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GURU IS NOT A DECORATION

*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

Unless one is perfectly anxious to inquire about the way of perfection, there is no necessity of approaching a spiritual master. A spiritual master is not a kind of decoration for a householder. Generally a fashionable materialist engages a so-called spiritual master without any profit. The pseudo-spiritual master flatters the so-called disciple, and thereby both the master and his ward go to hell without a doubt. Maharaja Parikshit is the right type of disciple because he puts forward questions vital to the interest of all men, particularly for the dying men. The question put forward by Maharaja Parikshit is the basic principle of the complete thesis of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. ❀

— Purport to *Bhāg.* 1.19.37

NOT WANTING TO HEAR CRITICISM

*A Remembrance of
His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

I remember sitting in his room, and if a guest came in and started speaking badly about some

[next column](#) ❀

other devotee, Prabhupadaji would just start chanting "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna". He did not want to hear any devotee being offended. (Gopal Ghosh) ❀

— *Prabhupada at Radha Damodara*. Written and published by Mahanidhi Swami, Vrindavan. 1990. Page 59.

GOVINDAYA NAMAH

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati
Thakur Prabhupada*

"uḍo khai govindāya namaḥ"

Chapter 108 of Upākhyāne Upadeśa

Upākhyāne Upadeśa is a collection of short stories with explanations that were commonly used by Srila Bhakti-siddhanta Saraswati Thakur. Compiled by Sri Sundarananda Prabhu, a prominent disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, it was first published in 1940.

Harakanta Chakravarti was famous in his village as a great Vaishnava. People would say, "Chakravarti Thakura never enjoys anything without first offering it to the Lord." At the *Pauṣa-saṅkrānti* festival, Harakanta bought some khoi, a type of puffed rice, from the market for his wife's lunch. By chance there was a strong wind and the khoi started blowing out of his paper bag.

Some of his acquaintances happened to be nearby. Seeing them, Chakravarti felt awkward and, chanting "govindāya namaḥ", let the rest of the khoi fly from his bag as if he were offering it to the Lord.

❀

Meanwhile, seeing that he was late, Harakanta's wife became worried and sent her son to find him. Seeing his father standing in a group of people, the innocent boy told him, "Father, where is the khoi? Mother has been waiting for it for a long time." In this way, Chakravarti was put to shame as the true fact was disclosed in front of several gentlemen.

PURPORT: There are pretenders who are actually anxious for their own sense gratification but outwardly make a show of piety for the purpose of earning name and fame. The khoi was bought for self-enjoyment, but when by bad luck it could not be enjoyed properly, a show was made of offering it to the Lord. This was not genuine devotional service.

When in spite of his best efforts to protect them, a materialistic person loses his assets, in his frustrated condition he sometimes makes a show of religiosity and detachment and prays, *bhagavan, sabai tomāra, tumi rākhile rākhite pāra, mārile mārīte pāra* — "O God, everything is yours! You are the maintainer as well as the destroyer of all!" Such shows of piety by materialistic cheaters do not constitute real surrender.

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GURU AND DISCIPLE

Sri Nityananda Das'
Prema-vilāsa 11.92-112

For more about Prema-vilāsa and Nityananda Das, see Bindus number 2, 5, and 115.

*mahāprabhura ājñā ache harināma prati
jīvera rakṣāra lāgi dibena samprati*

[Lokanath Goswami to Narottam Das Thakur:] Mahaprabhu has instructed how *harināma* should be given for the protection of the living entities. (Text 93)

*kata deha bhrami jīva naradeha pāya
tāhāra rakṣāra hetu mahauśadha cāya*

After traveling through so many bodies, the *jīva* finally gets a human body, and for his protection he needs a powerful medicine. (Text 94)

*anya dehāntare jīvera pāpa tāpa roga
tāhāra khaṇḍana kare nāhi hena yoga*

There is no yoga that can cut away the sinful entanglement that the *jīva* has acquired through other bodies. (Text 95)

Nāma-tattva

THE POWER OF KRISHNA'S NAME

ŚRĪM AD BHĀGAVATAM 3.9.15

With Jiva Goswami's comments
from Bhakti-sandarbha 152

*yasyāvātāra-guṇa-karma-vidāmbanāni
nāmāni ye 'su-vigame vivaśā gṛṇanti
te 'naika-janma-sāmalarṇi sahasaiva hitvā
samīyānty apāvṛtamṛtan tam ajam prapadye*

Let me take shelter of the lotus feet of him whose incarnations, qualities and activities are mysterious imitations of worldly affairs. One who invokes his transcendental names, even unconsciously, at the time he quits this life, is certainly washed immediately of the sins of many, many births and attains him without fail.

In this verse, the words *asu-vigame api*, "even at the time of death", imply that the persons referred to in this verse spoke the holy names only at the time of death, in a physical state in which they would not have been able to speak the Lord's holy name clearly or distinctly. The word *vivaśāḥ*, "even without desire", implies that they chanted for some external reason and not out of devotion.

The reason the Lord's holy name even when chanted in such a condition has the power to destroy the sins of many, many births, etc., is also indicated in this verse in the words *avatāra-guṇa-karma-vidāmbanāni*, "these names refer to the various incarnations, qualities and pastimes of the Lord". The name "*nṛsiṃhadeva*" is an example of a word that denotes a specific incarnation of the Lord. Such names of specific incarnations are identical with those incarnations and thus are endowed with the same potency. The name "*bhakta-vatsala*" reflects the quality of the Lord as one who is affectionate to his devotees. And the name *govardhana-dhara* denotes the Lord in his specific pastime of lifting Govardhan hill. Such names that refer to the Lord's qualities and pastimes are also identical with the Lord and are thereby equally powerful. ❀

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janme janme yata pāpa tāpa pāiyā thāke
vismaraṇa jīva nāhi jāne āpanāke

Due to the sinful entanglements of many lifetimes, the forgetful living entity does not recognize his real self. (Text 96)

manuṣya-deha pāñā tāhā sakali sādhiba
nā sādhibe sei deha temati pāiba

[He thinks] “In this human form I will desire everything. If my desires are not fulfilled in this life, I will get other bodies to do so later.” (Text 97)

hena roga dūra kare kṛṣṇa bhakta-rūpe
kṛṣṇa-nāma dile hayena gurura svarūpe

This entanglement is cured by Krishna in the form of a devotee. He assumes the form of guru and gives Krishna’s names. (Text 98)

guru śiṣye kathā ei śāstrete āchaya
yei tāhā jāne sei avaśya karaya

These topics about guru and disciple are there in śāstra, and one who understands them will adopt the process. (Text 99)

tāhā nā karile śāstra haya anuvāda
te kāraṇe nahe tāre kṛṣṇera prasāda

One who does not understand the teachings of śāstra in this way will not get Krishna’s mercy. (Text 100)

kṛṣṇa-rūpe sāstradvāre karena pracāra
sad-guru yeṅho vākya kariba vicāra

Krishna distributes this truth through the words of śāstra, and by studying those śāstric teachings one can understand who is a genuine guru. (Text 101)

ekavatsara dekhibena gurura ye tattva
viśvāsa kariyā mane bujhiba mahattva

For one year a disciple should faithfully imbibe the philosophical conclusions propounded by the guru and understand their significance. (Text 102)

ye kriyā kariba guru kari nirikṣaṇa
yena yogya tena sevā kari anukṣaṇa

The disciple should carefully observe the guru’s activities and serve him in suitable ways. (Text 103)

guru bujhibena śiṣyera yemata ācāra
yogyatā ayogyā mane kariba vicāra

The guru will understand the nature and behavior of the disciple and thus discern the disciple’s qualifications and disqualifications. (Text 104)

harināma sādhiba guru-saṅge thāki sadā
vaiṣṇavera saṅge lobha kariba sarvathā

To acquire the holy name, a disciple should always remain close to the guru and constantly seek out the association of vaiṣṇavas. (Text 105)

jānibena śiṣya mane kari dṛḍha rati
nahile ki yāya jīvera sakala durmati

Understanding this process, a disciple must develop firm attachment to executing it faithfully. Otherwise he will never vanquish his sinful mentality. (Text 106)

hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra sādhi divānīsi
kona yuge prabhu kṛpā haya hena vāsi

He should savor the Hare Krishna mantra day and night, eagerly waiting for the time when his master will bestow mercy on him. (Text 107)

adhika utkaṅṭhā haya guru karena karuṇā
ihā se bujhite pāre kona kona janā

The spiritual master shows mercy on a disciple when he sees that the disciple is extremely anxious for it. Very few people understand this. (Text 108)

śiṣya mana bujhi guru viśvāsera kathā
yogyatā nahile kṛpā nahibe sarvathā

As per his determination of the heart of the disciple, the guru instructs accordingly. If the disciple is not qualified then mercy will not manifest. (Text 109)

ei haya prācīna vākya śuna narottama
nā janme kṛṣṇera kṛpā eita kāraṇa

O Narottam! Please listen to this ancient wisdom. It is for this reason that Krishna’s mercy does not arise. (Text 110)

bahu śiṣya karite gosāiṅra ājñā nāhiñ
ihāte viśuddha āche śuna mana dei

A goswami is not permitted to make many disciples. Hear this important truth carefully. (Text 111)

dui cāri śiṣya kaile dhare prema phala
bahu śiṣya kaile saba haya ta vipphala

If one has two or four disciples he can obtain the fruit of love of God. If one accepts many disciples all his endeavors go in vain. (Text 112) ❀

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SHELTER OF RAMA

Rev. A. G. Atkins

Part four of a six-part series

For more about Reverend Atkins, see Bindu 116.

Rama said, "Those who give up a refugee,
thinking

"That shelt'ring him may bring them harm,
"Are despicable sinners; the very sight of them
"Itself is a cause for alarm.

"Slaughter of many Brahmans might be his
offence,

"But if one seeks protection, I can't drive him
hence;

"Right away, when before me a trusting soul
stands,

"I destroy sins of countless births, with their
demands;

"Downright wicked men by this one sign we
may know,

"No desire for my worship and praise do
they show;

"If a soul should to such sinful folly succumb,
"He will never before me in willingness come;

"To bring one to me a pure heart is the warrant;
"Deception and falsehood to me are abhorrent.

"But even tho' Ravan has sent him for spying,



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"No harm need we fear; in his hands we're
not lying;

"All demons there are in the world — the
whole lot

"In an instant can Lakshman kill here on the spot;

"But perhaps he seeks shelter because of
some fear;

"As my own soul I'll guard him then, keeping
him near.

"So whatever his purpose, bring him here
to me,"

Said the kind, gracious lord with a smile;
Angad, Hanuman and all the monkeys
went off

Shouting praises to him all the while.

Now they (eager to make up all former defect)
Led Vibhishan to Rama with highest respect.

Then the brothers, who givers of true blessings are
And a joy to all eyes — them he saw from afar;

Coming nearer, on lord Rama's beauty he
gazed,

Stood stock-still where he was, for a moment
seemed dazed;

There he saw those eyes lotus-red, saw those
long arms,

And that dark frame that frees his own from
all alarms,

He saw that broad chest and those lion-like
shoulders,

That face beyond all in its charm for beholders;

His body was trembling, tears from his eyes
poured;

But he rallied himself, and said humbly, "My
lord,

"I am brother of demon-king Ravan, ten-
headed,

"And born of the demons by gods and men
dreaded;

"To those born of darkness dear are all things foul,
"As the darkness of night-time is dear to the owl.

"I have heard of your glory — the One who
dispels

"All his suppliants' sorrow and fear,

"Giving joy in its place; so I've come and am
pleading,

"Save me, even me, Raghubir!" ❀