

Prabhupada Memoirs

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In his continuing discourse on *mahat seva*, service to the *mahatmas*, Prabhupada this morning gave a few definitions how we can recognise such great souls, both by their behaviour and by their work. He advised that we go beyond outer appearances and study their actual character and activities.

"What is the symptom?" he asked. "In the *sastra* we'll find not by one symptom that one has got saffron cloth or big beard, then he is *mahatma*. No. There are other symptoms. Just like *brahmana*. In the Kali-yuga *brahmana* means one two-paisa thread, that's all. But that is not *brahmana*. *Brahmana* means *samo damo titiksva*. These are the symptoms. Similarly, *mahatma* does not mean a dress. In India still, although poverty stricken, if a person, simply by dressing in saffron goes to a village, he has no problem. Everyone will call him, invite him, give him shelter, give him food. "Sir, come here, take *prasada*", everyone will ask. Poor people have taken advantage of it. Without any education, they take it for solving economic problems. Here also in Vrindavana you'll find so many people have come here because there are so many *chatras*. You can get free *chapatti*, dal. You'll find in the morning so many wretched class. They have come to Vrindavan just for this bread and dal. And they collect and they exchange. They purchase *bidi* (cigarettes)."

A real *mahatma*, he said, was a *pandita*, a learned man who saw every living being equally. And Krishna similarly offers the chance equally to every living being to go back to Godhead, no matter how lowly they may be by birth. So if Krishna is making this offer for all to return to Him, "Then who will do it?" Prabhupada asked. "You are a

big *sadhu*, very learned *sadhu*, and if you sit down, 'No, no, I shall not go out of India. As soon as I cross the sea, immediately I'll become fallen,' then who will do this business? Krishna wants that *te 'pi yanti param gatim, ye 'pi syuh papa-yonayah*. Then who will deliver these *papa-yoni*? If I am a big *sannyasi* and big devotee, I do not go outside Vrindavan, I do not go outside India. I am *jagat-guru...* 'Have you seen *jagat*?' 'No. I'm self-made *jagat-guru*.' This is going on. Cheating. This cheating is going on. What is *mahatma* they do not know; still, they are posing themselves as *mahatma*.

So if Krishna is making this offer for all to return to Him, "Then who will do it?" Prabhupada asked

A symptom of a great soul, he said, is that they are *prasanta*, peaceful, despite the difficulties encountered in the course of preaching. Lord Nityananda was ideal in His reaction to the attack on Him by Jagai and Madhai; He was hit by an earthen pot and still He asked them to simply chant. But Prabhupada also pointed out that it was not always appropriate to be peaceful. "When Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu heard it, He immediately came, and He was so angry, that 'I shall kill these two men immediately. Bring my *chakra*.' Nityananda prabhu said, 'My Lord, You have promised not to take weapons in this incarnation, so kindly be merciful upon them.' 'No! They have insulted a Vaishnava!' This is another example. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is teaching this humbleness: *trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna* [Cc. Adi 17.31]. But when Nityananda prabhu was injured, did he stop punishing them? No. At that time He became fire: 'I shall kill them!' *Trnad api sunicena* does not mean that if a Vaishnava is insulted or Visnu is defamed, you remain silent. No. At that time you should become fire. That is the teaching of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Just like

Hanumanji; he's Vaishnava. But when there was need for the service of Lord Ramachandra, he set fire in the Lanka. So when there is *visnu-vaishnava-ninda*, defamation, you should not remain *trnad api sunicena*. You should take steps. This is the instruction. Anyway, Vaishnava is never angry, but that does not mean that you tolerate insult to Visnu and Vaishnava. No."

Citing several other examples of devotees who exhibited extreme tolerance in the face of demonic opposition, including that of Lord Jesus whom he calls a *saktyavesa avatara*, God's son, Prabhupada told us something very surprising – that *mahatmas* are found not only in the human species. "Don't misunderstand that we are preaching that *mahatmas* are only in India. No, by the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, there are *mahatmas* even amongst the birds, even amongst the beasts, even amongst the lower than animals. Because this Krishna Consciousness movement is going on in different places, in different circumstances. That is God's desire, *yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavatri bhārata tadatmanam srjamy aham* [Bg. 4.7]

"So Krishna wants this. Just like in your country there are welfare activities by the government. Welfare department is seeing that nobody is unhappy for want of money. Similarly, *mahatmas*, they are in the welfare department of Krishna. They are sent to different countries, different places, different species of life, so that the living entity may take advantage of Krishna Consciousness."

NOW THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT! YEAH! LORD KRISHNA IS KIND TO ALL THE SPECIES – THAT'S REAL EQUALITY!

