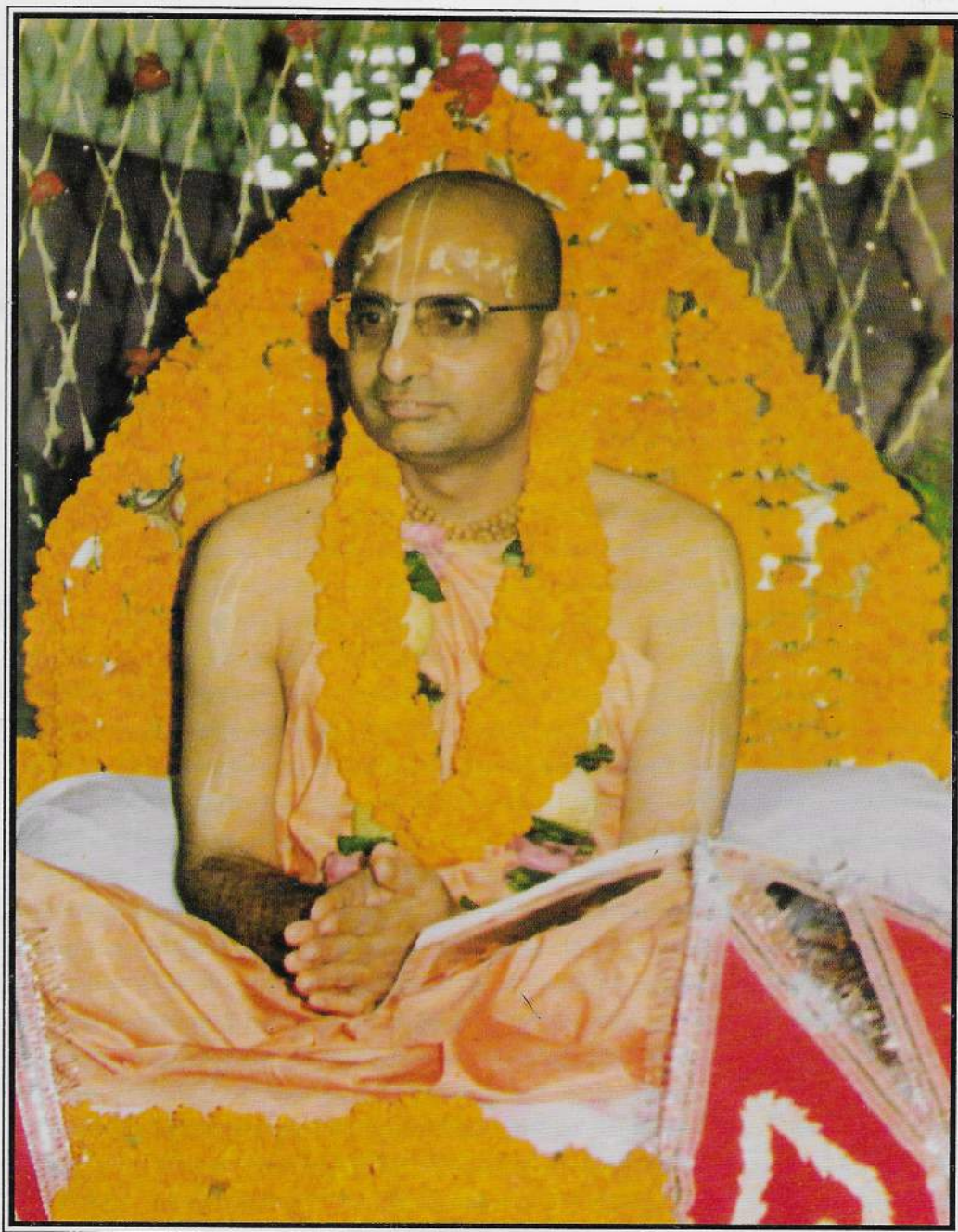


Spiritual Connections

SRI VYASA-PUJA 1995



FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION



*apane acare keha, na kare pracara
pracara karena keha, na karena acara
'acara' 'pracara' namera karaha 'dwi' karya
tumi sarva-guru, tumi jagatera arya*

Some practice but do not preach, others preach but do not practice, but one who is perfect in both preaching and practise is the guru of the entire universe. You are a real jagad-guru, for you practice what you preach.

(Cc. Antya 4.102, 103)

Spiritual Connections

Vol. 11
Vyasa-puja Issue
17th September 1995

A MAGAZINE FOR THE DISCIPLES
AND WELL-WISHERS OF
HIS DIVINE GRACE BHAKTI CHARU
SWAMI

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION
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Guru-maharaja's Personal Message:

Krishna Consciousness is the Perfect Process

To all my disciples,

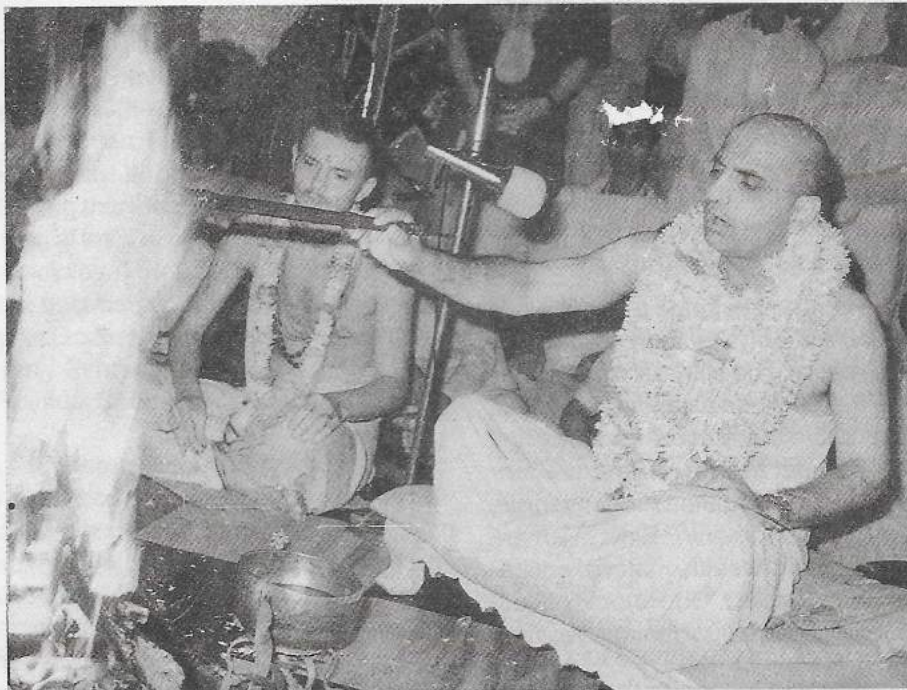
Please accept my blessings. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I hope you all are well and making steady advancement in your spiritual life. Krishna Consciousness is the most practical process for spiritual advancement. To understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, as well as our 'selves' is a science. Therefore, if you practice the process properly, you are bound to make advancement.

The scientific process is opening our eyes that have lost the ability to see. Our vision has become covered by the Lord's illusory energy, *maya*, and on top of that we are in a place that is in total darkness. To save us from this ter-

rible predicament, Krishna has given us the perfect process of Krishna Consciousness. It opens our eyes and also removes the darkness. The spiritual master opens our eyes by imparting the transcendental knowledge, and Krishna removes the darkness by appearing in our hearts as the sun.

This process is the best of all spiritual processes. Prahlad Maharaja said, "Of the different processes recommended for disentanglement from material life, the one personally explained and accepted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be considered all perfect. That process is the performance of duties by which love for the Supreme Lord develops." (SB.7.7.29)



In the purport, Srila Prabhupada said, "One must accept the pure devotee, the representative of God, as one's *guru* and then offer him all the respect one would offer the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the secret of success." In the next verse Prahlad Maharaja also said, "One must accept the bona fide spiritual master and render service unto him with great devotion and faith. Whatever one has in his possession should be offered to the spiritual master, and in the association of saintly persons and devotees one should worship the Lord, hear the glories of the Lord with faith, glorify the transcendental qualities and activities of the Lord, always meditate on the Lord's lotus feet, and worship the Deity of the Lord strictly according to the instructions of *sastra* and *guru*."

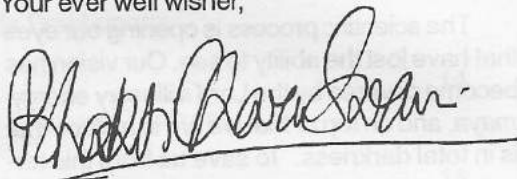
Srila Prabhupada quotes Srila Rupa Goswami in the purport of this verse. "One's first duty is to accept a bona fide spiritual master. The student or disciple should be very inquisitive; he should be eager to know the complete truth about eternal religion (*sanatana dharma*). The bonafide spiritual master is he who has accepted this process himself. That is, he surrendered himself completely to a bonafide spiritual master, served him with all sincerity and offered everything to him. To be a bona fide spiritual master, one does not have to become a superman. He only needs to be an ideal disciple of his spiritual master.

There is no need to judge a *guru* by any material qualification. Those who do will be cheated by *maya*. The spiritual master may have many material qualifications, however, that should not be the reason for accepting him as the spiritual master. There are four classes of material qualifications: *janma*, *aisvarya*, *sruta*, and *sribhir*. Birth in an exalted family, material wealth, material education and physical beauty. One should not accept someone as a spiritual master because

of these qualities. A spiritual master should be accepted because of his devotion to the Supreme Personality and dedication to his spiritual master.

When one finds such a spiritual master and serves him with all sincerity, by the mercy of the spiritual master, spiritual knowledge will automatically be revealed in his heart. In the light of that knowledge he will see Krishna in his heart, and then he will see that knowledge is the brilliant effulgence of Krishna's body. Then his heart will become filled with an indescribable joy. If you follow this process of Krishna Consciousness, you will experience it yourself.

Your ever well wisher,



Bhakti Charu Swami.



VYASA-PUJA OFFERING FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Guru-maharaja,

On the most glorious occasion of celebrating your appearance in this material world, please allow me, on behalf of Spiritual Connections, to offer humble obeisances to your divine lotus feet. All glories to you. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his ISKCON.

Spiritual Connections is not an ordinary publication. It is directly revealing the spiritual realm. It is revealing your loving concern for your disciples and how you will do everything possible to help them in their spiritual growth. It is revealing the depth of your humility. It is also revealing the essence of your instructions to your disciples and anyone involved in ISKCON — spiritual connection to the founder-*acharya*, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. And this is revealing the inner core of your heart.

I remember the very first time I mentioned the idea of you having a newsletter. You were so repulsed at the thought of a newsletter in your glorification. I even saw your top lip curl-up in disgust. It took another two years of mentioning this idea to you in different ways for you to at least accept the necessity of it for your disciples. I then had to wait another six months because you wanted to check it out with your Godbrothers and other senior devotees first. Everyone encouraged you to do it and Spiritual Connections took birth.

A small team of your disciples in Mayapur spun into action and production began — cautiously. While trying our best to do everything according to your instructions and permission, we also tried our best to keep your direct involvement to a minimum. We could see you still felt very uncomfortable with the idea of having a newsletter that glorified you. I re-

member presenting you with suggestions of a title for the newsletter. We had gathered some Sanskrit titles relating to *guru*. You immediately responded, "No, so many people read just English. What about 'Spiritual Connections'?" I was elated. Not only because it was the perfect title, perfectly encapsulating your mood, but also because it showed me you had been thinking about the newsletter and its development.

Using the facilities of your computer and printer, a two-paged newsletter emerged. It was very small and not well produced. But it was cramped full of nectar and instantaneously became popular and sought after by your disciples and other devotees. Then came the most rewarding part — letters from disciples saying how they appreciated the newsletter, and how it was helping them in their spiritual lives and their relationship with their spiritual master.

Spiritual Connections exists only because of your loving grace upon your disciples, because you care so much for their spiritual well-being. You are humility personified. You find any kind of personal praise embarrassing and difficult to cope with. For yourself, you only want to glorify others. But when you saw how Spiritual Connections was helping your disciples in their spiritual lives, for them only, Spiritual Connections not only exists, but is now flourishing at a phenomenal rate. Now your enthusiasm for Spiritual Connections is so strong I can't keep up with you.

When I arrived back in Mayapur, I was called into a meeting and discovered you had made all the arrangements for producing a new big Spiritual Connections which included

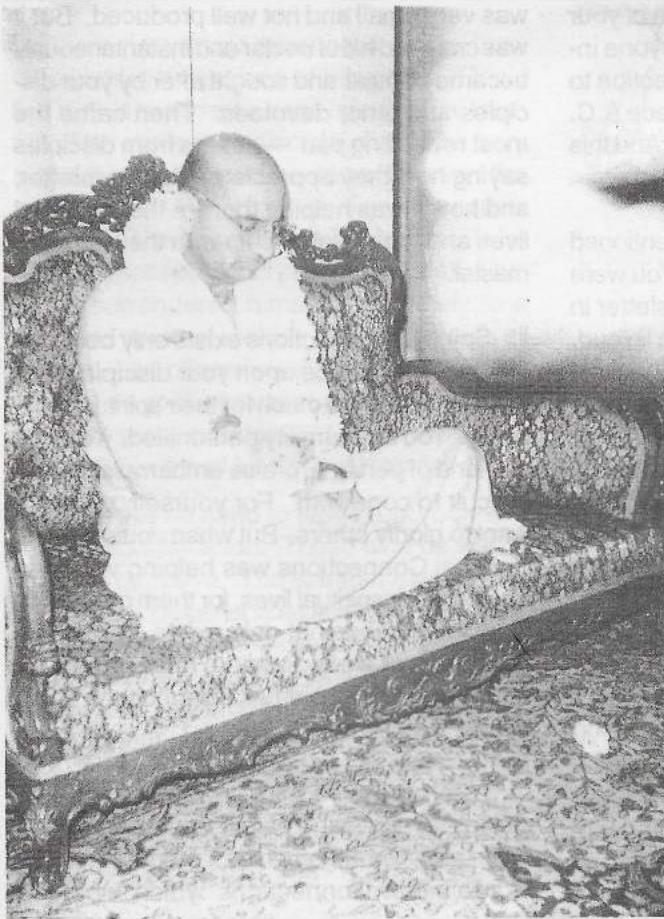
colour photos. You told me the Mayapur BBT would print covers with big colour pictures of Srila Prabhupada. I was surprised. "Guru-maharaja, this is a newsletter for your disciples. Shouldn't your photo be on the cover?" "It's all right. Srila Prabhupada is the founder-*acharya*, we can use his photo." I felt this was an important point. I had to try again. "But Guru-maharaja, as your disciples our connection with Srila Prabhupada and the *paramparah* is through you." You stopped, sat back and began seriously considering this point. I sat in front of you thinking, 'Ahah, I got him. He can't escape from this one.' My sense of pride and victory was very short lived. "No," you replied, "Srila Prabhupada is the founder-*acharya*, so he is the main link. We can use his photos."

A glorious disciple glorifies the spiritual master. Spiritual Connections is a manifestation of your love and dedication to your spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Therefore, especially today, the day of your appearance in this world, I pray that Spiritual Connections will continue to glorify you, the most glorious disciple, and therefore continue to glorify Srila Prabhupada and his preaching mission of spreading Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's *sankirtana* mission all over the world.

I beg to remain,

Your servant,

Manjari Devi Dasi



*guru-muka-padma-
vakya,
cittete koriya-
aikya,
ar na koriho
mane asa*

**Make the teachings
from the lotus mouth
of the spiritual
master one with your
heart, and do not
desire anything
else.**

Narottama dasa Thakura
Sri Guru-vandana

The following is an evening darshan with Guru-maharaja and his assembled disciples after a day of celebrating his *vyasa-puja* in New Mayapur, France, 1993.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SPIRITUAL MASTER

Thank-you all very much for expressing your feelings towards your spiritual master. Today is actually the day Srila Prabhupada arrived in America. I generally celebrate this day for Srila Prabhupada's arrival in America on 17th September 1965. When I began to accept disciples, they wanted to celebrate my *vyasa-puja*, but I was reluctant. I finally allowed them to do it but with the understanding of celebrating Srila Prabhupada's arrival in America.

But, as the number of disciples increased, the need to celebrate *vyasa-puja* became more and more obvious. Still, I tend to celebrate my birthday according to the English calculation, by the day of the month, 17th September, because this was the day Srila Prabhupada arrived in America and the day of my birth on my passport and school certificate, 17th September 1945.

Whatever we are doing today is due to Srila Prabhupada going to America. Had he not gone, there would be no ISKCON or any question of the Krishna consciousness movement spreading all over the world. There would have been no question of all of us being saved from material bondage. That's why this day of Srila Prabhupada's arrival in America is so very important. Our whole spiritual life depends on this day.

It is also very important for us to remember Srila Prabhupada and put him in the centre. It is because of him we are here today and so

many conditioned souls are being saved all over the world and will continue to be saved for thousands of years to come. It is Krishna's exceptional mercy that He sent Srila Prabhupada to this world. The more we realise Srila Prabhupada's exalted position, the more grateful we will feel towards him and we will make spiritual advancement.

Therefore, I personally feel that as a spiritual master my most important responsibility is to make my disciples aware of Srila Prabhupada's position. I noticed in many of your offerings, you are seeing it is because of Srila Prabhupada that you came to this movement. It is due to Srila Prabhupada you came to ISKCON, and because of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON you are safe in your spiritual life and making spiritual advancement.

I also consider that you all have become my disciples because I am a part of ISKCON. This gives me a very important obligation towards ISKCON. I have to act as a *via medium*, a representative of ISKCON to my disciples. When I accept disciples, I have to make a contract to take them back to Godhead. How do I dare make that contract? Because I consider it is my duty to link them up to ISKCON.

ISKCON is sailing across this material nature towards the spiritual sky, and whoever stays in the boat, in due course of time, will reach the destination of the spiritual sky. There is no doubt of this. It is the way to become a pure devotee. To become a pure devotee, we

don't have to be a superman. All we have to do is become dedicated to Srila Prabhupada's mission and execute this mission to the best of our ability. Preaching is the mission and we should just try our best to preach and deliver the conditioned souls by distributing Srila Prabhupada's books, or by rendering loyal service according to the authorities in the temples.

That is all we have to do and ISKCON is the boat that is sailing across the ocean of material nature, taking us back to the spiritual sky. It is not that only the big preachers and big leaders will go back to Godhead. No, anyone who is on the boat will go back, but we must execute our duties with all sincerity.

We just have to become loyal dedicated servants of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON. That is what is expected of every single member of the Society. Just by rendering our service according to Krishna's desire, we will become pure devotees. That means having no other desire besides serving Krishna and the *Vaishnavas*. What we must accept is this pure unalloyed devotion to Krishna.

Sometimes we do things because we have a desire for profit, adoration and distinction. This is not devotional service. Devotional service is just for the sake of our love for Krishna. A mother turns her blood into milk to feed her child. Does she expect anything in return for this? Does she think, 'Oh, my child will pay me so much money.' She doesn't even think, 'When he grows up he'll take care of me.' She does it only out of her love, and it is that love of the mother which turns the blood into milk.

If that can happen on the material platform, what can happen on the spiritual platform? What can spiritual love do? We can't even imagine. But spiritual love is even more selfless than a mother's love for her child. We must develop that love. How? This love for

Krishna is developed through one's loving relationship with their spiritual master.

Progress and advancement in spiritual life depends entirely upon the disciple's relationship with their spiritual master. *Sraddha*, faith, is the most important factor in spiritual life. That faith is initially for Krishna, but it develops through the spiritual master. Sometimes it is quite embarrassing for the spiritual master to speak like this. It sounds as if the spiritual master is making publicity for himself or trying to coax his disciples to become more attached to him. However, that is the responsibility the spiritual master actually has.

Another responsibility of the spiritual master is he must help his disciples make spiritual advancement. He must help his disciples become connected to Krishna, come close to Krishna, and finally enter into the spiritual sky. This process is completely bound up with the spiritual master because the disciple's spiritual progress is entirely pivoted on his relationship with his spiritual master.

When we see advanced devotees, those who are making advancement in their spiritual life, we will always find the same secret behind their success; they have great faith in their spiritual master and there is a very strong bond of loving exchange with the spiritual master. It is the duty of the spiritual master to remind his disciples of this secret. It is not that the spiritual master says, 'Become attached to me.' What he says is, 'Become attached to the spiritual master.' It is not the personality who demands respect and aggrandisement, it is the concept of spiritual master.

I remember before I came to Krishna consciousness, like any other conditioned soul, I had many bad habits. I tried many times to give them up, but I couldn't. But from the moment I became attached to Srila Prabhu

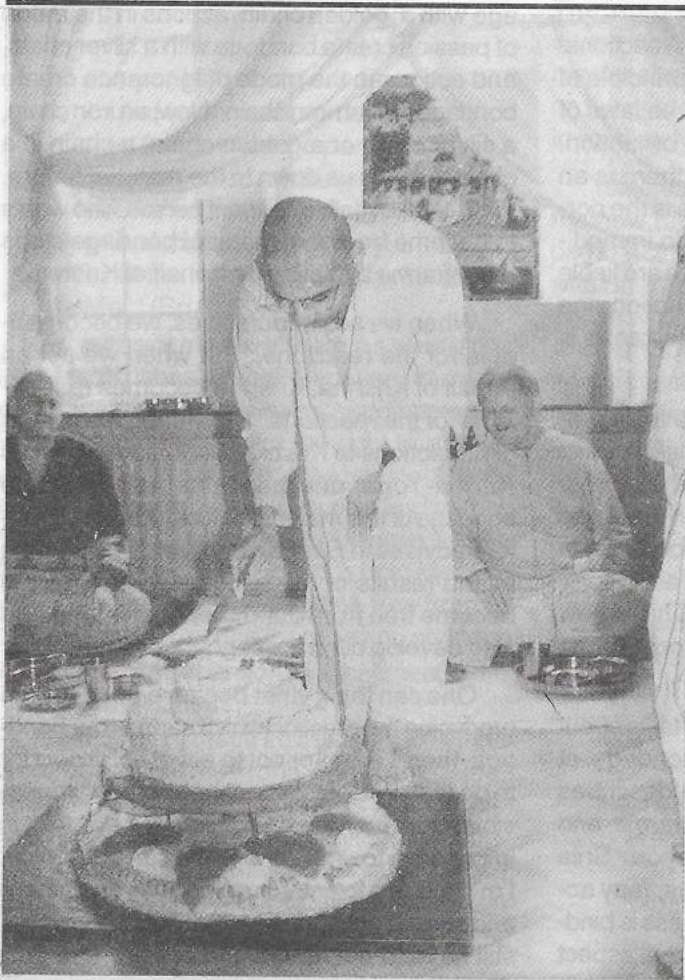
pada (by reading his books), even before I personally met him, practically in one day's time, I could give up all those bad habits without any difficulty. How could I do that? Because I always thought how Srila Prabhupada wouldn't like it. This is applicable to everyone; it is the love for the spiritual master which helps us make spiritual progress.

And it is that love which gradually develops into love for Krishna. It is not that we develop our love for Krishna first and then we develop our love for the spiritual master. Nor is it we directly develop our love for Krishna. It doesn't work like that. It is only through the spiritual

master we can develop our spiritual relationship with Krishna.

The spiritual master, doesn't want to accept anything for himself. The bona fide spiritual master is just a via medium to Krishna. Whoever comes to him, he accepts on behalf of Krishna and he offers them to Krishna. That is how the spiritual master remains safe in his position as a spiritual master.

As your spiritual master, I have the responsibility to connect you in ISKCON and guide you back to the spiritual sky. Please become aware of these responsibilities help me take you go back to the spiritual sky. 🙏



*guru-kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana
sastrera pramane
guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpa
karena bhakta-gane*

According to *sastra*
the *guru* is non-differ-
ent from Krishna,
because it is through
the *guru* that Krishna
bestows mercy on His
devotees.

(Cc *Adi*. 1.45)

The following is a class given by Guru-maharaja on *Bhagavad-gita* 4.20 in Radhadesh, date unknown.

FREEDOM FROM MATERIAL BONDAGE

*tyaktva karma-phalasangam
nitya-trypto nirasrayah
karmany abhipravrtto 'pi
naiva kincit karoti sah'*

"Abandoning all attachment to the result of his activities, ever satisfied and independent, he performed no fruitive action, although engaged in all kinds of undertakings." (Bg 4.20)

As we act, our actions produce reactions. That is the universally accepted principle of motion and activity. There are three laws of action known as Newton's laws of motion. The third law is for every action there is an equal and opposed reaction. This is the normal law of nature; whatever we do immediately produces a reaction which we are liable for. In Sanskrit, this principle of action and reaction is known as *karma*. This *karma* is the cause of our bondage.

All actions on the material platform produce reactions which become the cause of bondage in the material nature. When someone acts in a pious way, that action produces a good reaction, and when someone acts in an impious way, a sinful way, that action produces a bad result or suffering. This is how every individual is either enjoying or suffering the result of their *karma*.

But in *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna talks about the science of freedom from bondage of *karma*. In this chapter, Krishna describes three kinds of activities; *karma*, *akarma*, and *vikarma*. At the end of the purport, Srila Prabhupada describes *vikarma* as, "any action devoid of Krishna Consciousness is binding upon the worker." That is the real aspect

of *vikarma*. *Vikarma* is the *karma* that binds us to the material nature. It doesn't matter if the activities are pious or impious, all action bind us. Even enjoyment, as a result of pious activities, is a bondage because we have to enjoy the reactions of our good *karma*.

Srila Prabhupada explains that any action in any mode of nature is a cause of bondage. Actions in the mode of goodness create bondage with a golden chain, actions in the mode of passion create bondage with a silver chain, and actions in the mode of ignorance create bondage with an iron chain. Now, an iron chain, a silver chain or a golden chain, a chain is a chain that ties us down to the material nature. Therefore, a really intelligent person who wants to become free from material bondage stops his *vikarma* by acting on behalf of Krishna.

When we act for ourselves, we become liable for the reactions. But when we act on behalf of Krishna, Krishna becomes responsible for the reactions. By offering the results of our actions to Krishna, popularly known as *Karma-Yoga*, one becomes free from the bondage of this material nature. Krishna therefore advises in *Bhagavad-gita* that by offering all the results of our actions to Him, we will become free from our material bondage and also develop our transcendental love for Him.

One can think that because our action is producing the reaction which causes our bondage, then it is better not to act at all. *Yogis* try to do that, but they cannot because it's impossible for an individual to be totally inactive. It is impossible to stop action. We can say, "Well, I'm not going to act. I'm going to sit down here and stop all action." We may sit down, but we still have to eat, drink, and breath. The *yogi*

may say, "Okay, I'll stop even this. I'll stop eating, drinking and breathing" but he cannot stop his mind. He may stop his subtle physical action, but he cannot stop the action of his consciousness.

It is impossible for a living entity to become totally inactive. Even a tree is active. It is deriving energy from the rays of the sun and sucking its food from the soil. Even a stone is active. The Vedas explain how mountains breath and sweat. Even a mountain is a living entity, and anything that is alive is active.

This is the negative way to stop action. The positive way to stop action and become free from *karmic* reactions is:

*yaj juhosi dadasi yat
yat karosi yad asnas
yat tapasyasi kaunteya
tat kurusva mad-arpanam'*

"Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you give in charity, whatever austerities you perform, you just offer all the results of these actions to Me." (Bg 9.27)

Tat kurusva mad-arpanam, as an offering unto Me (Krishna). Why? Because, *karmany evadhikaras te, ma phalesu kadacana* (Bg 2.47). "Arjuna you have the right to act, but you do not have the right to the results of those actions because you are My part and parcel. As My part and parcel, your business is to offer all the results of your actions unto Me. And when you do that, you become free from all the reactions." Krishna is not saying abandon your actions, but abandon all attachment to the results of the actions.

Krishna gave these instructions to Arjuna on a battlefield. Arjuna was proposing, "Krishna I don't want to enjoy this material nature. What's the point of enjoying this kingdom if it's going to be stained with all the blood of my relatives. It would be better for me to go to the forest and survive by begging."

Krishna and Arjuna were friends and Krishna listened to Arjuna while he spoke like a wise man. But when Arjuna finally realised he didn't know what to do or what not to do, he surrendered to Krishna. *Sisya te 'ham sadhi mana tvam prapannam,*" Krishna I do not know what to do so I'm surrendering myself unto You as Your disciple. Please tell me what I should do."

Arjuna and Krishna were friends but as soon as Arjuna accepted Krishna as a spiritual master, Krishna took up the role of a spiritual master and chastised His disciple. In Sanskrit, the word for disciple is *sisyah*. Arjuna is saying, *sisyas te aham*, "I am your disciple." The word *sisya* comes from the root word *sasan* which means to chastise. The spiritual master chastises the disciple and guides him on the right path and here we see how Krishna immediately chastised His disciple, Arjuna.

Yesterday, Trivikrama Maharaja was telling me how he was chastised by Srila Prabhupada. Actually, anyone who had close contact with Srila Prabhupada was heavily chastised. Those who were not, were not very fortunate. Another Godbrother once told me how he was never chastised by Srila Prabhupada. I told him, 'Oh, you are so unfortunate,' and he admitted that he now realised how unfortunate he was. He realised that Srila Prabhupada could see he was not ready to take any chastisement. That's why Srila Prabhupada didn't chastise him.

The spiritual master chastises the disciple and gives him instructions to free him from the bondage of *maya*. This is what Krishna did to Arjuna. Krishna immediately responded;

*asocyan anvasocas tvam
prajna-vadams ca bhasase
gatasun agatasums ca
nanusocanti panditah*

"Arjuna you are talking like a wise man but at the same time you are lamenting for the things that one should not lament for." (Bg 2.11)

Krishna, in the *Bhagavad-gita*, systematically gave us absolute wisdom and here in this verse (Bg 4.20), in very simple words, Krishna explained how to become free from the bondage of reaction. "You just act on my behalf. You act for Me, offer the results of your actions to Me and you'll become free. Even fighting in a battle and killing thousands and thou-

sands of people, you will not become affected by that action."

Arjuna didn't want to fight in the beginning, but then he heard all the instructions of *Bhagavad-gita* from Krishna. Krishna then left it up to him to decide what he wanted to do. Krishna, the spiritual master gave instructions to his disciple, Arjuna, and then left it up to the disciple to decide. And what did Arjuna, who is the perfect disciple, do? He accepted;

Guru-maharaja remembers receiving chastisement from Srila Prabhupada

Sometimes, Srila Prabhupada would become very angry when the servants who were serving him directly made a mistake. I remember one incident when Srila Prabhupada was in Bombay. One morning Srila Prabhupada asked for some orange juice. There was no orange juice in Srila Prabhupada's kitchen or the devotee kitchen. I then went to the deity kitchen. They also didn't have any oranges so I bought them from a local shop.

I immediately returned to Srila Prabhupada's kitchen and just started to make the orange juice when Srila Prabhupada rang his bell. When I heard the bell, I immediately ran into Srila Prabhupada's room. Srila Prabhupada asked me, a little annoyed, "What happened to the orange juice?" I said, "I am just about to bring it Srila Prabhupada."

It took me a some time to make the juice. The bell rang again but this time it just kept on ringing. Srila Prabhupada, in anger, just kept pressing the bell. I immediately put what orange juice I had into a glass. I put it on a silver plate and rushed into Srila Prabhupada's room. As soon as I opened the door, I heard something that sounded like a thunderbolt. Srila Prabhupada was very angry.

He was yelling at me to get out. He was shouting he didn't want the orange juice but I just couldn't turn around and leave, so I just kept on walking towards Srila Prabhupada with the silver plate in my hand. I came in front of Srila Prabhupada's desk and held the plate in front of him. Srila Prabhupada was so angry that he didn't pick up the glass for some time. I kept on holding it. Finally, Srila Prabhupada picked up the glass and he started to drink.

As he started to drink, I realised I had forgotten to bring a bowl of water to wash Srila Prabhupada's mouth. Whenever Srila Prabhupada drank something, I would give him water to rinse his mouth. I immediately ran back to the kitchen and got a small bowl of water and I washed Srila Prabhupada's mouth. Then I realised I had forgotten to bring the napkin to wipe his mouth. This time I didn't go back to the kitchen, I reached into Srila Prabhupada's wardrobe and took a small towel and wiped Srila Prabhupada's mouth.


Then, Srila Prabhupada started to tell me, "You are trying to serve me so nicely, but I am

(cont'd next page)

"Krishna my illusion is over, I have regained my memory. I am free from doubt and will act according to your instructions." (Bg 18.73)

Saying that, Arjuna picked up his bow (Gandhiva), his arrows and began to fight.

Arjuna is presented here as the perfect disciple. This perfect disciple is not an inactive person who renounces everything and goes to the forest. Instead, Arjuna picked up his bow and arrows and started to fight. Arjuna

was killing on a battlefield, so what makes him a saintly person? Whatever he was doing, he offered it to Krishna. He was killing people on the battlefield of Kuruksetra, not for his own sake, but because Krishna, his spiritual master, asked him to. That is the mood of a disciple. By acting on behalf of the spiritual master and Krishna one very easily becomes free from all material bondage. 

always chastising you." When Srila Prabhupada chastised me, I didn't feel so bad. But when Srila Prabhupada spoke like this, I felt my heart break apart. I wanted to tell Srila Prabhupada not to speak like that but I couldn't because my voice was choked up. Srila Prabhupada kept saying, "You see, when someone becomes old he becomes short tempered. So please don't mind that I chastise you." I finally managed to speak up. "Srila Prabhupada, please don't speak like that. I make mistakes and if you don't correct me, then what will happen to me?"

Another time I was in Hrisikesh. Srila Prabhupada was there for a few days with a very small group of devotees. One day, Srila Prabhupada asked me to cook a preparation he had personally taught me in Bombay. This preparation is made with a lot of ghee and chilli.

Srila Prabhupada's stomach was not very good at that time so I thought I should not use so much chilli. I cooked the preparation with very little chilli. Srila Prabhupada used to throw in this much dry red chilli (demonstrating a big handful) and a lot of ghee. When I served the preparation to Srila Prabhupada, he took one bite and became very angry.

He started to blast me, telling me what a nonsense I was. He had personally taught me that preparation and I forgot. He practically threw the *subji* away. He didn't actually throw it, but brushed the bowl aside. Srila Prabhupada was so angry he couldn't eat that meal and for two days he blasted me every time he saw me. I was serving Srila Prabhupada so I must have gone to him at least twenty times a day. He not only blasted me every time he saw me, he also told everyone else who came to see him what a nonsense I was.

Srila Prabhupada's anger subsided a bit on the third day. "I personally taught you to make that preparation. How have you forgotten it?" I then told Srila Prabhupada, "I didn't forget it. I decided not to use a lot of chilli because your stomach was not very good. I thought so much chilli would not be good for your stomach." Srila Prabhupada said, "Then why didn't you tell me all this before?"

When the spiritual master chastises the disciple, it is his mercy. And when Srila Prabhupada chastised you, it was the heaviest thing you could ever experience. Devotees think that Srila Prabhupada was all love and affection, and he was, but sometimes this love became manifest in the form of volcanic eruptions. *(Excerpt from a class)*



*na dharmam nadharmam sruti-gana niruktam kila kuru
vraje radha-krsna-pracura-paricaryam iba taru
saci-sunum nandisvara-pati-sutatve guru-varam
mukunda-prestatve smara param ajasram namu manah*

O mind! Give up all connection with Vedic piety and impiety and simply serve Radha and Krishna in Vr̄ndavana with all your heart. Know that Lord Chaitanya, the son of Saci, is Sri Krishna, the son of Nanda and always remember that *Sri Guru is mukunda-prestha*, the dearmost servant of Krishna.

(*Manah-Siksa 2, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami*)

PROJECTS

A MOVIE ON SRILA PRABHUPADA'S LIFE

This is a new and very exciting project begun by Guru-maharaja. He wants to complete it in time to offer it to Srila Prabhupada for his centennial celebrations. "People in general know about ISKCON, but they don't really know who Prabhupada is. This movie will spread Srila Prabhupada's name everywhere and everyone will know what a tremendous thing he achieved." The movie, in English and Hindi, will be on Srila Prabhupada's early life up to his leaving for the West to fulfil the mission of spreading the *sankirtana* movement of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu all over the world.

Guru-maharaja has begun work on the script. Locabandhu Das and Anuradha Devi Dasi of SA are developing it and then it will be finished by professionals. Guru-maharaja's initial idea for the opening scenes is:

Scene One: An American devotee is travelling by plane to India to attend Srila Prabhupada's centennial celebrations. He is sitting next to an Indian man who asks, "Why are you going to India?" The devotee tells the man and explains who Srila Prabhupada is and what he achieved. This man becomes very interested. He admits he has lived in America for twenty five years and has become so Westernised he has lost of his Indian heritage.

Scene Two: The man meets up with the devotee in Calcutta and takes the devotee to the house of Srila Prabhupada's childhood. The devotee becomes overwhelmed. He is awe-struck and is transported into Srila Prabhupada's childhood. He sees five year old Abhay Charan waking up hearing his father performing *aroti* and singing in their little temple room. Abhay Charan jumps out of bed and runs downstairs to join his father.

The last scene is Srila Prabhupada's arrival in the USA. He is walking down a long empty street and many young Western devotee boys and girls start following him.

QUESTION: I can't wait to ask this question. WHO is playing Srila Prabhupada?


ANSWER: That hasn't been finalised yet but we are considering Kapila Dev Das. He is originally from New York but now he is doing Food for Life in Durban. He's actually a disciple of mine and is a fantastic actor. The movie will be made in Bombay and a director there, Tarun Dhannaj Gir, is very interested. He is the husband of a devotee, Rupavati Devi Dasi, and they already had this idea of making a movie on Srila Prabhupada when I told them about my desire to do it.

QUESTION: Why are you making movies?

ANSWER: Movies are the biggest and most important form of communication. It is the greatest preaching field. A movie can reach and influence millions of people, but in ISKCON we aren't really doing anything about this preaching opportunity.

QUESTION: The movie business is expensive. How are you getting the money for this?

ANSWER: It is very expensive. I don't have enough money for this movie on Srila Prabhupada so I am now asking my disciples for financial help. I have already done this in SA and the devotees responded very enthusiastically. Actually, I started a competition there; whoever donates the biggest amount for this movie would travel with me for one month, all expenses paid.

Someone from SA and now also someone from Europe - whoever donates the biggest amount in each place can travel with me for one month. 

SRI GURU-PARAMPARA

by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami

1.
*krsna hoite catur-mukha, hoy krsna-
 sevonmukha,
 brahma hoite naradera mati
 narada hoite vyasa, madhwa kohe vyasa-
 dasa
 purnaprajna padmanabha gati*
 2.
*nrhari madhava-bamse, aksobhya-
 paramahamse,
 sisya boli' angikara kore
 aksobhyera sisya jaya-tirtha name
 paricaya,
 tara dasye jnanasindhu tore*

3.
*taha hoite dayanidhi, tara dasa vidyanidhi
 rajendra hoilo taha ha'te
 tahara kinkora jaya-dharma name paricaya,
 parampara jano bhalo mate*

4.
*jayadharmadasye khyati, sri purusottama
 jati,
 ta ha'te brahmanya-tirtha suri
 vyasatirtha tara dasa, laksmipati vyasa-
 dasa,
 taha ha'te madhavendra puri*

1. In the beginning of creation the science of devotional service was received by the four-headed Brahma from the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Devarsi Narada's understanding of this divine science was obtained from Brahma. The great sage Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa, who was empowered to compile the Vedic literatures, became a disciple of Devarsi Narada. Sripada Madhvacarya, the founder of the *suddha-dvaita* school of Vedanta philosophy, who visited Vyasadeva at Badarikasrama in the thirteenth century to learn from him Vedanta philosophy, calls himself a servant of Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa. Purnaprajna Tirtha (Madhva) is the *guru* and sole refuge of Padmanabha Tirtha.

2. The two other principle disciples of Madhva are Nrhari Tirtha and Madhava Tirtha. Madhava Tirtha accepted the great *paramhansa* Aksobhya Tirtha as a disciple. The principal disciple of Aksobhya Tirtha was known as Jayatirtha. Jayatirtha's service was for his disciple Jnanasindhu.

3. Dayanidhi received the science of devotional service from Jnanasindhu. The servant of Dayanidhi was Vidyavidhi (Vidyadhiraja Tirtha). Rajendra Tirtha's servant was known as Jayadharmadasye or Vijayadhvajaya Tirtha. In this way you should properly understand this disciplic succession.

4. The great *sannyasi* Sri Purusottama Tirtha received his knowledge in the service of his *guru*, Vijayadhvajaya Tirtha (Jayadharmadasye). The principal disciple of Purusottama Tirtha was Subrahmanya Tirtha. His servant was the great Vyasatirtha (Vyasa Raya). Vyasatirtha's servant was Laksmipati Tirtha, whose disciple was Madhavendra Puri Goswami.

5. The chief disciple of Madhavendra Puri was Isvara Puri, and two of his other disciples were the renowned incarnations of Godhead Sri Nityananda and Advaita Acarya. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the spiritual preceptor of all the worlds, made Isvara Puri greatly fortunate by accepting him as His spiritual master.

6. Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya is nondifferent from Sri Sri Radha Krishna and is the very life of those Vaishnavas who follow Sri Rupa Goswami. Sri Svarupa Damodara Goswami, Rupa Goswami, and Sanatana Goswami were the givers of great happiness to Visvambhara (Sri Chaitanya).

5.

madhavendra puri-bara, sisya-bara sri-
iswara,
nityananda sri-adwaita-vibhu
iswara-purike dhanya, korilen sri-caitanya,
jagad-guru gaura mahaprabhu

6.

mahaprabhu sri-caitanya, radha-krsna
nahe anya,
rupanuga janera jivana
viswambhara priyankara, sri-swarupa
damodara,
sri-goswami rupa-sanatana

*9.

ihara paramahamsa,
gaurangera nija-bamsa,
tadera carane mama gati
ami seba-udasina, namete tridandi dina
sri-bhaktisiddhanta saraswati

7.

rupa-priya mahajana, jiva, raghunatha
hana,
tara priya kavi krsnadasa
krsnadasa-priya-bara, narottama seva-
para,
yanra pada visvanatha asa

8.

viswanatha-bhakta-satha, baladeva
jagannatha,
tara priya sri-bhaktivinoda
maha-bhagavata-vara, sri-gaurakisora-
bara,
hari-bhajanete ja'ra moda


*9.

sri-varsabhanavi-bara, sada sevya-seva-para,
tahara dayita-dasa-nama
tara pradhan pracarako, sri-bhaktivedanta namo,
patita-janete doya-dhama

7. The great souls Jiva Gosvami and Raghunatha das Gosvami became very dear to Rupa Gosvami. Jiva Gosvami was a disciple of Rupa Gosvami, and Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, a disciple of Advaita Acarya's disciple Yadunandana Acarya, was accepted by Rupa and Sanatana as their third brother. Raghunatha dasa Gosvami's beloved student was Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami. Krishnadasa Kaviraja was an intimate friend of Lokanatha Gosvami. They lived together in Vrndavana and always discussed the topics of Krishna with one another. Lokanatha Gosvami, a disciple of Gadadhara Pandita, had only one disciple, whose name was Narottama dasa. Narottama dasa was always engaged in the service of his *guru*, and he also engaged himself in the service of his *guru's* intimate friend. Thus he became very dear to Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami. To serve the feet of Narottama dasa Thakura was the only desire of Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, who was the fourth *acharya* in disciplic succession from Narottama dasa.

8. Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura was the *siksa-guru* (instructing spiritual master) of Baladeva Vidyabhusana, to whom he taught the precepts of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Jagannatha dasa Babaji was a very prominent *acharya* after Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana and was the beloved *siksa-guru* of Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Bhaktivinoda Thakura's intimate friend and associate was the eminent *maha-bhagavata* Sri Gaurakisora dasa Babaji, whose sole joy was found in *hari-bhajana*.

*9. These great saintly Vaishnavas are all *paramahamsas*, or devotees of the highest order, and they are all part of Lord Gauranga's own spiritual family. Their holy feet are my refuge. I have no real interest in devotional service, and I am a poor and lowly *tridandi sannyasi* named Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati.

*9. Because this song has been composed by Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, he has placed his name at the end of the song, as is customarily done by Vaishnava poets. In order to glorify Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura and his beloved disciple Sri A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada as spiritual teachers in the preceptorial succession from Sri Caitanyadeva, the following verse has been added and may be optionally sung instead of the song's ninth verse. 

Guru-maharaja was asked by the GBC to compile a selection of verses from Hari Bhakti Vilasa on Vaishnava Etiquette. The following are selected verses from that work.

QUOTES FROM HARI BHAKTI VILAS ON DISCIPLE

DUTIES OF AN INITIATED DISCIPLE

1. He should show great respect to the *Vaishnavas*, spiritual masters and especially the *Vaishnava acharyas*. He should try to help them to the best of his ability when they are in difficulty. He should always consider that the worshipable Lord is situated in the sun, moon, cows, banyan trees, fire, the spiritual master and the *brahmanas*.
2. A disciple should not speak to or live with a person who blasphemes the spiritual master, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the scriptures.
3. The initiated disciple should observe *Ekadasi* according to rules and regulations, keep his worshipable Lord, *guru*, *mantra* and his beads as a sacred possession.
4. He should protect devotional scriptures such as the *Srimad Bhagavatam* with great care, get up during *Brahma Muhurta*, do *aratika* with instruments, take bath according to rules and regulations, wear sacred clothes, worship the Lord, honour *charanamrta*, wear *Tulasi mala*, remove the garlands from Visnu, apply sandalwood on Visnu's body and decorate Him with garlands.
5. The disciple should abide by the instructions of the spiritual master, have faith in the instructions of the spiritual master, sing and dance with devotion, make regular offerings to the Lord, greet the *sadhus* and worship them. He should accept Krishna *prasadam*, associate with the *Vaishnavas*, enquire about spiritual life, especially on *Dasami Ekadasi* and

Dvadasi. He should not consider observing the vows of *Ekadasi* to be difficult.

6. He should observe Janmastami and other such special celebrations, go to the temple, observe eight *maha-dvadasis*, serve all *Vaishnava* brothers and consider the spiritual master as God.
7. He should not eat or sleep when night turns into day and day turns into night, do *acamana* standing up, make friendship with nondevotees, put *tilak* on or do *acamana* without chanting *mantra*, accept any other scriptures besides *Vaishnava* scriptures, become attached to the association of non devotees and temporary material happiness.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A DISCIPLE

1. The Eleventh Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (11.10.6) says: "The servant or disciple of the spiritual master should be free from false prestige, never considering himself to be the doer. He should be active and never lazy and should give up all sense of proprietorship over the objects of the senses, including his wife, children, home and society. He should be endowed with feelings of loving friendship toward the spiritual master and should never become deviated or bewildered. The servant or disciple should always desire advancement in spiritual understanding, should not envy anyone and should always avoid useless conversation."
2. One who is lazy; dirty; toils unnecessarily; proud; miserly; poor; diseased; indignant;



*brahmana bhramite kona bhagyavan jiva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde paya bhakti-lata-bija
tate kṛṣṇa bhaje, kare gurura sevana
maya-jala chūte, paya kṛṣṇera carana*

Wandering throughout the universe, by the mercy of Krishna, the living entity who is fortunate meets a bonafide spiritual master. By the mercy of the spiritual master, he gets the seed of the *bhakti-lata*. By worshiping Krishna and rendering service to the spiritual master, one is liberated from the illusory world of *maya*, and attains the lotus feet of the Lord.

(Cc Mad. 19.151, 22.25)

materially attached; greedy for sense gratification; envious; sly; foul-mouthed; earns money by unscrupulous means; adulterous; inimical towards the learned; although ignorant pretends to be a scholar; has fallen from his vow; earns his livelihood with difficulty; finds fault with others; inflicts pain on others; is gluttonous; a miscreant; wicked and sinful; such a degraded person is not eligible to become a disciple.

3. Those who cannot be dissuaded from committing sinful activities and is negligent of the *guru's* strict instructions are disqualified for initiation. One should not accept such a person as his disciple. If, being lured by money, a *guru* accepts such a person as his disciple, he will incur the demigods' wrath, become poor, be bereft of wife and children and receive an animals body after death.

4. Both the spiritual master and disciple should live together for one year to test the eligibility of each other. The *guru* will check the disciple and the disciple will also check the *guru*.

5. According to the *Mantra Muktavali*, a minimum of one year is needed for the *guru* and disciple to know each other. It is incumbent upon the spiritual master to test his disciple because the *Sarshangraha* states that a bona fide spiritual master should test his disciple for one year. Just as the minister's sin enters into the king, the wife's sin enters into the husband, similarly the disciple's sin enters into the spiritual master.

THE DISCIPLES' DUTIES

1. A disciple should not go anywhere without asking his spiritual master; sit with his legs

stretched out in front of his spiritual master; yawn, laugh or speak loudly in front of the spiritual master; cover his neck with his upper garment; snap his fingers in front of the spiritual master and should always be engaged in activities that are pleasing and useful to the spiritual master.

2. Lord Siva says in the *Devi Tantra* that a disciple should never transgress the *guru's* bed, sheet, vehicle, shoes, pedestal, bathing water and shadow. He should not accept separate worship in front of his spiritual master or allow anyone to say that he is non-different from his spiritual master. The disciple should not give *mantra*, explain scriptures or establish his authority when the spiritual master is present.

3. Sri Narada also says that a disciple must offer his obeisances with folded hands falling like an uprooted tree wherever

he sees his spiritual master. A disciple should never transgress the instruction, feet, vehicle, sandal, cloth or shadow of the spiritual master.

4. The *Manu Smrti* also instructs that a disciple should never, even indirectly, utter the name of the spiritual master without first using proper titles. The disciple should never imitate the spiritual master's movement, voice or gestures.

5. The disciple should never even inadvertently give an order to the spiritual master on any subject; disobey the spiritual master's orders; eat anything without offering it to the spiritual master or eat the spiritual master's remnants without his permission.

*The guru will check the
disciple and the disciple
will also check the guru.*

6. The disciple must approach the spiritual master when he sees his *guru* coming and must follow him when he goes. The disciple should never sit on a seat or bed in front of the spiritual master and all good food and drinks must be offered to the spiritual master first before they can be eaten.

7. One should not do anything to court the spiritual master's displeasure, even when cajoled or treated rudely by him. The disciple should never disobey the orders of his spiritual master or go against him. The disciple who pleases the spiritual master with his life, wealth, activities, mind and words, attains the supreme destination. (*Visnu Smrti*)

8. If the spiritual master gives initiation without testing the disciple and disciple receives the *mantra* without serving the spiritual mas-

ter, both of them face great spiritual difficulty. The *Narada Pancaratra* states that in this situation, both the spiritual master and disciple will go to a terrible hell for eternity.

9. *Vaishnava Tantra* describes how a disciple should pray to the spiritual master after initiation for the spiritual master's pleasure;

"O Lord of the Universe! O my spiritual master! I am being burned in the fire of material existence and am being beaten by the snake of time. Please deliver me. I am surrendering myself unto you."

10. The wise accept only that initiation which offers him shelter at the lotus feet of Sri Vasudeva, the crest-jewel of all demigods. Any other type of initiation is simply a sign of stupidity.

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Write and tell us about :

- instructions in Guru-maharaja's letters
- special experiences with Guru-maharaja that reveal his mood and divine qualities
- sankirtana and preaching stories
- other nectar you would like to share

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is YOUR newsletter.

Be part of it by giving us your suggestions,
photos of Guru-maharaja and writing an article.

- share those precious times with Guru-maharaja.
-

The following is an excerpt from a darshan with Guru-maharaja and his disciples held at Bhaktivedanta Manor, 1992.

A BONA FIDE SPIRITUAL MASTER IN DISCIPLIC SUCCESSION


In *The Spiritual Master and Disciple*, compiled by Sivananda Das Brahmachari, it mentions; "The first five principles of devotional service involve the acceptance of a spiritual master." Chaitanya Mahaprabhu pointed out the five most important points of devotional principles, and what are they? Srila Rupa Goswami listed them as the following:

1. Accepting the shelter of the lotus feet of the bona fide spiritual master.
2. Becoming initiated by the bona fide spiritual master and learning how to discharge devotional service from him.
3. Obeying the orders of the spiritual master with faith and devotion.
4. Following in the footsteps of the previous *acharyas* under the guidance of a spiritual master.
5. Inquiring from the spiritual master how to advance in devotional service.

Srila Rupa Goswami pointed out how these are the first five basic principles of devotional service. We can see they all centre around the acceptance of a spiritual master. Srila Prabhupada was very emphatic about this point, about the acceptance of a bona fide spiritual master. He didn't say spiritual master, he said bona fide spiritual master. What is

the meaning of bona fide spiritual master? Srila Prabhupada explained a bona fide spiritual master belongs to the disciplic succession. That is the first qualification of being bona fide.

But this alone isn't enough. He must also be following the teachings of his disciplic succession. In other words, a bona fide spiritual master is he who has been initiated by a bona fide spiritual master, and his spiritual master is also bona fide because he too was initiated by a bona fide spiritual master, and they are all teaching the same philosophical truths as received from their respective spiritual master. This is how the chain of disciplic succession goes all the way back to Krishna, the original spiritual master.

There are four bona fide *sampradayas*. One of them starts from Lord Brahma, and the others start from Laxsmidevi, Lord Siva and the four Kumaras. In our *sampradaya*, the Brahma Madhava Gaudiya *sampradaya*, Krishna instructed transcendental knowledge to Lord Brahma first and then Lord Brahma imparted that knowledge to his disciple. The spiritual master imparts transcendental knowledge to his disciples as he received it from his spiritual master. Then, at the right time, those disciples become bona fide spiritual masters and impart the same knowledge to their disciples. This is the unbroken chain of disciplic succession. 

Balarama Das travelled with Guru-maharaja as his personal servant and secretary for at least four years. This gave him a lot of personal association with Guru-maharaja and many opportunities to see his exemplary Vaishnava qualities and dealings in all circumstances. Balarama now shares some of his insights with us.

AN OLD FRIEND

Lonavala, 20th July 1995

I am staying with Bhakta Vinod in room 102 of the Hari International Hotel, three hours south of Bombay. Guru-maharaja's writing retreat this year is unlike the year before; shorter (only one week), he receives visitors (especially those connected with his film projects), and he stays in a hotel.

Bhakta Vinod is an old friend from the time of Guru-maharaja's youth. We are sharing the same room so we spend a lot of time talking about Guru-maharaja's special character. This has been my special interest throughout the many years I have had the good fortune of studying Guru-maharaja's behaviour, dealings and character. But today, I have come across a very very special item in Guru-maharaja's life which gives all his other qualities a special meaning.

Bhakta Vinod, while telling me about Guru-maharaja's caring nature, described how he is the same as he was in his youth in the early 1960's. For me, this has a very special sig-

nificance. My life completely changed when I came in contact with ISKCON. My habits, my character, and my understanding, etc. all changed. I actually started to adopt a different nature altogether, especially after I started serving Guru-maharaja as his secretary.

But for Guru-maharaja, contact with Srila Prabhupada and his ISKCON simply enhanced the qualities and character he already had. All divine qualities were already in Guru-maharaja and they are simply being utilized by Srila Prabhupada in his preaching mission. This leaves me in awe and wonder -- where is Guru-maharaja coming from?!

I am convinced Guru-maharaja was called here by Srila Prabhupada to help him in his mission to his spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. Now it is up to us to take advantage of all these divine arrangements that have been made for our sake. **Guru-maharaja kei jaya!** 🙏

The following comes from a darshan given by Guru-maharaja to a disciple in Mayapur Dham, March 1995.

SURRENDER AND BECOME A GOOD DEVOTEE

Whatever happens to us on the spiritual platform is good, whereas, on the material platform, nothing is good. Material or mundane things dampen our enthusiasm because the material nature is illusory. This material nature is relative to our senses but as we are not this body, we do not need material senses to go inwards to see the Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The Supersoul is the Supreme Controller and everything happens by His divine arrangement. That very same Personality stands as the Deity on the altar. Although He is the Supreme Controller of everyone, and everything belongs to Him, He is very, very close to us. He is present in our hearts. Not only is He present in our hearts, He is all-pervasive and present in every atom. Although He is the greatest, He allows us to develop a most intimate relationship with Him. He allows us to deal with everyone and everything through Him. When we develop that vision, we become detached.

When we develop the understanding that we are doing everything for Him, we begin to render devotional service. We have a relationship with that personality in our heart, so if we do everything for His pleasure, He empowers us. Somebody may be very weak physically, but instead of identifying himself with the body, if he identifies himself as being a part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then the Supersoul will give him all strength and facility to render service. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is not an inert, incapable Person. He is the source of all energy, the source of all consciousness, the source

of everything. The more we develop our lost relationship with Him, the more we become empowered by Him.

Sometimes, when we render service, we tend to become impersonal and think, 'The deity is just stone. How can He accept the service we render?' However, we should understand that this personality is not simply standing on the altar. He is also present in our hearts as a witness. One should render service unto Him with the realisation He is witnessing everything and appreciates any service we try to do for Him.

Just as the Supersoul is non-different from the deity of Krishna on the altar, the spiritual master is also non-different from the Supersoul. Thus we appreciate how the Supersoul manifests Himself as the spiritual master as well as the deity on the altar. Therefore, there is no difference between Krishna and the spiritual master.

When we render service with this understanding, we immediately notice how Krishna reciprocates. We notice that when we render service sincerely, Krishna fulfils all our desires. But then, gradually, we come to a point when we do not have any other desire besides serving Him. Krishna does this in a very gentle way. First He fulfils our desires then He then brings us to the point of surrendering all of our independent desires. At this stage we can tune into His desires and desire only to fulfil them.

That is pure devotional service — we do not have any independent desires, we desire to do whatever Krishna wants us to do. This is



*acaryam mam vijaniyan navamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhasuyeta sarva deva-mayo guruh*

Know the acharya to be as good as Myself. Never disrespect him. Never envy him or consider him an ordinary man for he is the sum total of all the demigods. (Bhag. 11.17.27)

what it means to be a servant. A servant does not tell his master, 'Please do this for me. Please do that for me.' He simply waits for his master to tell him what to do and then he does it immediately.

Krishna is omniscient. He not only knows what we want, He also knows what is good for us. A child may want something, but if the father knows it is not good for the child, he will not give it to him. Therefore, we should just surrender unto Krishna and serve Him with all sincerity.

Question: Guru-maharaja, before initiation I wrote asking you for some specific instructions. You mentioned that I should always serve Srila Prabhupada with full enthusiasm, cooperate with devotees in ISKCON no matter what happens, and never leave ISKCON. As far as engagement, I should just do what my temple authorities advise? By following their orders, I should understand that I am serving you? But are there other things I can do to assist you in serving Krishna?

Answer: ISKCON is a society having many members and involving many *gurus* representing Srila Prabhupada. Therefore, the bottom-line is to serve the institution. By serving the institution you serve Srila Prabhupada. By instructing his disciples so, the spiritual master fulfills his responsibilities because his job is to simply be a representative of his spiritual master, especially, the founder-*acharya*, Srila Prabhupada.

If I tell my disciple to do a particular service for me, without consulting the temple authorities, it may create a conflict. Especially if you are from a temple in a zone that I am not involved in. If I give personal instructions like that, other devotees will feel Bhakti Charu Maharaja is using his disciples for his personal benefit. I have to be completely transparent

so everybody can see that Bhakti Charu Maharaja is using his disciples in the service of Srila Prabhupada. And when I engage my disciples in the service of Srila Prabhupada, everybody will be happy and the society will become strong. That is why my instruction to you all is to please accept the responsibilities you have been given by your authorities and fulfil them in the best possible way without any personal motivation. Do it as your service to Srila Prabhupada.

ISKCON has a very specific structure: a temple is the unit, devotees render service to the Deities in the temple and the temple management engages the devotees. The spiritual masters play a very unique role in that they encourage their disciples, on behalf of Srila Prabhupada, to become engaged in the unit they are involved in, i.e. their respective temples. If a spiritual master takes his disciples and forms his own society, it will weaken ISKCON. It will create a society within this society. Srila Prabhupada did not want that. The ultimate consideration should be the unity of ISKCON, because therein lies our strength.

Therefore, the spiritual master's duty is to encourage his disciples to become fully involved with the temple they are in and to render service under the direction of their authorities.

Personally, I prefer not to interfere. You all have to try to surrender to your authority whether you like it or not. I remember, at one time you were having some difficulty with your authorities and you approached me for guidance. My instruction was that you should just surrender to your authority and do whatever they ask of you. Perhaps you did not like it at that time and you felt your spiritual master was not considering your problem. He was naive about the situation and being heavy with you.

(cont'd Page 31)

What follows is a compilation of quotes from Guru-maharaja's letters to his disciples on:

THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPIRITUAL MASTER

THE RELATIONSHIP IS NOT PHYSICAL

I am happy to know that you are feeling more settled within yourself now. Please always remember that the relationship with your spiritual master is spiritual and does not depend on his physical presence. One's connection to his spiritual master develops through them both serving Srila Prabhupada and the Holy Name together. As long as you are absorbed in doing this, then you are always with your spiritual master, and your spiritual master is always with you. You are Srila Prabhupada's grand-son and so are very dear to me. Please be rest assured that I am always here to help you whenever you need it.

AUSTERITIES DEEPEN THE ATTACHMENT

Yes, it is true that the more difficult something is, the more we become attached to it. Your acceptance of everything to deepen your attachment for your spiritual master is the right spirit of understanding.

DEVELOPING THE RELATIONSHIP

Question No.1: "I wish to know how one should act to develop a relationship with one's spiritual master. Can that be done through philosophy, by personal service, or ..."

Answer: Yes, one's relationship with their spiritual master can be developed through a philosophical understanding of the position of the spiritual master and rendering service to him. However, one essential element of this relationship is that the disciple needs to also make sincere enquiries from the spiritual master on how to make advancement in spiritual life. To do this one should write to the spiritual master on a regular basis and let him know how he is doing in his spiritual practices and ask questions on anything he may have doubts about, or if there is any problem that is affecting him spiritually. You can refer to Bhagavad-gita Ch 4.34 on this point.

ETIQUETTE IN THE RELATIONSHIP

I noticed in your letter you have decided to buy yourself a set of Gaura-Nitai deities so you can develop a more personal mood of service. It is proper etiquette towards your spiritual master that you approach him and seek his guidance and blessings on any matter in your spiritual life.

A SENTIMENTAL RELATIONSHIP

Question No.2: "How can we recognize if the relationship with the spiritual master is sentimental or not?"

Answer: You can tell if a disciple's relationship with his spiritual master is sentimental by how much he follows the instructions of the spiritual master. The relationship between the spiritual master and disciple is based on the principle that the spiritual master gives instructions on how to best practice Krishna consciousness, and the disciple follows these instructions with full faith.

Even if the instructions seem difficult to the disciple, he still does his very best to follow them because he understands they are for his spiritual benefit, and as the disciple it is his duty to follow them. Therefore, a sincere disciple will try his best to follow the instructions. But someone who claims to be a disciple, yet does not follow his spiritual masters instructions, definitely has only a sentimental relationship.

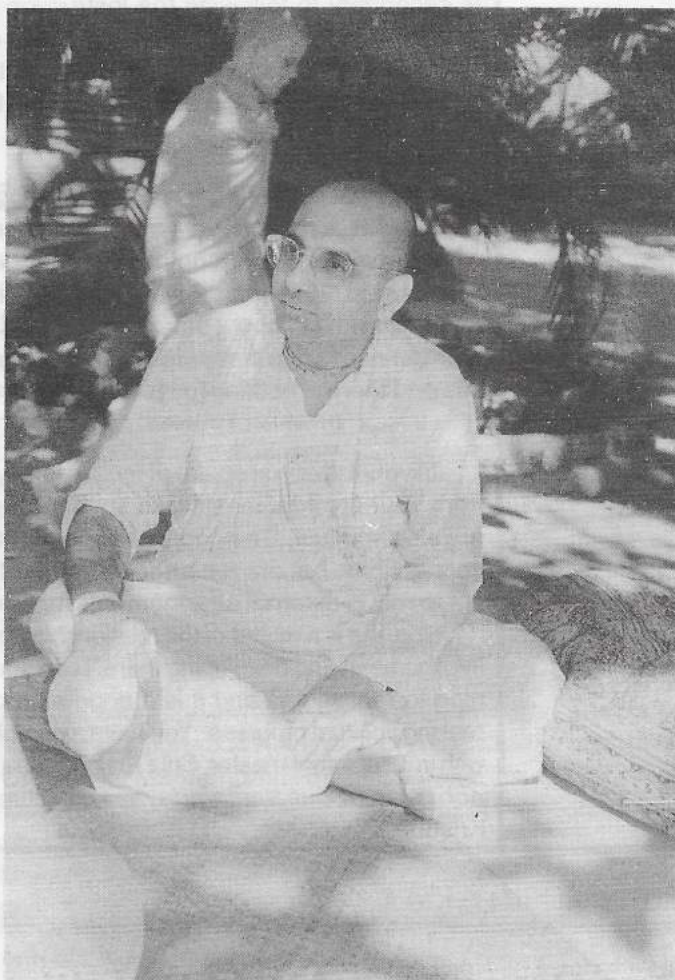
The most important consideration in the relationship is Krishna. The disciple approaches the spiritual master because he wants Krishna, and the spiritual master is the person who can show him the way. Therefore, it is so important to follow the instructions of the spiritual master. If one accepts a spiritual master for any other reason besides getting Krishna, then that relationship is obviously going to be sentimental.

PLEASEING THE SPIRITUAL MASTER

The sentiments that you expressed in your letter for your spiritual master are very touching. On my part, I am trying to help you to come closer to Srila Prabhupada and it makes me very happy when I see how sincerely you are responding. A teacher naturally feels satisfied when he sees the student is sincerely learning; a father naturally feels happy when he sees that the son is following him so obediently. In the same way I am very pleased to see how sincerely you are following Srila Prabhupada's instructions.

REVEALING ONE'S MIND

Please do not feel bad about the letter you wrote to me or that I would think it to be nonsense. In your relationship with your spiritual master, you should feel able to reveal your mind and write about matters that you wish guidance upon for your spiritual well-being. You are a sincere disciple and I am pleased to do whatever I can to help you in your spiritual life.



*tad vijñanartham sa gurum evabhiḡacchet
samit panih srotṛiyam brahma-niṣṭham*

One who wants to know the Absolute Truth scientifically must approach a bona fide spiritual master and offer him everything required for sacrifice.

Such a spiritual master must be fixed in the truth, having heard it in disciplic succession. (*Mundaka Upanisad 1.2.12*)

FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS

In my last letter to you I made it clear that your spiritual master is giving you certain instruction to go to another temple. Why do you not follow his instruction? Everything is secondary to following the instruction of the spiritual master. You may be right or wrong in your claims, but that is not the point. The point is that your spiritual master has given you an instruction and if you do not follow that then you are definitely wrong.

RELATIONSHIP IS THE BASIS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

I am pleased to see how you are realizing the importance of your relationship with your spiritual master. Actually one's whole spiritual life is completely dependent upon this relationship, and the best way to develop it is to sincerely enquire from him about practising spiritual life and render your service for his pleasure. I can see that you are doing this and there is nothing for you to be concerned about.

THE RELATIONSHIP IS INTERNAL

In your letter you spoke of feeling lonely and distanced from your spiritual master. In spiritual life, relationships are also spiritual. They are not dependent upon physical connections, but are a matter of the heart. It is learning not to rely in external arrangements for the relationship to develop, but is a matter of the relationship being internalized into the heart and developing there. I can see you are beginning to realize this and it is a good sign of how you are making spiritual progress. You have a complete relationship with your spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, the *Vaishnava acharyas* in our *sampradaya*, and ultimately Lord Sri Krishna.

Questions and Answers with Guru-maharaja on COM

Guru-maharaja is opening a COM conference for questions and answers. You can join by getting your local COM operator to contact:

Malati Manjari BCS

The following are excerpts from Guru-maharaja's class on spiritual master and disciple given as part of his seminar on Vaishnava Etiquette in Mayapur, Gaura-purnima festival, 1994.

VAISHNAVA ETIQUETTE

Spiritual master and disciple

THE MEANING OF "INITIATION"

Where does the word initiation come from? The root word initiate means to begin. Begin what? One's spiritual life. And how does spiritual life begin? By accepting a bona fide spiritual master. Therefore, accepting a bona fide spiritual master means the disciple makes an agreement to surrender unto the spiritual master and follow his instructions. The spiritual master's instructions are how the disciple receives spiritual knowledge. That is the meaning of initiation.

FAITH PURCHASES THE HOLY NAME

Initiation takes place through the spiritual master giving the disciple a bona fide *mantra*. In the line of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Gaudiya Vaishnava *sampradaya*, the *mantra* is the Hare Krishna *maha mantra*. Therefore, the disciple actually receives the seed of the devotional creeper.

*brahmāṇḍa brahmīte kona bhagayavan jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde paya bhakti-lata-bija*

"According to their *karma*, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Krishna. By the mercy of both Krishna and the spiritual master, one such person received the seed of the creeper of devotional

service." (Cc.Mad.19.151) (Lord Chaitanya to Sanatana Goswami.)

The seed of *bhakti-lata* is explained by Bhaktivinoda Thakura as *sraddha*, faith. That *sraddha* is given by the spiritual master and our spiritual life is entirely based upon it.

We can refer to Nityananda Prabhu's instructions on selling the holy name. When you buy something, you have to pay the price. To buy the holy name, the price is *sraddha*. The more *sraddha* one has, the more of the holy name one can buy. If somebody doesn't have *sraddha*, then he can't get the holy name. Where can one get this *sraddha* from? The spiritual master. The spiritual master gives the *bhakti-lata-bija* and that *bhakti-lata-bija* is *sraddha*. From that *bhakti-lata-bija* one gets the fruit of devotional service, the holy name of Krishna.

A BONA FIDE SPIRITUAL MASTER

The *Vedic* scriptures say that one must take initiation from a *Vaishnava*. A bona fide spiritual master means a *Vaishnava* who has been initiated in a bona fide disciplic succession. There are four bona fide *sampradayas*, Sri, Brahma, Rudra and Kumara, and we belong to the Brahma Madhava Gaudiya *sampradaya*.

Someone may belong to a bona fide disciplic succession, but that does not mean he is a bona fide spiritual master. He must also be properly connected to the disciplic suc-

cession. This means he is imparting transcendental knowledge that is flowing in the disciplic succession. If someone is not imparting this knowledge, saying something that is not in the line with their disciplic succession, he is not bona fide.

BRAHMANA OR VAISHNAVA SPIRITUAL MASTER

It doesn't matter if one is a *brahmana*, a *sannyasi*, a *grhastha* or a *sudra*, if he knows Krishna in Truth, he is qualified to be a spiritual master. Those who claim that only *brahmanas* can be *guru* should try to understand that this is the age of *Kali* and no-one is *brahmana* by birth.

The qualification to be a *guru* is that he must be *krsna-bhakta-vritta*. One who is a *krsna-bhakta-vritta* is one who knows Krishna in truth, he is a *Vaishnava* and a *Vaishnava* is the perfection of a *brahmana*.

QUALIFICATION FOR BRAHMANA INITIATION

The ultimate understanding is that *brahmanas* are qualified according to their qualities, not their birth. That is why Srila Prabhupada gave *brahmana* initiation. Actually, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura started the system of giving *brahmana* initiation to those who are not actually born in *brahmana* families. He gave *brahmana* initiation according to their qualities and qualification.

How does a disciple become qualified to receive *brahmana* initiation? He should pray, "Oh Lord of the Universe, oh my spiritual master, I am being burned in the fire of material existence and I'm being bitten by the snake of time. Please deliver me, I am surrendering

myself unto you." According to the *Pancaratrika viddhi*, one puts marks on the body with hot iron or hot copper for initiation, and the candidate gets permanent marks on different parts of his body. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explained this is symbolic. It represents that the person has suffered so much in the material nature, he realises it is such a terrible place to be. That is why he's saying, "I'm burning in the fire of material existence, please deliver me."

One should approach a spiritual master with that understanding. If one thinks, 'I will join ISKCON and enjoy. Then, when I get initiation it will increase even more,' and takes

"I'm burning in the fire of
material existence, please
deliver me."

initiation with that attitude, he won't derive the benefit of being initiated. One has to approach the spiritual master for initiation with the consciousness, 'I'm burning in this hellish material existence. Please deliver me.' Until one has experienced this disappointment with material existence, he cannot become serious about his spiritual life.

THE CREST JEWEL OF VAISHNAVA MANTRAS

One should take initiation only in a *Vaishnava* disciplic succession. This purport is from *The Glories of Vishnu mantra*: "One who has received the *Vaishnava mantra*, the king of all mantras, by the mercy of his spiritual master, attains all opulence and goes to the supreme abode of Sri Vishnu by chanting that *mantra*." When one achieves the *Vaishnava mantra*, just by chanting that *mantra* one will be elevated to *Vishnu loka*. That is the potency of *Vishnu mantra* and that's why one should accept *Vishnu mantra* from a *Vaishnava*.

"Only one who has performed great austerity and acquired a huge amount of piety for a thousand years is fortunate enough to chant the *Vaishnava mantra*." It has to be understood that when one chants the *Vaishnava mantra*, he has performed great austerities and acquired a huge amount of piety for thousands of lifetimes. This is the eligibility for receiving the *Vaishnava mantra*, the king of all *mantras*.


Now consider what the Hare Krishna *maha mantra* is. The Hare Krsna *maha mantra* is the crest jewel of all *Vaishnava mantras*. Can you imagine how fortunate one must be to receive this Hare Krishna *maha mantra*. You cannot. We didn't perform any austerity or piety. We are from a very very degraded background. In the age of *Kali*, what is our condition? Practically all of us were non-vegetarian and not fulfilling the four regulative principles before we joined. So what kind of piety can we have? Our good fortune was created by Srila Prabhupada.

Our position is actually far worse than Jagai and Madai. They were born in Navadvip in a *brahmana* family. They became scoundrels later but in so many ways they are more elevated than us. When Jagai and Madai were delivered by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the golden appearance of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu became black because He took on all of their sins. When Yamaraja heard that Jagai and Madai had been delivered by Chaitanya Maha-

prabhu, it was too much for him to comprehend and he fainted.

We should be very thankful to Srila Prabhupada and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu for this wonderful process where there are no considerations of qualification. That's why we are getting this mercy. In previous ages there were heavy considerations of qualification, but because of the mercy of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, he sent Srila Prabhupada who distributed Krishna consciousness all over the world so anyone and everyone can accept initiation in this *sampradaya*. That is the only reason we are here. Had Srila Prabhupada not come, what would have happened? We would still be rolling in the gutters of material nature.


QUALIFICATIONS OF A DISCIPLE

In the 11th Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam* it says: "The servant or disciple of the spiritual master should be free from false prestige, never lazy and give up all sense of proprietorship over the objects of the senses including the wife, the home and society. He should be endowed with feelings of loving friendship towards the spiritual master and should never become deviated or bewildered. The servant or disciple should always desire advancement in spiritual understanding and should not envy anyone and should always avoid useless conversation." These are some of the qualifications of the disciple. 

Surrender darshan cont'd from Page 24

thorities and interfere with their disciples in the temples, there will be chaos. But if all *gurus* tell their disciples to obey the temple authorities, since it comes from him, the disciples will accept it. Then they will become submissive. Unless we become surrendered, we cannot make spiritual advancement. Surrender does not mean only to the spiritual master, ultimate

surrender means surrendering to all those who are serving Krishna.

So please surrender and become a good devotee. 



*acaryam mam vijaniyan
navamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyasuyeta
sarva-devamayo guruh*

"One should know the acharya to be Myself and never disrespect him in any way. One should not envy him, thinking him an ordinary man, for he is the representative of all the demigods."

(SB 11.17.27)