

International Society for Kåñëa Consciousness
Founder-Acarya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



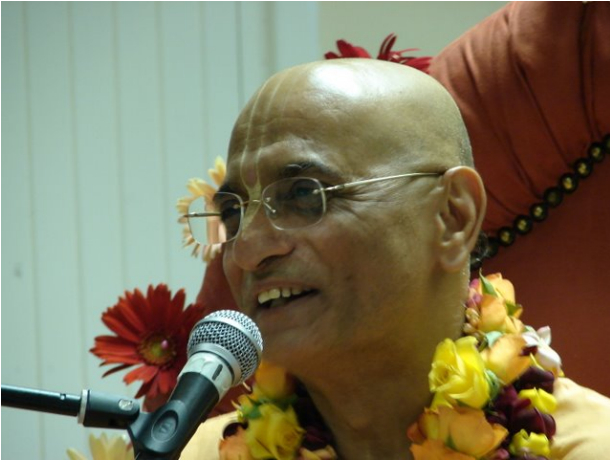
Ocean of Nectar

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1. One must accept a bona fide spiritual master

*ḥaya ḥaya ḥṛé-caitanya ḥaya nityānanda
ḥayādvaīta-candra ḥaya gaura-bhakta-vānda*
CC Adi, Chapter 1, verse 35

mantra-guru—the initiating spiritual master; āra—and also; yata—as many (as there are); ḥikñā-guru-gaēa—all the instructing spiritual masters; tāihāra—of all of them; caraēa—unto the lotus feet; āge—at first; kariye—I offer; vandana—respectful obeisances.

mantra-guru āra yata ḥikñā-guru-gaēa
tāihāra caraēa āge kariye vandana

It is a very beautiful sloka, translation by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada:

I first offer my respectful obeisances at the lotus feet of my initiating spiritual master and all my instructing spiritual masters.

PURPORT

Ḥṛéla Jéva Gosvāmé, in his thesis Bhakti-sandarbha (202), has stated that uncontaminated devotional service is the objective of pure Vaiñēavas and that one has to execute such service in the association of other devotees. By associating with devotees of Lord Kāñēa, one develops a sense of Kāñēa consciousness and thus becomes inclined toward the loving service of the Lord. This is the process of approaching the Supreme Lord by gradual appreciation in devotional service. If one desires unalloyed devotional service, one must associate with devotees of Ḥṛé Kāñēa, for by such association only can a conditioned soul achieve a taste for transcendental love and thus revive his eternal relationship with Godhead in a specific manifestation and in terms of the specific transcendental mellow (rasa) that one has eternally inherent in him. If one develops love for Kāñēa by Kāñēa conscious activities, one can know the Supreme Absolute Truth, but he who tries to understand God simply by logical arguments will not succeed, nor will he get a taste for unalloyed devotion. The secret is that one must submissively listen to those who know perfectly the science of God, and one must begin the mode of service regulated by the preceptor. A devotee already attracted by the name, form, qualities, etc., of the Supreme Lord may be directed to his specific manner of devotional service; he need not waste time in approaching the Lord through

logic. The expert spiritual master knows well how to engage his disciple's energy in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, and thus he engages a devotee in a specific devotional service according to his special tendency. A devotee must have only one initiating spiritual master because in the scriptures acceptance of more than one is always forbidden. There is no limit, however, to the number of instructing spiritual masters one may accept. Generally a spiritual master who constantly instructs a disciple in spiritual science becomes his initiating spiritual master later on. One should always remember that a person who is reluctant to accept a spiritual master and be initiated is sure to be baffled in his endeavor to go back to Godhead. One who is not properly initiated may present himself as a great devotee, but in fact he is sure to encounter many stumbling blocks on his path of progress toward spiritual realization, with the result that he must continue his term of material existence without relief. Such a helpless person is compared to a ship without a rudder, for such a ship can never reach its destination. It is imperative, therefore, that one accept a spiritual master if he at all desires to gain the favor of the Lord. The service of the spiritual master is essential. If there is no chance to serve the spiritual master directly, a devotee should serve him by remembering his instructions. There is no difference between the spiritual master's instructions and the spiritual master himself. In his absence, therefore, his words of direction should be the pride of the disciple. If one thinks that he is above consulting anyone else, including a spiritual master, he is at once an offender at the lotus feet of the Lord. Such an offender can never go back to Godhead. It is imperative that a serious person accept a bona fide spiritual master in terms of the ḥāstric injunctions. Ḥṛé Jéva Gosvāmé advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social and ecclesiastical conventions. One should simply try to find a genuinely qualified spiritual master for actual advancement in spiritual understanding. (End).

↓ Mangalācaraēa

In the very beginning of Caitanya-caritāmāta and Ḥṛéla Kāñēadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmé is doing the mangalācaraēa which means the invocation. Before one starts a work he must invoke all auspiciousness by mercy of the Lord and His devotees. As customary here he is actually offering his obeisances and prayers to the spiritual masters. The previous sloka is

vande gurūn éḥa-bhaktān

éḥam éḥavatārakān

tat-prakāḥāḥ ca tac-chaktéu

kāñēa-caitanya-saājīakam

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the spiritual masters, the devotees of the Lord, the Lord's incarnations, His plenary portions, His energies and the primeval Lord Himself, Ḥṛé Kāñēa Caitanya.

↓ Submissive attitude

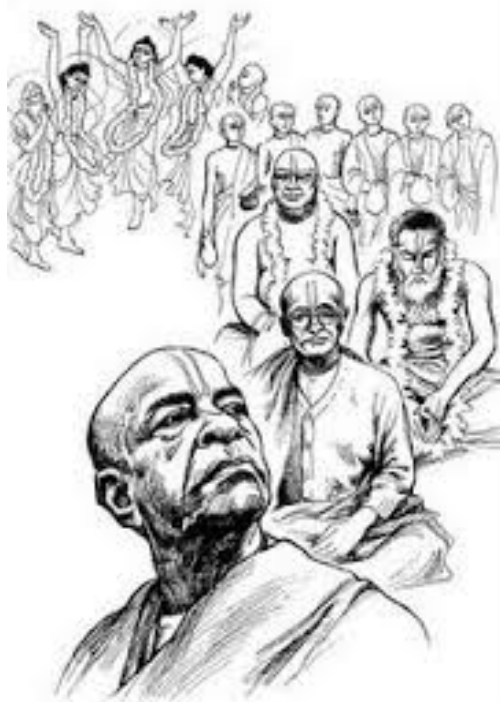
So that is how one must express his submissive attitude towards the Lord and His devotees and in this verse he is specifically praying to his diksa guru and to his siksa gurus and here Prabhupada pointed out that diksa guru

is one. One must have only one diksa guru but he can have many siksa gurus. Prabhupada pointed out that it is very very important that one accepts a bona fide spiritual master. There are quite a few points Prabhupada has made in this purport and one is that one must accept initiation but that acceptance must be done with due understanding of initiation. One should not take initiation just for the sake of having a guru as one has a fancy car so let me have a guru. In India it is happening, also in the west I see people are keeping gurus like they keep their dog. Guru is not just a commodity like that to show off like I have a guru, see what a beautiful guru I have, that should not be the consideration. The consideration of accepting a bona fide spiritual master is the consideration to make advancement in spiritual life.

↓ Guru is not just an ordinary person

Guru is not just an ordinary person not even a person who has some understanding of Krishna, the guru is actually the person who is Krishna in our hearts. It is very important that the guru is a bona fide guru, the spiritual master is a bona fide spiritual master. Now what is the meaning of this bona fide spiritual master? Defining that expression bona fide in this context Prabhupada said that the bona fide qualification of the spiritual master is that he is also initiated by a bona fide spiritual master and he doesn't deviate from the instructions of his spiritual master. So this is what the disciplic succession actually means. Bona fide spiritual master must be linked to the disciplic succession.

↓ What is the disciplic succession?



Disciplic succession means the knowledge that is flowing without being interrupted, that is the disciplic succession. The guru gives the instruction to the disciple and the disciple sees it just as it is just as the way the guru gave it to him and then in his turn he presents the knowledge to his disciple without distorting

it or concocting different meanings out of that instruction. That is the criterion for disciplic succession, the adi guru, original guru is actually Krishna. In the beginning Krishna gave this instruction, transcendental knowledge to Brahma, Lakṣmī-devī i. Lord Shiva and the 4 Kumaras. These are the four original preceptors forming the four sampradayas. Brahma gave this knowledge to his disciples and who was Brahma's first disciple? Narada muni then Narada muni received the knowledge from Brahma and he gave it to his disciple, who is the disciple of Narada muni? Vyasadeva. So this is how the knowledge is passed down from the spiritual world from the original spiritual master, Krishna down through the disciplic succession. One is through Brahma, what is the name of that Sampradaya? Brahma Madhava sampradaya and later it became Gaudiya because of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Originally it was called Brahma sampradaya originated from Brahma. Another sampradaya that came from Lakṣmīdevī, once Krishna, Narayana instructed Lakṣmī-devī also about the science of Krishna Consciousness and what's the name of that sampradaya? Sri Sampradaya. There is another sampradaya from Lord Siva, what is the name of that sampradaya? Rudra Sampradaya. There is another sampradaya from the four Kumaras and what is the name of that sampradaya? Kumara-sampradaya. So these are the four Vaishnava sampradayas. Whenever you talk about Vaishnavas they must belong to one of these sampradayas. Everybody who have been initiated in these sampradayas does not necessarily become a bona fide spiritual master. What is the qualification of a bona fide spiritual master? He also must be initiated by another bona fide spiritual master from one of these four sampradayas and he must receive the knowledge without any deviation and must impart the knowledge without any deviation. If someone deviates from the instructions then what happens then that link and sampradaya becomes useless. If the branch is cut off from the tree will it bear any fruits? Never. In the same way if a person cuts himself off from the tree of the sampradaya then he becomes useless, without any juice, becomes completely dry but he doesn't have the link to derive the transcendental juice. It is very important that the spiritual master one accepts must be a bona fide spiritual master. The qualification of judging a spiritual master is how much he is attached to his spiritual master and how clearly he is presenting the knowledge. The qualification of the spiritual master is nothing else whether he has mercy, whether he is brahmin or sudra or a householder or even if he is lower than a sudra even then it does not matter, the only qualification is his attachment to his spiritual master because the more attached he is to his spiritual master accordingly he will be able to help his disciples make progress in their spiritual life because to have disciples is a very heavy weight. If a person is clinging onto his spiritual master's lotus feet then the entire burden he is carrying he will be able to withstand that burden. Because he is holding onto his spiritual master's lotus feet he is connected in the disciplic

chain, he is linked up and it is the potency of Krishna that help the living entities go back to Godhead. Living entities can never go back to Godhead by dint of their own endeavor. We can never say that I will perform all this austerities and penances and make so many endeavors and then I am bound to go back to Godhead. No one can ever think like that. Going back to Godhead does not depend on the living entity's independent endeavor. Going back to Godhead depends on Krishna's sanctioning, when Krishna tells the material energy Maha Maya, release this living entity or Krishna can even send some of His associates to take the living entity out of this material nature then only the living entity can go out otherwise its impossible for a living entity to go back to Godhead. Ultimate criterion is actually Krishna's mercy to go back to Godhead and when we become linked up with the disciplic succession then we receive the mercy of Krishna because Krishna's mercy flows through the disciplic succession, through His pure devotees, through His dedicated devotees. If we have a spiritual master who is also linked up to the disciplic succession then our position is our spiritual lives are very secure. It is very important that one accepts the spiritual master with the proper understanding and the spiritual master is a bona fide one that is that he belongs to a bona fide sampradaya and is properly connected to that sampradaya. Now the most important consideration here is why should one accept a spiritual master?

↓ What is the need of accepting a spiritual master?

One must be submissive, spiritual life is actually a process of submission and the submission begins from accepting a spiritual master that is the indication of submission that here I am offering myself. Like Arjuna in the beginning of Bhagavad Gita was very exemplary like Krishna was Arjuna's cousin but Arjuna accepted Krishna as the spiritual master and he accepted Krishna as his spiritual master he simply told Him, "Krishna I am simply accepting You as my spiritual master so please tell me what I should do.

kārpaëya-doñopahata-svabhāvaù
pācchāmi tvāà dharma-sammüðha-cetāù
yac chreyaù syān niçcitatā brühi tan me
çïñyas te 'haà çādhi mãà tvāà prapannam

I am actually a miser although I have wealth I have not utilized that as yet. Miser is a person who does not use his money. If somebody has some wealth then he must properly utilize it. We have the human body it is the greatest opulence that one can ever have in the material platform and in spite of having this human body I have not endeavored for spiritual life, so that was the mood of Arjuna. I do not have any understanding of dharma, religiosity what is the right action that is why I am asking You Krishna please tell me what I should do. I am becoming Your disciple and I am surrendered to You so You please tell me.

↓ The mood of a disciple

That should be the mood of a disciple when at initiation. Initiation actually means surrender that I am surrendering myself to you now you do whatever you

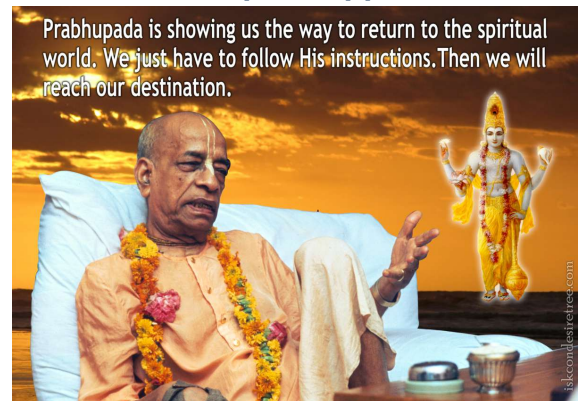
want to do and at that time Krishna actually accepts the living entity. dékñā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaëa/ sei-kāle kññëa tāre kare ātma-sama, at the time of initiation ātma-samarpaëa means surrender tare means offering surrender of the spirit. At the time of the initiation the disciple surrenders himself to the spiritual master at that time Krishna makes him His own, Krishna accepts him. That is why this process of initiation is very important and when one surrenders oneself at the time of initiation he actually surrenders to the spiritual master, he knows only the spiritual master he doesn't know anyone else. Conditioned living entities do not have any knowledge of Krishna but at that time although the disciple surrenders himself unto the spiritual master. Now the spiritual master does not hold the disciple as his own property, spiritual master never thinks that now I have got a slave, the person has offered himself to me so now he is my personal property and I will ask him to do whatever I want and he must do it.

↓ The mood of a bona fide spiritual master

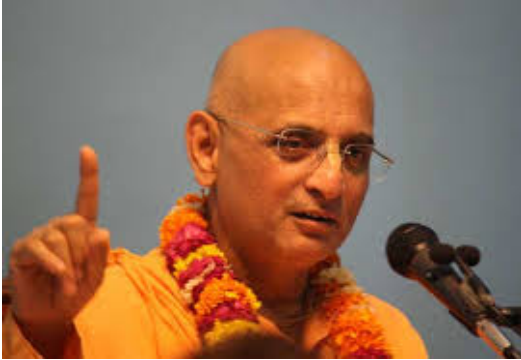
That is not the mood of a bona fide spiritual master. The bona fide spiritual master feels that, "oh, this person is surrendering himself to my spiritual master and he is actually surrendering to Krishna". The bona fide spiritual master never thinks that the disciples are my property he simply thinks that the disciple is actually Krishna's property. Another mood of a bona fide spiritual master is that he feels that I am the servant of Krishna, Krishna is my Lord and Master and he sees the other living entities as the children of Krishna and his mood towards his disciples or the other devotees those who are aspiring for spiritual life he assumes that of a caretaker the way the servant feels about his master's children. Like sometimes the servant takes up the role of a leader or teacher to the children of his master like sometimes the children are naughty and he chastises the children and he takes up that role because that responsibility has been assigned to him by his master. Although he may chastise his master's children sometimes when they do something wrong but he never thinks that he is their Lord and master. He thinks that they are my master's children and in that respect they are also my master. So that is the mood of a bona fide spiritual master

Thank you very much. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

2. Srila Prabhupada appreciation



3. Guru Maharaja's Instructions



- ↓ Guru is not just a commodity like that to show off like I have a guru, see what a beautiful guru I have, that should not be the consideration. The consideration of accepting a bona fide spiritual master is the consideration to make advancement in spiritual life;
- ↓ If we have a spiritual master who is also linked up to the disciplic succession then our position is our spiritual lives are very secure. It is very important that one accepts the spiritual master with the proper understanding and the spiritual master is a bona fide one that is that he belongs to a bona fide sampradaya and is properly connected to that sampradaya;
- ↓ One must be submissive, spiritual life is actually a process of submission and the submission begins from accepting a spiritual master that is the indication of submission that here I am offering myself; and
- ↓ Initiation actually means surrender that I am surrendering myself to you now you do whatever you want to do.

(The content of this E-magazine was based on a lecture given by His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami in Mumbai in August 1986)

(Compilation & editing by Hemavati Radhika dasi)