

Vyasa Puja

(Guru Tattva – Part 2 – 12)

We wrote a little something to say about Guru *tattva*, it's our offering to our spiritual master in relation to *tattva* or the truth or substance of guru and we can hear something from Srimad Bhagvatam also in the context of this delivery.

Generally the standard is in Gaudiya *sampradaya* if there is some discussion about guru's appearance day, if they celebrate, then they keep it on *tattva*, to illuminate everyone. Because the guru is a person obviously, but he is also a personality or she is a personality, a lady guru, but they represent something. And it's what they represent that is more important than the physical; the *vani* is more important than the *vapu*. The *vapu* will come and go but the *vani* is eternal – *sabda Brahman*.

So this is *guru tattva*, our ideas. And if you have some similar ideas, that's also good. That means that Krsna wants us to hear these ideas because the idea is His philosophy.

So it's important to know exactly what principles the spiritual master represents. In the *sastras*, the spiritual master is described as the *asraya vigraha*. *Vigraha* means form and *asraya* means shelter. They say he is God in the form of a devotee like Srila Prabhupada, our spiritual master, your *parama guru*. So the *asraya vigraha*, he is God in the form of a devotee, while Sri Krsna Himself is the *visaya vigraha*, which means God as the object of our devotion. Only by taking shelter of the *asraya vigraha*, because *asraya* means shelter, the form of shelter, *vigraha*, can we attain the service of the *visaya vigraha*, Lord Sri Krsna. All the *sastras* proclaim very clearly that we cannot attain service of Krsna or go directly to God as an object of love without first going through a person who possesses such love, like Srila Prabhupada.

Just as we can see the sun, only with the help of the sun's own light. It might be night time. It's night and you want to see the sun. You can use all kinds of flash-lights, torches as you say, or any kind of special lights, you won't be able to see the sun. The light of the sun will have to be given to you from the sun to enable you to see the sun. Just as we see the sun only with the help of the sun's own light, we can only see the Supreme Lord with the light of His mercy, which appears before us as a spiritual master. Without a spiritual master it is impossible to see God.

Because often times people challenge us when we are preaching. Either they ask – “Have you seen God?” or “Can you show me God?”

We say, “Yes, we can show you God. Are you willing to pay the price?”
“No, no. I snap my fingers and you show me God.”

You have to pay a price, you have to have some qualification. To see any big man, you need some introduction, and you need some qualification. Prime Minister is a big

man, you can't meet him without any introduction or qualification and all kinds of screening. Even if you have the qualification to meet the Prime Minister because you are some big writer or some famous person, the CID, the legal branch of the government will come and do all kinds of investigations about you for one month.

If you go now and say, "I'd like to meet the Prime Minister." They will say, "Ok, maybe in 2-3 months we will give you an appointment." And during those 2 months, they will inspect you, they will check you out – Are you a terrorist? Are you a Hare Krsna?

(Everyone laughs)

And they will find out all about you and then when you get the reply after 2 months, they say, "Your application for meeting the Prime Minister has been denied."

But we think – "Oh! God...God is equal, He is in everyone's heart. I should see Him very easily."

But it's not. There is some system. So without a spiritual master it's impossible to see God. In Bhakti-sandarbha, Jiva Gosvami says – The spiritual master is the manifestation of the Supreme Lord's mercy. *Krpa-sakti-murti*. *Krpa*, as you know in Hindi, the energy or the potency of mercy. The Supreme Lord's mercy takes the form of a saintly devotee.

So what can we learn from the spiritual master? To realize the absolute truth as He exists in the spiritual world, we must first have knowledge of the three categories – *sambandha*, *abhideya* and *prayojana* – which means knowledge of Sri Krsna, devotional service and practice and divine love. This is what is taught, this is what we learn, this is the science that we learn from the spiritual master, the science of relationship – Who am I? Who is God? What is our relationship? Is it eternal? Is it temporary? What is the intimacy of our relationship? How do I develop that relationship and how do I fructify that relationship in pure love of God or divine love of God?

So the guru teaches, this is what we learn from the spiritual master. By practicing devotional service, one eventually relishes the object of devotion, Krsna. In Caitanya Caritamrta, Krsnadasa Kaviraja says,

*sadhana bhakti haite, haya prema utpanna,
nistha haite upajaye, premera taranga.*

Love for Krsna develops by *sadhana bhakti*, *Sadhana bhakti haite, haya prema utpanna*. By practicing devotional service, waves of love, *premera taranga*, arise when one is totally committed to the process.

So this is the translation, but if you look at the word-for-word, Krsnadasa Kaviraja I saying, when one comes to *nistha*, *nisthita bhakti*, it says, *nistha haite upajaye premera tarange*. When one rises to the platform of *nistha*, there is *anartha nivrtti*, and then there is *nistha*, then *ruci*, *asakti* and *bhava*. When one comes at the level of *nistha*, then some waves start to rise - waves of love in the heart. We are not talking about tidal waves or *toofaan*. May little *whoop, whoop*, small waves, some ripples at *nistha* it begins. Then those waves start to grow more and more.

So who can attain Krsna? Who can attain God? God can be attained by one who is totally committed to the spiritual master, who has fixed the spiritual master in the heart as the object of worship, who thinks of himself as nothing more than a servant of the spiritual master. Thus it is said, there is a Hindi phrase (I think it's Hindi)

guru-cari govinde bhaje, sei papi narake majhe

It's Bengali? One who circumvents the guru to worship Govinda is directly a sinner who goes to hell. Therefore the *sastras* tell us that we must worship our spiritual master before our chosen Deity.

If you are a *pujari* and you are doing *puja* of Radha and Krsna or Sita-Rama whoever and you know *sastras* on *puja* and *arcana*, *arcana-vidhi*, the rules of *vidhi*, they explain how first you have to worship the guru. *Guru puja* is first. *Manasi puja*, you meditate in your mind, and maybe offer articles externally, flower and *candana*, some *ghee* lamp or some incense, first *guru puja*. Without *guru puja*, Govinda doesn't even accept the service. So this is so much important.

So the appearance of Krsna in the house of Nanda Maharaja and mother Yasoda in Gokula is not the only time that Krsna appears. Krsna can appear anytime, in a purified mind or heart of a devotee. As one progresses in *bhajana*, he will attain internal visions of Krsna coming by the grace of the spiritual master.

This can also be called *Janmastami* or *Krsna Jayanti*. Usually we say *Janmastami*, every year in *Bhadra masa-Krsna paksa-astami* is Krsna's *janam tithi*, *janam din*. So we say this is *Krsna jayanti* but *Krsna jayanti* can be any day, anytime, anywhere, when our heart becomes in this Vasudeva position and becomes purified like Vasudeva – pure consciousness.

So this is the heart of a devotee practitioner. So it is the duty of a spiritual master to establish the disciple in his eternal relationship with the supreme Lord. The perfection of *bhakti yoga* means to attain the joyful state of loving union with Lord Krsna in one of five relationships – either peacefulness, servitor-ship, friendship, seniority or conjugal love. But now we are bound and locked up in temporary relationships.

Srimad Bhagvatam describes our dilemma. And there are some verses here that we can read: Eleventh canto, chapter seventeen, verse 53, 56 and 57

I can read the verses, it's nice. Because the greatest value is in hearing the Srimad Bhagvatam. So this is a description about married life. Some of you are married, some aren't, some are getting married and some are getting unmarried! (Everyone laughs)

These are the four categories – either you are not married, or you are getting married or you are married or you are getting unmarried.

So you only have four choices!

*yas tv asakta-matir gehe
putra-vittaishanaturah
strainah kripana-dhir mudho
mamaham iti badhyate*

(Srimad Bhagvatam, 11.17.56)

Translation by Srila Prabhupada: But a householder whose mind is attached to his home and who is thus disturbed by ardent desires to enjoy his money and children, who is lusty after women, who is possessed of a miserly mentality and who unintelligently thinks, "Everything is mine and I am everything," is certainly bound in illusion.

This type of person thinks like this. The attached material householder thinks "Everything is mine and I am everything, Oh! My poor elderly parents, and my wife with a mere infant in her arms and my other young children. Without me, they have absolutely no one to protect them! And they will suffer unbearably. How can any of my poor relatives possibly live without me?!"

This is what they call foolish mentality. Then Sukadeva says, "Because of his foolish mentality, a householder whose house is overwhelmed by family attachment is never satisfied. Constantly meditating on his relatives, he dies and enters into the darkness of ignorance." *Haribol!*

There he goes! Wish you well!

So the first verse talked about *pantha-sangamah*, like if you go to Jagannatha Puri, there is *pantha-nivasa*, means a tourist guesthouse, *yatri nivasa* or *pantha-nivasa*.

So this verse is there – *sangamah pantha-sangamah*

So the analogy is given in the purport – When a traveler is far away from his home and loved ones, he may strike up superficial conversations with other travelers, but such relationships have no ultimate meaning. We are constitutionally part and parcel of Krsna, who is the reservoir of all spiritual pleasure, and our original relationship is with Krsna and is full of love and happiness. Any intelligent person realizes there is no actual pleasure or satisfaction for the soul on either this planet or any other material planet. Therefore, like a weary traveler exhausted from his long journey, an intelligent person should go back home, back to Godhead, for eternal peace as the faithful servant of Krsna.

So this is what the guru is trying to do – bring everybody home. “Come home! You are all lost, we are all lost...” Srila Prabhupada came and said, “You are all lost children of God, you lost your way. You have forgotten your benevolent, loving father.” So those who are foolish conditioned souls who do not have the guidance of an enlightened spiritual master spend their whole life worrying about family and friends. Thus at the time of death, they are forced to take another birth.

The question can be asked – “How does one actually attain *bhakti* (devotion for the Lord)?”

So in Brhad-Naradiya-Purana, there is one verse –

*bhaktistu bhagavad-bhakta- sangena parijayate
sat-sangah prapyate pumbhah sukrtaih purvasancitaih*

Devotion is born out of association with devotees of the Lord. One meets a saintly devotee as a result of accumulated transcendental pious merit (*bhakti-unmukhi-sukrti*) from our previous lives.

In Harinama-cintamani, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, how does this happen? He says like this – When a *jiva* becomes free from envy and inclined towards devotional service, the *bhakti* potency (*suddha sattva*) which is the bliss or love potency combined with knowledge potency (*hladini* and *samvit*) This *bhakti* potency is transferred from the heart of a pure devotee into the heart of the *jiva* and when that transfer occurs then a service propensity awakens.

What the *jiva* has in his possession is the wealth or potential for service. So he has a potential for service and now he is serving *maya*. Because we are in this *mayic* energy. But when this *bhakti* energy, when this *suddha sattva* mixes in the heart, being received from the pure devotee, then that *bhakti* mixes in the heart and changes the propensity to serve the body into the propensity to serve God.

So the guru actually awakens the propensity and the act of service to God. This is the role and the function of the guru.

Through contact with the spiritual master one attains devotion for Lord Krsna. In Hindi, everyone has heard this phrase – *gurukrpa-hi-kevalam*; only by *gurukrpa*.

Out of compassion for the suffering people, the spiritual master preaches and teaches the science of *bhakti*. The compassionate energy of Krsna, the *karuna sakti*, is fully present in the spiritual master.

From Goloka, the spiritual world, Lord Sri Krsna has extended His soft lotus feet and placed them on the head of the spiritual master. The spiritual master is connected with the source of divine love - The transcendental power-house of spiritual energy. As a light bulb shines brightly when connected with the electric source, if someone connects with a bona fide spiritual master then the energy of Krsna will shine in that person. When one connects with the spiritual master by surrender and service he becomes enlightened and illuminated, bright-faced. He begins to shine with hope, shine with inner peace and shine with satisfaction. His heart becomes bright with the mercy of God. He feels joyful fulfillment in living with a higher purpose, serving God and helping others to attain permanent happiness.

In short the spiritual master comes into our lives to uplift us and bless us with the perfection of human life, the most valuable and precious gift of *Krsna prema*, pure love of God. *Srila Prabhupada ki jai!*

So this is a kind of mini *vyasapuja* offering from our side to our guru with a little bit of heart and a little bit of philosophy. So please take these words to your heart and may they uplift you and open your eyes to some higher points and improve your own devotion to your own spiritual masters.