.

Of course, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was no ordinary baby. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is God Himself; whether as a baby or as a fullgrown man, He is always the Supreme Personality. The Lord appears as a baby just to give pleasure to His devotees who enjoy His childhood pastimes. Thus the Lord plays the role of an ordinary child.

One time, while Mother Sachi was breast feeding Lord Chaitanya, she saw on His lotus feet all the markings of Vishnu — the flag, the thunder bolt, conchshell, disc and fish. Immediately she informed Jagannatha Mishra, who called in an expert astrologer. When the astrologer saw those marks, he said: "Yes, this baby has all the markings of Narayana on His palms and soles. He is able to deliver the three worlds. This child will preach to everyone the glories of devotional service to Lord Krishna and everyone will receive the highest benediction of Krishna Prema (love of Krishna) from Him."



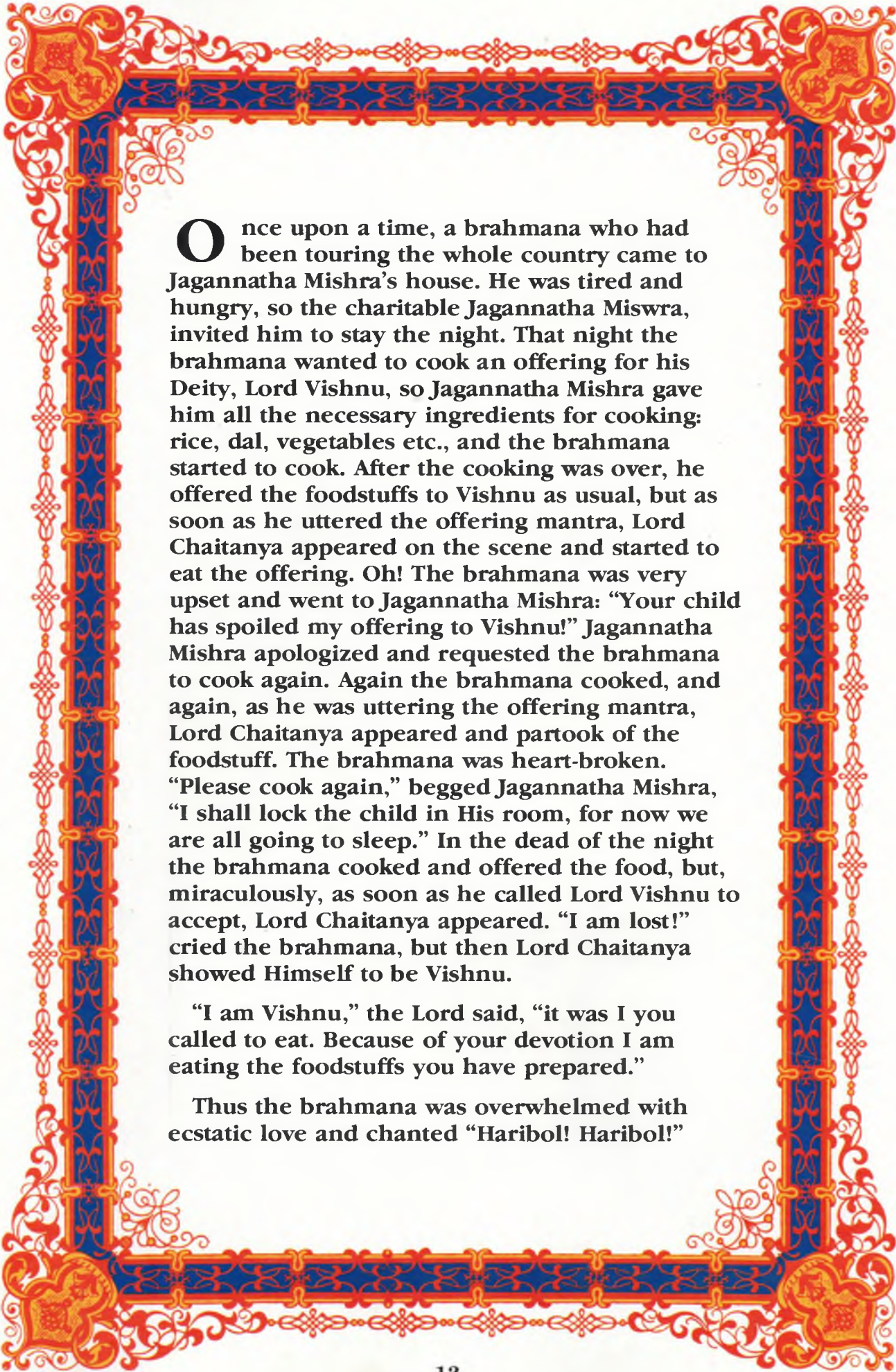


Lord Chaitanya is undoubtedly Vishnu Himself, but He did not like this to be openly revealed. He was playing the role of a devotee of Vishnu, and a devotee never claims that he is God — a devotee always maintains that he is a servant of the servant of God. Thus Lord Chaitanya, revealing to the brahmana His identity as Vishnu, or Krishna, requested the brahmana not to tell anyone about this. In this way, Lord Chaitanya kept His Godhood a secret to everyone except the wisest of His personal associates. Even Sachimata and Jagannatha Mishra did not know that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was God. For them the Lord was their lovable child.

On one occasion, a snake, a very large and fearsome cobra, appeared in the courtyard of Jagannatha Mishra's house. This snake was actually Ananta Sesa, the divine serpent on whom Lord Vishnu lies down to rest. Lord Chaitanya played with the snake, who was in fact His old associate, and lay down on the body of the snake, as if resting. When His mother and father came out of the house and saw the Lord lying down on a big snake, they were terrified. They snatched up the Lord in horror, desiring to protect Him from danger of death, and the snake slithered away.

Only the Lord and His enlightened associates are able to understand the significance of these pastimes. The snake, Ananta Sesha, is a plenary expansion of Lord Krishna; in other words, this cobra was a powerful portion of Vishnu.



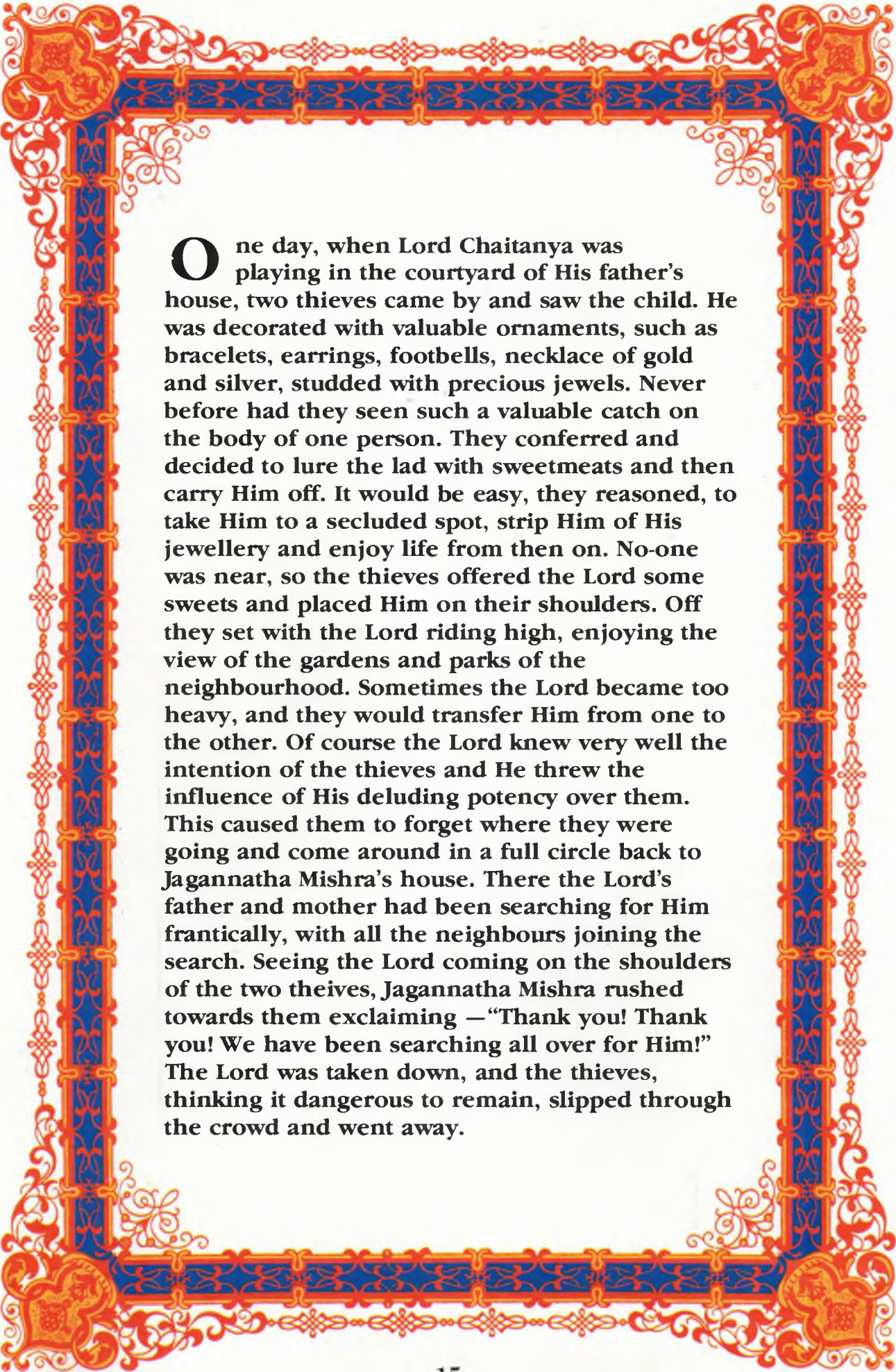


Once upon a time, a brahmana who had been touring the whole country came to Jagannatha Mishra's house. He was tired and hungry, so the charitable Jagannatha Mishra, invited him to stay the night. That night the brahmana wanted to cook an offering for his Deity, Lord Vishnu, so Jagannatha Mishra gave him all the necessary ingredients for cooking: rice, dal, vegetables etc., and the brahmana started to cook. After the cooking was over, he offered the foodstuffs to Vishnu as usual, but as soon as he uttered the offering mantra, Lord Chaitanya appeared on the scene and started to eat the offering. Oh! The brahmana was very upset and went to Jagannatha Mishra: "Your child has spoiled my offering to Vishnu!" Jagannatha Mishra apologized and requested the brahmana to cook again. Again the brahmana cooked, and again, as he was uttering the offering mantra, Lord Chaitanya appeared and partook of the foodstuff. The brahmana was heart-broken. "Please cook again," begged Jagannatha Mishra, "I shall lock the child in His room, for now we are all going to sleep." In the dead of the night the brahmana cooked and offered the food, but, miraculously, as soon as he called Lord Vishnu to accept, Lord Chaitanya appeared. "I am lost!" cried the brahmana, but then Lord Chaitanya showed Himself to be Vishnu.

"I am Vishnu," the Lord said, "it was I you called to eat. Because of your devotion I am eating the foodstuffs you have prepared."

Thus the brahmana was overwhelmed with ecstatic love and chanted "Haribol! Haribol!"





One day, when Lord Chaitanya was playing in the courtyard of His father's house, two thieves came by and saw the child. He was decorated with valuable ornaments, such as bracelets, earrings, footbells, necklace of gold and silver, studded with precious jewels. Never before had they seen such a valuable catch on the body of one person. They conferred and decided to lure the lad with sweetmeats and then carry Him off. It would be easy, they reasoned, to take Him to a secluded spot, strip Him of His jewellery and enjoy life from then on. No-one was near, so the thieves offered the Lord some sweets and placed Him on their shoulders. Off they set with the Lord riding high, enjoying the view of the gardens and parks of the neighbourhood. Sometimes the Lord became too heavy, and they would transfer Him from one to the other. Of course the Lord knew very well the intention of the thieves and He threw the influence of His deluding potency over them. This caused them to forget where they were going and come around in a full circle back to Jagannatha Mishra's house. There the Lord's father and mother had been searching for Him frantically, with all the neighbours joining the search. Seeing the Lord coming on the shoulders of the two thieves, Jagannatha Mishra rushed towards them exclaiming — "Thank you! Thank you! We have been searching all over for Him!" The Lord was taken down, and the thieves, thinking it dangerous to remain, slipped through the crowd and went away.

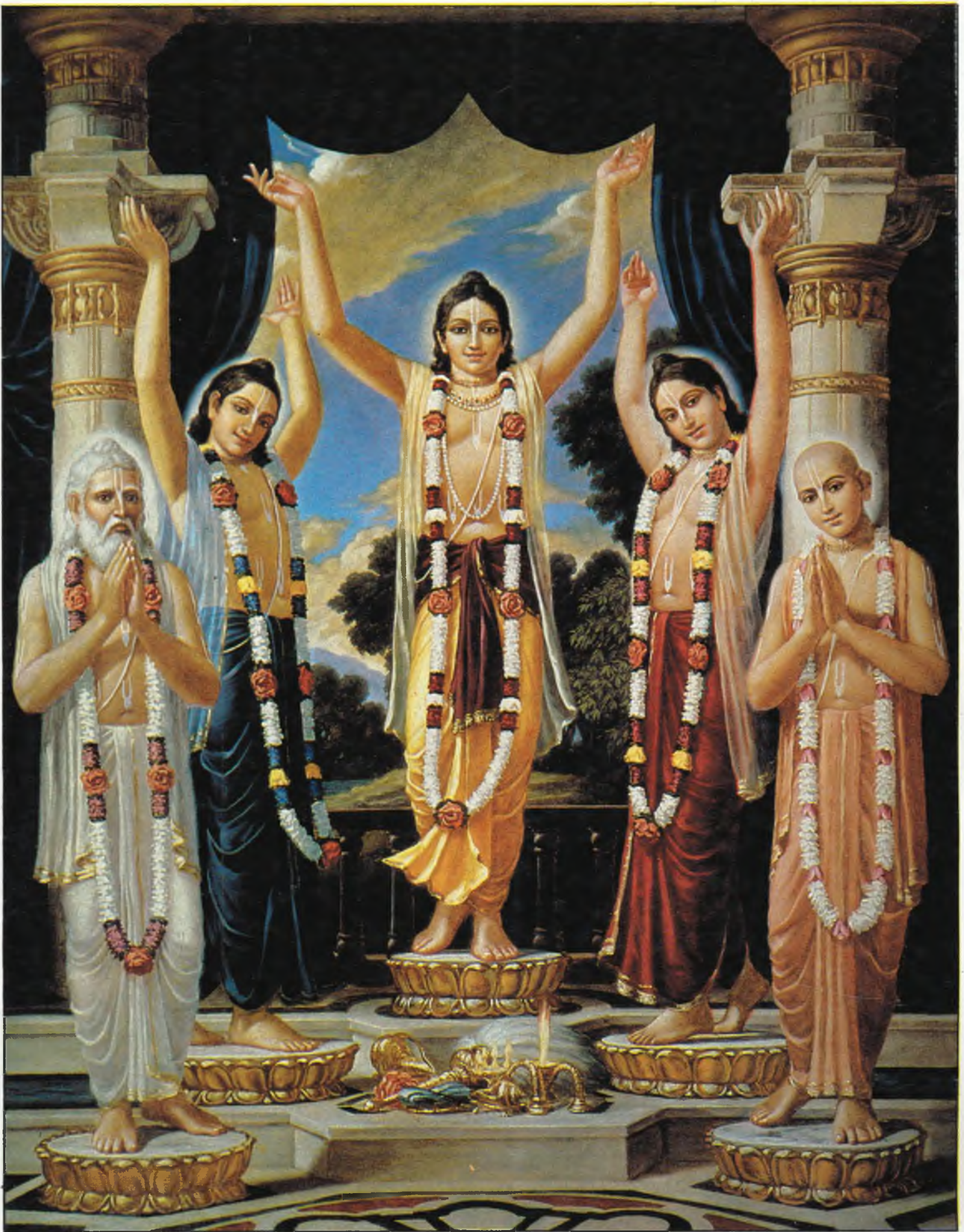




Sometimes the Lord, along with other children, would take bath in the Ganges. The neighbourhood girls would also come there to worship various demigods. The Lord would say to the girls: "Worship Me, and I shall give you good husbands and other benedictions. The Ganges and goddess Durga are My maidservants. What to speak of others, even Lord Shiva is My servant."

The Lord would take the sandalwood pulp and smear it on His own body and put the flower garlands around His neck. Then He would snatch and eat all the offerings of sweetmeats, rice and bananas. The girls were very angry: "Dear Nimai, You are as good as a brother to us. You shouldn't do this. Don't take away our puja lamps and paraphernalia. Stop it!" The Lord replied: "My dear sisters. I bless you that your husbands will be very handsome. They will be intelligent, young and rich. You will each have seven sons who will live a long time and also be very bright."

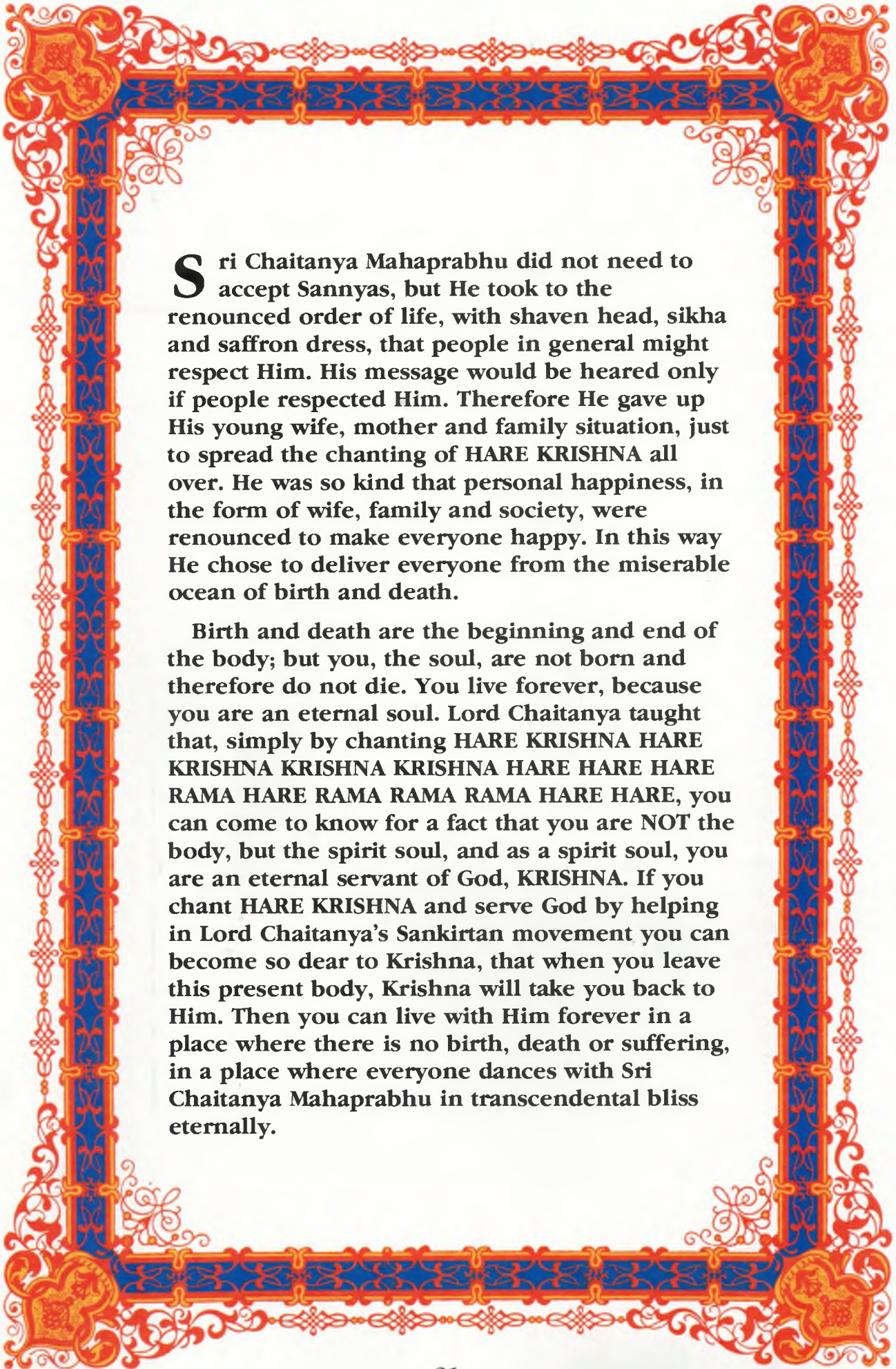
The girls were inwardly very happy to hear these things, but outwardly they feigned anger. Some of the girls ran away and the Lord would call after them: "if you don't give Me the offerings I shall curse you to have a husband who is old and has at least four more wives." The girls then became afraid, thinking that the Lord might have some extraordinary powers. They then brought their offerings before the Lord, who ate them and blessed the girls to their full satisfaction. Hearing of these dealings everyone felt great happiness.



SRI KRISHNA-CHAITANYA PRABHU-NITYANANDA
SRI ADVAITA GADADHARA SRIVASADI GOUR-BHAKTA-VRINDA.







Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu did not need to accept Sannyas, but He took to the renounced order of life, with shaven head, sikha and saffron dress, that people in general might respect Him. His message would be heard only if people respected Him. Therefore He gave up His young wife, mother and family situation, just to spread the chanting of HARE KRISHNA all over. He was so kind that personal happiness, in the form of wife, family and society, were renounced to make everyone happy. In this way He chose to deliver everyone from the miserable ocean of birth and death.

Birth and death are the beginning and end of the body; but you, the soul, are not born and therefore do not die. You live forever, because you are an eternal soul. Lord Chaitanya taught that, simply by chanting HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE, you can come to know for a fact that you are NOT the body, but the spirit soul, and as a spirit soul, you are an eternal servant of God, KRISHNA. If you chant HARE KRISHNA and serve God by helping in Lord Chaitanya's Sankirtan movement you can become so dear to Krishna, that when you leave this present body, Krishna will take you back to Him. Then you can live with Him forever in a place where there is no birth, death or suffering, in a place where everyone dances with Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in transcendental bliss eternally.





Sankirtan, or congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord —

HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE,
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE —

is the prescribed method of self-realization in this age of Kali. Simply by chanting these mantras, one can get free from all unhappiness and go back to Godhead.

When Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu grew up, He spread this movement of Sankirtan and He encouraged everybody to chant. So much so that all over Bengal the Hindus especially were chanting. The Muslims were also chanting, because they heard the chanting so much, they could not get away from it. Some of the demons complained about Lord Chaitanya's chanting to the Kazi (district Magistrate), saying that the Lord was creating a disturbance which should be stopped. The Kazi, who was a Muslim, tried to stop the Sankirtan, but he was converted by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Lord Chaitanya organized a huge Sankirtan procession with hundreds and thousands of people, so many that their number could not be counted. They all marched towards the Kazi's house chanting at the top of their voices — HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE. The sound of their voices shook the whole universe! They were dancing and everyone was totally absorbed in the name of Krishna. When the Kazi saw the tremendous number of demonstrators, he was terribly afraid and hid in the back room of his house. When Lord Chaitanya arrived at the front door, He had to send in a delegation to get the Kazi out. Finally the Kazi came and spoke with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu for a long time.

"Why are you eating cow's flesh?" the Lord asked, "don't you know it is sinful to kill, especially the cow since she is the mother of mankind, providing milk?"

The Kazi replied: "Actually our scriptures also prohibit killing if one follows the path of detachment."

The Lord convinced the Kazi of the strength and purity of the Vedic Version and the Kazi eventually surrendered at the lotus feet of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

"There is one thing you must promise," said the Lord, "that neither you, nor any of your descendants will try to hinder the spreading of the Sankirtan movement."

The Kazi promised and joined the Lord and His associates in chanting HARIBOL! HARIBOL! To this day, the descendants of the Kazi have always respected, and never sought to hinder the Sankirtan movement of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Now it is spreading all over the world by the grace of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's devoted servants and anyone can take advantage of this congregational chanting to attain the supreme perfection of life.



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