

The Nature of a Mahātmā



*Sri Srimad
Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja*

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Yesterday we observed the holy appearance day of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and today we are observing the holy appearance day of our revered spiritual master, Śrī Śrīmad A. C. Bhativedānta Swami Prabhupādajī Mahārāja.

Kṛṣṇa sent His own man, His very dear and very intimate devotee, Śrī Śrīmad A. C. Bhativedānta Swami Prabhupādajī Mahārāja to this world, just after His appearance day.

When Nanda Mahārāja is observing a great festival for the appearance day of his beloved son, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that very day Kṛṣṇa's very dear devotee, very intimate devotee, His own man, appeared.

Kṛṣṇa Is the Lord of His Heart

What is the necessity of the *Vaiṣṇavas* coming here? *Sādhu-vaiṣṇavas*, Kṛṣṇa's own men are always with Kṛṣṇa in that *sat-cid-ānanda-maya-dhāma*. Those who have attained Kṛṣṇa, only see *kṛṣṇa-sambandha*, the relationship with Kṛṣṇa. They see how everyone, everything, every object is related to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the only relationship. *Kṛṣṇa nitya-sambandha* — every *jīva* has a perfect, eternal, loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa. A completely Kṛṣṇa conscious person has this vision. For that *premi-bhakta* Kṛṣṇa is his most beloved and Kṛṣṇa is his object of love. *Kṛṣṇa prāṇanātha* — Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of his heart. The *premi-bhakta*, *Vaiṣṇava* sees that everything, every *jīva* is related to Kṛṣṇa in this loving relationship. Therefore how can he tolerate the suffering of Kṛṣṇa's *jīva*? His heart bleeds seeing the *jīvas* who are suffering because of their forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa and forgetfulness of their relationship with Him. They are bereft of Kṛṣṇa consciousness therefore they are suffering. This is the only cause. *Sādhu* *Vaiṣṇava* knows the cause very well. If they will develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that lost consciousness and become completely Kṛṣṇa conscious, then there will be no more suffering. They will go back home to Godhead.

Inculcate Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

*janma karma ca me divyam
evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna
(Bhagavad-gītā 4.9)*

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa has said, “My appearance, My birth, My activities or *līlās* are not material, they are transcendental. For one who knows this in *tattva*, it will be his last birth here in this material world.” *Tyaktvā deham punar janma naiti mām eti so ’rjuna* — after quitting this body he will definitely go back home, back to Godhead. There is no doubt about this. He will come to Me. No *punar janma*, no rebirth. He will never come back here again to this *prapañca*, material world, *dukhalayam*, this miserable platform. No more, finished! The only requirement is to inculcate Kṛṣṇa consciousness unto them; thereby they will be free from their suffering. They have been revolving in the cycle of birth and death from time immemorial. Transmigrating from one body to another, through *lakhs* of species, so how will their suffering be done away with? A Vaiṣṇava, Kṛṣṇa’s dear devotee knows this, he has that vision. Therefore he comes and wanders here.

The Ointment of Love

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states:

*janasya kṛṣṇād vimukhasya daivād
adharmā-śīlasya suduḥkhitasya
anugrahāyeha caranti nūnam
bhūtāni bhavyāni janārdanasya*

“O my Lord, great philanthropic souls travel on the earth on behalf of the Supreme Personality of Godhead to show compassion to the fallen souls who are averse to the sense of subordination to the Lord.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.5.3)

You have forgotten Kṛṣṇa and according to your *prārabdhakarma* you have been wandering here in lakhs of species of life, continuously suffering, afflicted by the three *tapas* — [the three kinds of miserable conditions-*adhyātmika*, *adhibhautika* and *adhidaivika* (miseries inflicted by the body and mind, those inflicted by other living entities, and natural disturbances)].

Kṛṣṇa's intimate dear devotee comes and wanders here in this material platform just to shower his mercy on the suffering *jīvas* and inculcate Kṛṣṇa consciousness whereby their suffering will end. Only for this purpose they come and wander here.

They are always here. If the sun and moon were not here how would this world go on? Similarly, if Kṛṣṇa's dear devotees, *sādhus*, would not be present, how would Kṛṣṇa's world keep going? It would not be possible. *Sādhus* are always here, we only lack the vision to see them. You cannot see a *sādhu* through your material vision. They are not material beings. How can you see them? How can you see Lord Kṛṣṇa? *Premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena* — if you are endowed with *bhakti-caṅṣu*, a devotional eye, if the ointment of love is smeared on your eyes then you can see the Lord, and how He is everywhere. Then *yāhān netra paḍe tāhān kṛṣṇa sphure* — wherever you look you will see “Yes, Kṛṣṇa is there.” Similarly, how can you see His dear devotee, *sādhu-vaiṣṇava-mahājana*, with your material eyes? He is not a material being.

A Sādhu Opens the Eye

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā
caṅṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ
(Gautamīya Tantra)*

“The *guru*’s business is to open the disciple’s eyes of knowledge. When the disciple is awakened from ignorance to knowledge he can see the Supreme Personality of Godhead everywhere because the Lord actually is everywhere.”

That *guru-sādhu-mahājana* opens the eye, and with that vision you can see Kṛṣṇa’s dear devotee. Otherwise you are blind. With material vision you think you are the seer. That is completely wrong. You are not the seer. *Sādhus, gurus*, they are the seers, and you are to be seen. It is completely the reverse. You are not the seer. Kṛṣṇa is the seer, His dear devotee *sādhu-mahājana* is the seer, and you are to be seen. When he casts his merciful glance on you, all your bad fortune is gone, and then good fortune arises. *Sādhu-guru* blesses you with that vision to really see. Otherwise how can you see?

Śrīla Prabhupāda is Nourished by Kṛṣṇa-Śakti

My revered spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda is one such Vaiṣṇava *sādhu*. Kṛṣṇa has sent him and he is especially empowered by Kṛṣṇa. It is said, *kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana* — without *kṛṣṇa-śakti* one cannot fathom it and inculcate Kṛṣṇa consciousness unto the conditioned souls. His *guru* especially ordered him to go to the Western world and preach the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in English.

The Western world means countries where the people are gross materialists, who have no Kṛṣṇa consciousness, no God consciousness at all. Therefore, who is able to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness among them? It is completely impossible, unless, *kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*, one is empowered by Kṛṣṇa’s *śakti* and becomes *kṛṣṇa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikara*. That is *guru-tattva*. One who is *sad-guru*, Śrī-Guru, a pure Vaiṣṇava,

sādhu mahājana is *kṛṣṇa-śakti-puṣṭa-parikara*. He is Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associate. He is nourished by *kṛṣṇa-śakti*. Without *kṛṣṇa-śakti* no one can spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness alone, by his own strength. It is impossible. Therefore, there is definitely no doubt that Śrīla Prabhupāda was empowered by Kṛṣṇa, empowered by Mahāprabhu. He had received the full mercy of Kṛṣṇa, Mahāprabhu and the previous *ācāryas* — Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and all other *sādhu-mahājanas*, who gave him full power. Thus he was able to do it.

Prabhupāda Fulfilled Mahāprabhu’s Desire

Who else could go to the Western world at that time? He went to the West when he was an old man, near the end of his life. Anyone would say, “Where shall I go? I am a stranger in a foreign land. My friends are not here. Who will take care of me?” Anyone else would be afraid to embark on such a journey in their old age. No one would go, but he went, to carry out the order of his *guru* and to fulfill the desire of Mahāprabhu: *pr̥thivīte āche yata nagarādi-grām sarvatra pracara haibe mora nāma* — “My name and My teachings will spread throughout the world, *nagarādi-grām* — reaching all cities, towns, villages, in every nook and corner of the world.” That was Mahāprabhu’s *mano-bhīṣṭam*, desire, and Mahāprabhu’s prophecy. Who did it? Who fulfilled the desire of Mahāprabhu? Who fulfilled the desire of the previous *ācāryas*?

My dear *guru-pāda padma*, my most revered spiritual master, Śrī Śrīmad A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupādājī Mahārāja, he did it, fearlessly. He was empowered, otherwise no one could have done as he did. In the short span of twelve years he travelled around the world fourteen times, preaching the science of

Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The result is here; these Westerners, gross materialists, have developed Kṛṣṇa consciousness and they are realising that they are *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*, eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa, and now they are preaching and speaking about Kṛṣṇa, and are engaged in Kṛṣṇa's loving service. How have they done this?

The Nature of a Mahātmā

*mahad-vicalanam nṛṇām
grhiṇām dīna-cetasām
niḥśreyasāya bhagavan
kalpate nānyathā kvacit*

“O my lord, O great devotee, persons like you move from one place to another not for their own interests but for the sake of poor-hearted *grhasthas* [householders]. Otherwise they have no interest in going from one place to another.”
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.8.4)

O Lord, these materialistic people, who are overly attached to home and hearth, whose consciousness is very, very low, and degraded, are suffering. O Lord, You are so merciful that You send Your own men to the material world. Those *sādhu*, *mahājanas* go to the doorstep of the *grhī*, householder, who is overly attached to home and hearth, and completely bereft of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in order to inculcate Kṛṣṇa consciousness unto them. No other purpose is there. This is mercy.

*mahānta-svabhāva ei tārīte pāmara
nija kārya nāhi tabu yāna tāra ghara*

“It is the general practice of all saintly people to deliver the fallen. Therefore they go to people’s houses, although they have no personal business there.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya* 8.39)

This is the nature of a *mahātma*. He has no other business going to the house of a materialistic person, who is too attached to household life, who only thinks, “I” and “mine” — my home, hearth, my wife, son, daughter, and family. His only purpose is to inculcate Kṛṣṇa consciousness and to deliver them.

A Vaiṣṇava Has No Birth

*na karma-bandhanam janma
vaiṣṇavānām ca vidyate
viṣṇur anucaratvaṁ hi
mokṣam āhur manīṣiṇaḥ*

“A Vaiṣṇava does not take birth under the jurisdiction of karmic law. His birth and disappearance are transcendental. The wise have declared that the servants of Viṣṇu are eternally engaged in the liberated service of the Lord and hence are free from the laws of material nature.” (*Padma Purāṇa*, quoted in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, 10.113)

A Vaiṣṇava is not a conditioned soul. He is a dear devotee of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu therefore a Vaiṣṇava is free from *karma-bandhana*, the bondage of *karma*, and he has no birth. As Kṛṣṇa appears and disappears, he also appears and disappears. His *janma*, birth is not a *duḥkha*, misery, for him. He never feels such pain. Whereas a conditioned soul feels pain; staying in the womb is a very painful situation. A Vaiṣṇava on the other hand,

