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FROM THE UPCOMING BOOK, "MATHURA MEETS VRINDAVAN"



PURE IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCE

HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C.
BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

Mahamsa Das: [Regarding some young Indian ladies about to take initiation from Srila Prabhupada] I don't know what is the position of the ladies being initiated. They are young girls. They may get married to someone outside the society.

Prabhupada: Still they can chant and observe the rules and regulations.

Mahamsa Das: Even if her husband does not follow?

Prabhupada: That does not matter. It is individual. My sister, when she married, everyone at her father-in-law's house were all eating fish. She was a young girl, ten, eleven years old. She was given this foodstuff with fish and everything and she started crying. Her mother-in-law asked, "Why you are crying?"

"No, we do not touch all these things." Her mother-in-law immediately arranged special cooking for her. So her husband and other family members were taking fish, but she never touched it. She does not know what is fish. If one wants to keep oneself pure, he or she can keep herself pure in any circumstances.

— Room Conversation, 22 August 1976 Hyderabad

KRISHNA'S APPEARANCE

SRILA GOUR GOVINDA SWAMI

In the first three chapters of the tenth canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* there is a description of the appearance of Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Krishna's appearance is also described in *Hari-vaṁśa* and in Sri Jiva Goswami's *Gopāla-campū*. Hearing the transcendental pastimes of Krishna is all-auspicious. The *Bhāgavatam* (1.2.17) describes:

*śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hrdy antaḥ stho hy abhadrāṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām*

Sri Krishna, the Personality of Godhead, who is the *paramātmā* in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.

Why Krishna Comes

The *Bhāgavatam* says that hearing the transcendental *līlā-kāhāṇī*, narrations of the pastimes of Bhagavan Krishna, is all-auspicious. If you hear with full faith and concentrated attention all the material contamination in your heart will be purified. In order to give you an opportunity to hear these narrations of His pastimes, Bhagavan Sri Krishna descends here.

Krishna's eternal abode in the spiritual sky is known as *sac-cid-ānanda-maya-dhāma*, a *dhāma* that is *sanmaya*, *cinmaya*, and *ānandamaya* — full of eternality, full of knowledge, and full of bliss.

He is always there engaged, completely absorbed in transcendental *līlā*, especially *rāsa-līlā*. Why should He come to this material world? It is not His abode. The material world is the antithesis of His transcendental *sac-cid-ānanda-maya-dhāma*. It is *asat-*, *acit-*, and *nirānanda-maya* — it is temporary and full of ignorance and misery. Why should Krishna come here? What business does He have to conduct here?

He comes because He is *suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānām*, (Bg. 5.29) the only well-wishing friend of all living entities. From time immemorial you have forgotten Krishna and have been under the clutches of *māyā*. But Krishna has not forgotten you. He is your well-wishing friend. He always runs behind you; He never deserts you. He is there in your heart as Paramatma. He also descends to this material world in many incarnations along with His *dhāma* and His associates and He manifests transcendental pastimes. One purpose for His coming is so that His *līlā-kāhāṇīs* will be recorded in books. Then His dear devotees — the *sādhus*, *vaiṣṇavas*, *mahājānas* — will come. They will preach, recite and speak these pastimes. Thereby you will get peace and bliss. Your heart will be cleansed and then you will be able to understand your constitutional position. Krishna is your eternal master and your constitutional position is as His eternal servant. Krishna therefore descends here out of *kriḍārtha* — for the purpose of enjoying playful pastimes with His dear devotees, to relish His *līlā-rasa*, the mellow of transcendental *līlā*. Simultaneously He also gives you an opportunity to relish these pastimes. Moreover, He also comes here for *sādhu-saṁrakṣaṇa*, to protect His dear devotees. These are the purposes of Krishna's coming to this material world.

Nanda Maharaja's Vow

Gopāla-campū describes that in the assembly of Nanda Maharaja there were two poets named Snigdha Kantha and Madhu Kantha who would daily sing songs. [*Snigdha-kaṇṭha* literally means, "affection-laden voice" and "*madhu-kaṇṭha*" literally means, "honey-laden voice".] One day they started singing the story of how Nandaraj got a son. With the aim of obtaining a son, Nandaraj performed many sacrifices, but still no son was born. The residents of Vrajabhumi, who were all his friends, also took up a vow and offered worship so that Nanda Maharaja could have a son. Still no son was coming. Yasomati, the wife of Nanda Maharaja, became very distressed. She

gave up eating and was always sitting, hanging her head down and shedding tears.

Seeing the condition of his wife, Nanda Maharaja become very distressed and consoled her in various ways. He said, "Whatever is the will of Providence, that will take place."

His wife Yasoda Mata said, "My dear husband, I will tell what I have thought of in my heart. I have performed many sacrifices and have taken up many vows. But I have not performed the *dvādasī-parama-vrata*."

Hearing this, Nanda Maharaja became very happy and said, "Yes, very good. We have not performed this *vrata*. So we must do it."

Nanda Maharaja called his priest. The priest described everything to him about the procedures, rules and regulations to perform this *dvādasī-vrata*.

The Yogini's Visit

Nanda Maharaja and Yasomati Rani observed the *vrata* for one year. At the end of the *vrata* Nanda Maharaja had a dream. Lord Hari appeared and, being very pleased with Him, said, "Your desire will soon be fulfilled. In every *kalpa* I come as your son, and in this *kalpa* I will also come as your son. I will manifest My babyhood *līlā* in your home. Every day you will see My pastimes and you will be very happy."

Then Nanda Maharaja's sleep broke. It was morning and birds were chirping. He decided to take bath in the Yamuna along with his wife Yasomati, and he took much wealth with him to give in charity. All of the demigods, *munis*, and *ṛṣis* came in the guise of beggars to receive charity from Nanda Maharaja. Nanda Maharaja and Yasomati completed their bath, and then started giving charity. Everyone become very pleased to receive charity from Nanda Maharaja. They all loudly shouted, "Nanda Maharaja *ki jaya!*" and "Yasomati Rani *ki jaya!*"

Then Nanda Maharaja returned home and offered worship to Bhagavan Vishnu. After finishing his daily activities, he came to his assembly and offered respect to worshipable personalities such as his gurus and the *brāhmaṇas*.

Snigdha Kantha's narration continued: Just then the gatekeeper came and informed Nanda Maharaja that a *brahmacāriṇī* had come. Hearing this, he stood up and welcomed them, offering them nice seats. Nanda Maharaja washed their feet and worshiped them. Yasoda Mata began

crying at the feet of that *brahmacāriṇī tapasvī*. The ascetic took Yasoda Mata onto her lap and, putting her hand on Yasoda's head, blessed her, saying, "My dear queen, very soon a nice son will come and take birth." Hearing this, all of the cowherd men and women said, "Nandarani ki jaya!"

When Nanda Maharaja's brother Upananda heard the news he became very joyful and said, "This Gokula forest will be a great place of pilgrimage." Hearing the *brahmacāriṇī's* prophecy, all of the inhabitants of Vrajabhumi became very joyful. They all came and offered *daṇḍavat pranāmas* at the feet of that yogini, *brahmacāriṇī*. They built a cottage for her and she stayed there.

Yasoda's Pregnancy

Snigdha Kantha asked, "My dear brother Madhu Kantha, now tell how Krishna came to the womb of Yasoda Mata." Madhu Kantha then spoke about this confidential truth:

For one year Nanda and his wife observed *dvādāsī-vrata*. Then, on the night of the Krishna *pratipat*, the first day of the dark fortnight of the month of Māgha, Nanda Maharaja had a dream. He saw a baby child with a blue complexion moving in the sky, and then he saw a girl with a golden-hued bodily complexion. The two of them entered into Nanda Maharaja's heart. Then they came out of the heart of Nanda Maharaja and entered into the womb of Yasoda Mata.

In this way, Yasoda Mata became pregnant. Hearing this news all of the *gopas* and *gopīs* became very blissful and happy. Every day they had grand festivals on account of Yasoda's pregnancy.

Nanda Maharaja gave much charity to the *brāhmaṇas* and *vaiṣṇavas*. Many persons were coming and going to Nanda's house. Who all of those persons were, no one could say. Among them some demigoddesses were also coming.

After eight months of pregnancy an astrologer told them, "On the eighth day of the dark fortnight of this month of *Bhādra* the child will take birth on a most auspicious *tithi*. When this *Bhādra-kṛṣṇāṣṭamī*, the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of *Bhādra* came, the nurse said, "The child will be born today." Immediately a maternity home was prepared and decorated nicely. Flower garlands were hung all over. Gates were also made out of various flowers. Expert nurses came to take care of the mother and child. In the heavenly planets all of the demigods became very joyful. Indradeva was showering rain. On that day

everyone was drowning in an ocean of happiness, for the Supreme Lord was about to take birth.

All of the *gopīs* stayed awake that night. But due to the influence of Krishna's *yoga-māyā* they all fell asleep. When the child took birth, everyone was sleeping. Even Yasoda Mata was asleep. There was no pain in the delivery at all. Without any pain, Yasoda Mata gave birth to Krishna, the Supreme Personality. That child was *putra-ratna*, a son like an invaluable gem.

Mathura and Vrindavan

Exactly at the same time when Yasoda Mata gave birth to Krishna in Vrindavan, in Mathura, in the prison house of Kamsa, Devaki also gave birth to a child. That is described in the tenth canto of the *Bhāgavatam*. Lord Hari appeared in Mathura in a four-handed form. He had a crown on His head, and with his four hands he was holding *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *gadā*, and *padma* — a conch shell, disk, club and lotus. *Kanaka-kunḍala-karṇa*, on His two ears there were golden earrings, and a bright effulgence was coming out of His body. Although it was a dark and cloudy night, by the effulgence coming from the body of Lord Hari everything was illuminated.

Seeing this wonderful child, Devaki paid obeisances with folded hands and offered prayers. Vasudev immediately took bath. How could he take bath in the prison house? He did so by meditation within his mind, *manasā-snāna*. Also in his mind he observed a grand festival for the birthday of Lord Hari and gave away innumerable cows in charity to the *brāhmaṇas* and *vaiṣṇavas*. Like Devaki, he also offered prayers to Lord Narayan. Then Narayan told him, "Immediately take Me to Vraja-Gokula and put Me on the lap of Yasoda Mata."

Hearing this, Vasudev was very, very happy. By the wonderful will of Lord Hari, those who were guarding the prison all fell asleep. All of the strong iron doors and shackles opened and Vasudev was free to leave. Exactly at the same time when Vasudev was leaving the prison of Kamsa, Yasoda Mata gave birth to a second child, a daughter.

When Vasudev came to the bank of the Yamuna he saw there was a great flood. The water was very high and all of the land was inundated. He thought, "How can I cross?" Just then Vasudev saw Mahamaya in the form of a she-jackal crossing the Yamuna. So Vasudev followed her.

Finally he came to the quarters of Nanda Maharaja. There he put his son on the lap of Yasoda Mata and took Yasoda's daughter with him.

Born in Two Places

Hearing this, Snigdha Kantha said, “What is this? Yasoda Mata gave birth to one son and one daughter, and Vasudev took the daughter. What happened to the son?”

Madhu Kantha said, “This is a very confidential matter. Yasoda Mata’s daughter was *sākṣāt-yogamāyā*. By her potency, Yogamaya kept the son of Nanda hidden, and Vasudev could not see Him. He only saw the daughter.”

The son of Nanda and Yasoda is *svayam bhagavān*, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead — *ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* (Bhāg. 1.3.28). *Nandanandana kṛṣṇa, yaśodā-nanda-nandana kṛṣṇa* is *svayam bhagavān*, and all *avatāras* are His plenary portions or portions of His plenary portions — *aṁsa* and *kalā*.

From the womb of Devaki came the four-handed form Vāsudev, who is a *prābhava-prakāśa* of Krishna. Krishna has two types of expansions, *prābhava-prakāśa* and *vaibhava-prakāśa*.

When *svayam bhagavān* Krishna comes, all of His portions and portions of portions, *aṁsa* and *kalā*, all come within Him. The son of Vasudev is Vāsudev, a four-handed form of the Lord. Vāsudev is a plenary portion of Krishna. So when Vasudev put his son on the lap of Yasoda, that Vāsudev entered

into the child Krishna who was already lying there. Just as all rivers flow down to enter into the ocean, similarly all the plenary portions and portions of the plenary portions of the Lord all come and enter into the original Lord. By the activity of Yogamaya, Vasudev could not understand all of these things.

In the *Hari-varṁśa* (2.4.11) it is described how Lord Hari simultaneously took birth in two places:

garbha kāle tv asaṁpūrṇe aṣṭame māsi te striyau devakī ca yaśodā ca suṣubāte samam tadā

In the eighth month of pregnancy, which is considered *asaṁpūrṇa*, incomplete, Yasoda and Devaki both gave birth at the same time.

Just after that, Yasoda gave birth to a daughter, Yogamaya. Mahamaya is a portion of Yogamaya, and she was thus also there. Vasudev took away this Mahamaya and handed her over to Kamsa, while Yogamaya stayed, hidden, in Vrajabhumi. In this way it was declared that the eighth child was a daughter, not a son. Kamsa was cheated.

Yasoda’s Joy

Madhu Kantha then said, “When Yasoda Mata gave birth to Krishna, all were asleep. Everyone slept through the whole night. Then in the morning, Lord Hari started crying. *Kwaaa! Kwaaa! Kwaaa!* Everyone woke up. Yasomati also woke and saw her nice son.

Seeing her wonderful, very beautiful son, mother Yasoda completely drowned in the ocean of blissfulness. She couldn’t think what to do. She was shedding tears of bliss and love. From her breast, milk was flowing. The newborn child was there in her lap and Yasoda was very blissfully looking at Him.

Yasoda Mata’s voice was faltering in joy. She could not speak anything, and was simply shedding tears of love. Up until that day she had only looked at the sons of others. Today she was looking at her own son. Tears poured from her eyes and milk flowed from her breasts. Her whole sari became completely soaked. Again and again Yasoda Mata looked at the beautiful lotus-like, moon-like face of her son. All the nurses, *gopas*, and *gopīs* awoke, hearing the crying sound of the newborn child. Everyone came and said, “Oh, it is not a daughter, it is a son!”

— Excerpted from the upcoming book from Gopal Jiu Publications, “Mathura Meets Vrindavan”

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