

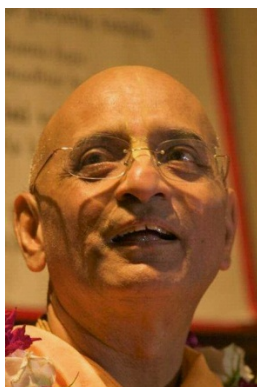
Ocean of Nectar

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1. Q&A WITH GURU MAHARAJA

1. Srila Prabhupada gave instructions that his disciples should become *gurus*. Now when Srila Prabhupada said that they should become *gurus*, are the devotees to be understood as *diksa gurus only*?

No, not only, are they *diksa gurus* but both *Diksa and siksa* are needed but the thing is that both the *gurus*, *diksa* and *siksa* must function under the institution of ISKCON. Not that because they have become *gurus* they have inherited ISKCON. No. Like they function under the institution and the governing structure of ISKCON that's how the ISKCON *gurus* should function and the *gurus* function is to become the via-medium. Generally the *guru* is a via-medium between his disciple and *Krishna* but in ISKCON it is

disciple, Srila Prabhupada and *Krishna*. Like the *gurus* of ISKCON, what they are doing? They are acting as a via-medium between their disciples and Srila Prabhupada. They are giving Srila Prabhupada's teachings to them explaining or clarifying Srila Prabhupada's teachings and they are securing them in Srila Prabhupada's *asrama*, ISKCON, right? And this way they are eventually coming to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Prabhupada is giving them *Krishna*. The *gurus* are giving *Krishna* through Srila Prabhupada not directly *Krishna*, *guru* and disciple. And as a *guru* myself I can tell you that makes my job very easy

2. So now is it when Srila Prabhupada said that his disciples should act as *gurus*, so you now whatever you said, in this context what I understand is: is it implied that when Srila Prabhupada says *guru*, it means both included, it is implied?

Well, yes we have to understand. It is not implied. It is a matter of understanding. The understanding is say if I had my own *asrama*, yes if I had my own *asrama* then I could function in a different way. I could become a via-medium between my disciples and *Krishna*. But I don't have my *asrama*; I belong to the *asrama* of ISKCON which belongs to Srila Prabhupada and ISKCON has a structure which is giving Srila Prabhupada's teachings. By Srila Prabhupada's arrangement it is giving protection to the devotees. And by Srila Prabhupada's arrangement devotees are getting the opportunity to make advancement in spiritual life. So what I am doing is: I am functioning within that structure. I do not have to train all my disciples myself. I am just helping them to get connected to ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada and this structure is giving them all the facilities in the form of ISKCON. Like I am functioning you see I am not having my *asrama*, I am functioning within the *asrama* of ISKCON which Srila Prabhupada arranged. I will just give you an example. Say in Malaga I have a few disciples. If ISKCON was not there could I dare to give initiation to disciples here where I come only once a year at the most? Then I go to South Africa; then I go to Australia then I go to Europe, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. Now will it be possible to accept disciples and train them and if I could not train them would it have been appropriate for me to give them initiation? But today how do I dare to give initiation to the devotees in different parts of the world? Because I know ISKCON is there and ISKCON will give them the protection and direction and the guidance, right? Otherwise I had to have my *asrama* in Malaga, I had to have my *asrama* in Switzerland and which wouldn't have been possible and Srila Prabhupada has created everything for us and we simply have to take advantage of that. And that's why it is important that those who approach me, I tell them that look my business is to connect you to Srila Prabhupada and situate you in ISKCON. Yes, you are my disciple but actually Srila Prabhupada is your real *guru* and who would not want to be connected to Srila Prabhupada? Just today Hari Narayana was telling me if he had come one year earlier then he could be initiated by Srila Prabhupada and I think all the devotees, you know in a way feel that way: had I come ten years earlier I could have been initiated by Srila Prabhupada. Had I come hundred years earlier I could have been initiated by Srila Prabhupada. This feeling will always be there in the heart of the devotees and tell me how they will feel when you say that you are initiated or you are Prabhupada's disciple? I am just a via-medium and I am taking

you to Srila Prabhupada. Somebody can ask how do you feel about that Vinod Vihari? VinodVihari das: I feel very safe.

His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami: Very good. Feel very safe. What about you Priyavrata? Priyavrata das: I feel very happy to be connected to ISKCON and very happy also to be initiated by Your Divine Grace, Your Holiness and I also feel very safe to be in ISKCON.

His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami: And I am also very happy to connect you to Srila Prabhupada I think that's how the devotees, you know, feel. They feel so secured, so safe. We can say in this respect quite a few *gurus* in ISKCON have fallen down. Now if their disciples had that understanding then their real shelter is Prabhupada then they wouldn't have left ISKCON after their *guru* fell down. And many of you here like at least like Hari-Narayana, Dharmaraja, have gone through few falling *gurus*. Also Madhavipriya but their spiritual life is safe. What is the secret Hari-Narayana? Connection to Srila Prabhupada; connection to ISKCON. They didn't think oh because my *guru* fell down my spiritual life is finished. HariNarayana all along had been telling me that I came for Srila Prabhupada. Thank you very much.

3. So, in this aspect can you put some light on the finer technicalities of *siksa* and *diksa*?

Diksa is the process by which one receives the *mantra*. But again the Hare *Krishna mantra*, *mantra* has been given by Caitanya Mahaprabhu, so, Hare *Krishna maha mantra* doesn't need *diksa* but there is another aspect of *diksa* that is: at the time of *diksa* a disciple submits to *guru* and *Krishna* accepts him at that time. And so that's why for the sake of surrender which is the beginning of spiritual life, *diksa* is necessary. So that is the role of the *diksa guru*. You see disciple begins to associate with the *sadhus*, *vaisnavas*, and devotees. And then he develops faith in one of the *sadhus* and officially surrenders to him and that is the role of the *diksa guru* and then *siksa* is the spiritual enlightenment. So those who are giving the instructions they are *siksa gurus*. Now *diksa guru* has to be present but *siksa guru* may not be present. Like, although Srila Prabhupada is not present on the planet, Srila Prabhupada is the *siksa guru* of all the devotees of ISKCON. Just as although Rupa Goswami is not present on the planet he is the *siksa guru* of all the Gaudiya vaishnavas.

4. You said that we are not this body and we don't have to identify with the pain and pleasures of the material world, but still we see that although we know that we are not this body, we are spirit soul, still we are suffering so much some headache or whatever. It seems very theoretical at the moment, not very practical.

Yes very good point. Actually Krishna consciousness or the process of spiritual advancement is a very practical process. There is nothing artificial about it. When our consciousness is limited to the body or related to the body, there is no need to artificially say that we are not attached to the body. But we can recognize that we have a body

and for the time being, we are related to and connected to the body. Krishna consciousness actually teaches us to use the body for spiritual activities and thus become situated in the spiritual identity and become free from the bondage of the material body. For example, when we have the body, the body needs food. In order to function, the body needs food. The body becomes hungry. We can't say, "I'm not this body". When my stomach is burning for food out of hunger, I cannot artificially say, "I am not this body". The spiritual process is, "Ok, you are hungry, so eat Krishna prasadam." Krishna prasadam is the mercy of the Lord in the form of food and if we take the mercy of the Lord in the form of food, then by taking that food, we become free from the bondage of matter. The body needs to sleep, we say "Ok sleep, but sleep for six hours and try to remain awake and serve the Lord." When the body is feeling cold, then we are not saying, "Well, tolerate the cold." No, we make the necessary arrangements, we get the warm clothes and some heater in the room. In this way, as long as we have the body, we take care of the body in order to engage it in service of the Lord. Actually the devotee's understanding is that the body is a gift of nature. Especially when one gets the human body, it is a very special gift that one receives from nature. When one gets a human body, as I mentioned earlier, he gets an opportunity to expand his consciousness to an unlimited extent so that he can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is a wonderful gift of nature and we must take full advantage of it. Take care of this body and engage this body in the service of the Lord. Just by doing that, we can make spiritual advancement. One should be very careful not to waste this wonderful gift of material nature, by using this human facility in order to lead a life like that of an animal. Animal life is eating, sleeping, mating and defending. In spite of getting the human body, if we are just leading our life to eat, sleep, have sex and defend ourselves from different attacks that is not the human way to lead one's life. Human life is based on three questions: "Who am I?", "Where did I come from?" and "What is the purpose of my existence?" Only then does life transcend the animal platform and comes to the human platform. Who am I? That is the first question. Am I this body or something else? Where did I come from? Did I just come from my mother's belly? No, the body came from my mother's womb, but I am not this body. I am a part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and I came from the spiritual world. What am I supposed to do here? The goal of life is to take advantage of this human form of life, recognize our spiritual identity and go back to the spiritual world.

5. How can we go back to Godhead when we have not purified our consciousness?

You cannot go back to Godhead unless you purify your consciousness. Therefore, purify your consciousness. Do you know how to purify your consciousness? By chanting:

HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE

HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE

ceto-darpaṇa marjanam this chanting of the holy name of the Lord cleanses the mirror of our mind and purifies our consciousness.

6. When we dream about the spiritual master or Krishna, are we in contact with Them?

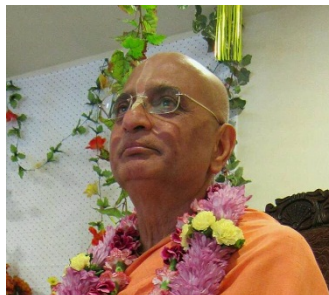
What is dream? Dream is the experiences in a subtle body when the gross body is not active. We consider reality to be what our gross body is experiencing. Whatever the senses of this body are experiencing we take to be reality. When we fall asleep, the senses are asleep, the gross body is inactive but the subtle body is active. When the subtle body is active, that is a dream. Beyond the subtle body there is the spirit soul and its spiritual experiences. Those spiritual experiences are experiences with Krishna and the spiritual master. Apparently it appears to be like a dream but it is not a dream it is absolute reality. That is the difference. Yes, in spiritual dreams we become connected to the spiritual master and Krishna.

2. SRILA PRABHUPADA APPRECIATION



I belong to the *asrama* of ISKCON which belongs to Srila Prabhupada and ISKCON has a structure which is giving Srila Prabhupada's teachings. By Srila Prabhupada's arrangement it is giving protection to the devotees. And by Srila Prabhupada's arrangement devotees are getting the opportunity to make advancement in spiritual life. Srila Prabhupada has created everything for us and we simply have to take advantage of that. Like, although Srila Prabhupada is not present on the planet, Srila Prabhupada is the siksa *guru* of all the devotees of ISKCON.

3. GURU MAHARAJA'S INSTRUCTIONS



⇓ Take care of this body and engage this body in the service of the Lord. Just by doing that, we can make spiritual advancement; and

↓ You cannot go back to Godhead unless you purify your consciousness. Therefore, purify your consciousness. Do you know how to purify your consciousness? By chanting: **HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE**

HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE *ceto-darpana marjanam* this chanting of the holy name of the Lord cleanses the mirror of our mind and purifies our consciousness.

(Compilation & editing by Hemavati Radhika dasi)