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SERIOUS TO FIND A GURU

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

Krishna is a friend to everyone, but he is a special friend to his devotees. As soon as we become a little inclined toward him, he begins to give favorable instructions from within our hearts so that we can gradually make progress. Krishna is the first spiritual master, and when we become more interested in him, we have to go to a *sādhū*, holy man, who serves as spiritual master from without. This is enjoined by Sri Krishna himself in the following verse:

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninas tattva-darśinah*

Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth. (Bg. 4.34)

It is necessary to select a person to whom we can surrender ourselves. Of course, no one likes to surrender to anyone. We are puffed up with whatever knowledge we have, and our attitude is, "Oh, who can give *me* knowledge?" Some people say that for spiritual realization there is no need for a spiritual master, but so far as Vedic literature is concerned, and as far as *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Srimad Bhāgavatam*, and the Upanishads are concerned, there is need of a spiritual master. Even in the material world if one wants to learn to be a musician, he has to search out a musician



*The lotus feet of His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

to teach him, or if one wants to be an engineer, he has to go to a technological college and learn from those who know the technology. Nor can anyone become a doctor by simply purchasing a book from the market and reading it at home. One has to be admitted to a medical college and undergo training under licensed doctors. It is not possible to learn any major subject simply by purchasing books and reading them at home. Someone is needed to show us how to apply that knowledge which is found in the books. As far as the science of God is concerned, Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead himself, advises us to go to a person to whom we can surrender. This means that we have to check to see if a person is capable of giving instructions in *Bhagavad-gītā* and other literatures of God realization. It is not that we are to search out a spiritual master whimsically. We should be very serious to find a person who is actually in knowledge of the subject.

In the beginning of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Arjuna was talking to Krishna just like a friend, and Krishna was questioning how he, as a military man, could give up fighting. But when Arjuna saw that friendly talks would not make a solution to his problems, he surrendered unto Krishna, saying, *śiṣyas te 'haṁ śādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam*— “Now I am your disciple and a soul surrendered unto you. Please instruct me.” (Bg. 2.7) This is the process. It is not that we should blindly surrender, but we should be able to inquire with intelligence.

Without inquiry, we cannot make advancement. In school, a student who makes inquiries from the teacher is usually an intelligent student. It is generally a sign of intelligence when a small child inquires from his father, “Oh, what is this? What is that?” We may have a very good spiritual master, but if we have no power to inquire, we cannot make progress. Nor should the inquiry be of the nature of a challenge. One should not think, “Now I will see what kind of spiritual master he is. I will challenge him.” Our inquiries (*paripraśnena*) should be on the subject of service (*sevayā*). Without service, our inquiries will be futile. But even before making inquiries, we should have some qualification. If we go to a store to purchase some gold or jewelry and we know nothing about jewels or gold, we are likely to be cheated. If we go to a jeweler and say, “Can you give me a diamond?” he will understand that this is a fool. He could charge us any price for anything. That kind of searching will not do at all. We first have to become a little intelligent, for it is not possible to make spiritual progress otherwise. ❀

— *Raja Vidya*, chapter 7.

PLEASING SERVICE

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Serving Krishna with pure love means without expecting anything in return. If you want something from Krishna in return for your service, that is not service. In the words of Sri Prahlad Maharaja, *na sa bhṛtyaḥ sa vai vaṇīk*— one who does business with Krishna is a merchant, he is not a servant [Bhāg. 7.10.4]. This material world is such a dreadful, dangerous place. It puts us in such a situation that by rendering service unto Krishna we expect something in return. Consciously or unconsciously, most everyone expects something in exchange. But those who have come to Mahaprabhu’s path, this *bhakti-patha*, path of devotion, they say:

*na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam va jagad-isa kamaye
mama janmani janmaniśvare
bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki wayi*

O Lord of the universe, I do not desire material wealth, materialistic followers, a beautiful wife or fruitive activities described in flowery language. All I want, life after life, is unmotivated devotional service unto you. [Cc. *antya* 20.29]

Many people repeat this verse, but it is mere saying only. “O Lord I don’t want anything from you. I don’t want material wealth or material followers. I don’t want a beautiful woman to enjoy. Even I don’t want liberation. Just life after life I only want to serve you and give you pleasure.” They say this but they are only speaking from the lips. How many are there who really practice this from the core of their hearts? How many don’t expect anything from Krishna and only want to render loving service and nothing else?

Vaiṣṇava-mahājana-ācārya Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode sings in *Śaraṇāgati* (2.3):

*mārobi rākhobi — yo icchā tohārā
nitya-dāsa prati tuyā adhikārā*

Slay me or protect me as you wish, for you are the master of your eternal servant.

O Lord, I am your eternal servant! I take complete shelter at your lotus feet. You may do whatever you like. *Mārobi rākhobi*— if you want to kill me, kill me, or if you want to protect me, protect me. Whatever you want, you do. You have full right over me. *Nitya-dāsa prati tuyā adhikārā*— I am your eternal servant. I am yours. I don’t belong to myself. This is *bhāva*. This is not mere lip-saying. This should come out from the core of the heart. Krishna knows your heart.

Favorable Service

Therefore Srila Rupa Goswami teaches, *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*— serve Krishna in such a way, with such love, that he will be pleased. [Srila Rupa Goswami’s *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11] The *mahājanas*, *ācāryas*, have taught us how Krishna should be served. As the ideal teacher, Mahaprabhu said:

*ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam
namyā kācid upāsamā vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā*

Krishna, the son of the king of Vrajabhumi, is the supreme worshipable Deity, and His place Vrindavan is the supremely worshipable place. The most pleasing form of worship of the Lord is that which is performed by the *gopīs* of Vrindavan. [Srinath Chakravarti, *Caitanya-matta-mañjuṣā* commentary on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.]

This phrase is significant, *vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā*. Mahaprabhu is indicating *vrajeśa-tanaya* Krishna, the son of the king of Vraja; *nanda-nandana* Krishna, the son of Nanda Maharaja; *yaśodā-nandana* Krishna, the son of mother Yasoda; *mādhurya-maya* Krishna, who is full of all sweetness; *kiśora* Krishna, ten- or twelve-year-old Krishna; *gokuleśvara* Krishna, the Lord of Gokul. He is not *mathureśvara* Krishna or *dvārakeśvara* Krishna, the Lord of Mathura or Dwarka; He is *gokuleśvara* Krishna, *nanda-nandana* Krishna, *yaśodā-stanan-dhaye*, who has sucked the breast of mother Yasoda. That Krishna. Mahaprabhu teaches that it is this Krishna who should be served and worshipped — *ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanaya*. Krishna and His dear abode Vrindavan should be worshipped like him — *tad-dhāma vrndāvanam*. *Ramyā kācid upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā* — the *gopīs*, the damsels of Vrajabhumi, are rendering the topmost loving service to Krishna, with pure love. Krishna says, “The *gopīs* are *mad-gata-prāṇā* — their lives are completely devoted to me [Bg. 10.9]. *Gopī-jana-mama* — the *gopīs* are so dear to me, they have developed such love for me. I have become so indebted to them. *Na pārāye*, I cannot pay back that debt.” They expect nothing from Krishna. They only want to give him pleasure. They are prepared to go to hell and suffer there forever if required for the pleasure of Krishna. Such is their pure love. This is the deep purport to what Rupa Goswami has described as *ānukūlyena kṣṇānu-śīlanam*. We should understand its meaning. It is not sufficient to translate *ānukūlyena kṣṇānu-śīlanam* as, “to serve Krishna favorably”.

Seven Things

The *ācāryas* say that to render pleasing service to Radha and Krishna, there are seven things here in this world that one should develop attachment for: the guru; *goṣṭha*, Vraja *dhāma*; *dhāma-bāsī*, the residents of Vrajabhumi; *vaiṣṇavas*; *brāhmaṇas*; *nāma-kīrtana*; and *mantraś caraṇa*, receiving a mantra in disciple succession. The bonafide guru practically demonstrates this by his own life. He is



Unknown artist

a servant, *sevaka-bhagavān*. He is a very intimate, very dear associate of Krishna.

But there is one danger. If a devotee thinks, “Oh, I am rendering pleasing service to Krishna.” Then the result will be completely opposite, *viparīta-phala*. You may not consciously want to think this way, but unconsciously it comes. This material sphere is such a dangerous situation. One who thinks or tries to show off that he is a *vaiṣṇava*, that he is a devotee engaged in service, he will develop pride, *dambha*. The *Bhagavad-gītā* describes pride as a demoniac quality — *dambho darpo 'bhimāś ca* [Bg. 16.4]. Pride is not the quality of a devotee but is the quality of this dreadful, nasty, material world. Therefore Srīmad Bhaktisiddhanta Goswami Prabhupada Maharaja has said that this material world is not a fit place for any gentleman to live. ❀

— From *The Worship of Sri Guru*. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar, India. 2000.

THE DIVINE BRAHMACHARI

Srīla Jīva Goswami's

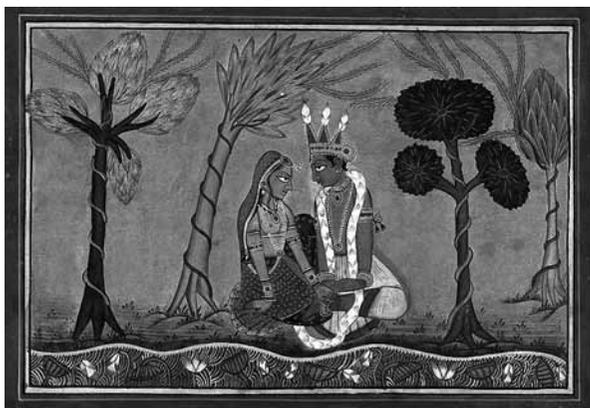
Śrī Gopāla-campū, part 2, chapter 9, song 2

*saha bhrāṭṛ-varyaṁ guror grāma-gāmī
dhṛta-brahmacaryaṁ nijādhīti-kāmī*

Accompanied by his noble brother, Krishna went to his guru's home. Now a *brahmacāri*, he eagerly studied his own Vedic literatures.

*tad āvantikāyāṁ javāl labdha-saṅgah
guror antikāyāṁ sabhāyāṁ sadaṅgah*

Unknown artist



He quickly went to Avantipur. He placed his transcendental form in his guru's assembly.

*samasteṣu sattveṣu cāsīd atīva
priyaḥ sarva-tattveṣu yadvat tu jīvaḥ*

Because he is the supersoul in everyone's heart, he dearly loves all living entities.

*samasmād viviktaṁ guror bhaktikārī
sa-vargātiriktaṁ samūt-patra-hārī*

He was very devoted to his guru. Accompanied by the other disciples, he brought firewood for his guru.

*guror itham āpta-prasādātirekaḥ
svadhīyan samāpta-vratāntābhīsekaḥ*

By his guru's mercy, he became learned. When his vow had come to its conclusion, he performed the *abhiṣeka* ceremony.

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Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026

Email: katha@gopaljiu.org

Website: www.gopaljiu.org

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contents

*guror dakṣināśaṁ drutaṁ bhartum īpsuḥ
gato dakṣināśaṁ sutam tasya lipsuḥ*

When he quickly approached to bring *dakṣinā* for his guru, his guru desired the return of his son as *dakṣinā*.

*dara-grastam etaṁ vicinvaṁ darāntaḥ
cirān nāśam etaṁ vijānan na śāntaḥ*

Learning that the boy was swallowed by a conch, Krishna searched for him inside the conch. Aware that the boy must certainly have died long ago, Krishna did not stop searching for him.

*pragrhyātha tasmād darani pāñcajanyaṁ
avādīd akasmāt tad etyāgrajanyaṁ*

Accompanied by his elder brother Balaram, Krishna went to Yamaraj's abode and then suddenly sounded his conchshell named Panchajanya.

*sthalaṁ dharmarājaḥ pratasthe'titūrṇam
tataḥ śarma-bhājaḥ sukhaṁ prāpa pūrṇam*

Quickly coming, and greeting the Lord with all respect, Yamaraj was filled with happiness.

*yadā tārakāṇām patis tatra yātaḥ
tadā nārakāṇām abhūt tāpa-ghātaḥ*

Lord Krishna, who stops the sufferings of the residents of hell, shone like a splendid moon, the master of the stars.

*agrhnād guroḥ śavam antāt pramuktam
yathāvad vayo-bhāva-dehādī-nyuktam*

Freeing him from death, and giving him a new, youthful body, the Lord took the boy with him.

*gurum tasya bhāryām api prāpya tasmāt
adhinviṣṭa kāryāt parān apy akasmāt*

When Krishna returned their son, the guru and his wife became filled with happiness.

*tam etaṁ samāyātam iḥṣasva goṣṭham
tad ānanda-sampāta-doha-smiṭoṣṭham*

Krishna has returned to Vraj. Gaze at his happily smiling face. ॐ

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