



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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THE NECESSITY OF GURU

His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

One cannot become a devotee by one's personal endeavor. Just like some rascals say, "What is the use of accepting a guru?" Of course, they have got very bad experience. Who is ācārya? Ācārya means one who has received Vedic knowledge through the paramparā system. *Evaṁ paramparā-prāptam imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ. He is ācārya. An ācārya cannot be manufactured or self-made. He must come in disciplic succession. One who is under the shelter of an ācārya, he knows things. Krishna recommends that if you actually want to have real knowledge then you must worship the ācārya, ācāryopāsanam. This is the Vedic system. Tad vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet.* It is not that, "If I like I can go to a guru, and if I don't like I can study books at home and learn everything." No, that is not possible. It is practical. Just like if you purchase a medical book, study at home, and then begin to practice, you will be called a quack. The government will not recognize you. You will not get the practitioner's registration. Unless you have passed through the medical college and had



His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

your medical examination you will not be accepted, even if you say, "I have read all the books." Similarly, someone may say, "I have read *Bhagavad-gītā* a hundred times." But if you ask him what is Krishna he cannot say because he has not approached the ācārya. This is the difficulty. He might have read *Bhagavad-gītā* a thousand times but he will not understand a single word because he has not approached.

Therefore Vedic literature says, *tad vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet. Abhigacchet.* This word is used when the sense is “you must”. It is the *vidhili*n form of the verb. “You must. There is no excuse. You cannot learn.”

Tasmād gurum prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam. “ut” means *udgatam*, transcending. “*Tamam*” means this material world. This material world is *tama*, darkness. If you are interested in *uttamam*, the subject matter that is transcendental to this material world, the spiritual world, then, *tasmād gurum prapadyeta*, you must surrender to a *guru. jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam*, you must inquire. Not ordinary inquiry, ordinary *jijñāsuḥ*. It is not like going to the market, “What is the rate of this share? What is the rate of rice? What is the rate of *dāl*? Not that kind of *jijñāsuḥ. Brahma-jijñāsuḥ. Athāto brahma-jijñāsā.* This human life is meant for inquiring about brahman, spirit, not this rice, *dāl*, share market. *Jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam* — To learn what is the highest perfection of life one must approach a guru. It is not just a fashion, “I have made my guru, such and such swami.”

What have you learned? You cannot learn because you do not know how to inquire, neither does the guru you have met know how to reply. Such kind of guru and disciple will not help. The disciple must be serious to understand spiritual subject matter. That is knowledge, *brahma-jijñāsā.* One who is inquisitive to know about the absolute truth must approach a guru. That is *jñāna. Jñāna* means *brahma-jñāna. Aham brahmāsmi.* Thinking “I am American” is not *jñāna.* It is *ajñāna.* “I am Indian.” “I am Brahmin.” “I am black.” “I am white.” “I am fat.” “I am thin.” These are all *ajñāna*, ignorance. You are neither fat, nor thin, nor black, nor white, nor American. You are spirit soul. You have to know that *aham brahmāsmi* — “I am spirit soul. I am the eternal servant of Krishna.” That is knowledge. And for this knowledge you must approach guru, *ācāryopāsanam.* ❧

— Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 13.8-12. Mumbai. 5 October 1973.

WHY SADHU-SANGA IS RARE

From *Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur's*
Jaiva Dharma, chapter 7

Yadava Das: Revered master, you speak of association with devotees, but devotees also live in the material world. They also suffer in the material world. How is it possible that they can deliver other souls?

Ananta Das: Devotees live in the material world. Still, the material world that is their home is very

different from the material world that is home to the souls bewildered by *māyā*. Looking at them from the outside, these worlds seem to be the same. But within they are very different.

sādhu-gaṇa ciradina jagate āchena, kevala asādhu-gaṇa tāñhādīgake cinite pāre nā baliyā, sādhu-saṅga durlabha haya

There are always *sādhus* in this world, but because non-devotees cannot recognize them, their association is rare. ❧

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HOW DO WE RECOGNIZE AND FIND A GURU?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

Question: How will I be able to recognize someone as a bona fide spiritual master?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta: When you make judgments based on your own intelligence, that such and such a person is guru, you are in fact projecting the qualities of guru on him. Such a person is never truly the guru. In such cases, you are thinking that the guru is somehow under your control, or within the purview of your sensory knowledge. When Krishna himself decides to



Unknown artist

Kīrtana of Mahaprabhu and his associates

send you someone to act as your spiritual master, that person will be manifest before you as the *mahānta-guru*.

Question: How will I find a bona fide guru?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta: The Supreme Lord acts as guru in two ways: as the *caitya-guru* within the heart, and externally as the *mahānta-guru*, a pure devotee. If I am sincere, then the Lord reveals the *mahānta-guru* to me. We can go to a thousand different people with a petition in hand, but until the one person who can approve our application approves it, we get nowhere. The Supreme Lord is that person. Why he does or does not approve our request is something we cannot fathom. He is not a field laborer working in our personal garden. We have to be patient and wait. In the meantime, we should prepare ourselves by cultivating a service attitude and trying to eliminate extraneous desires. If we pray sincerely for the Lord's blessing, then he will graciously bless us. Through his grace we will find a bona fide spiritual master.

*kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare kona bhāgyavāne
guru-antaryāmi-rūpe śikhāya āpane*

When Krishna decides to be kind to some fortunate soul, then he personally directs that person from within as the Supersoul and from without as the spiritual master. (Cc. madhya 22.47) ❀

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SADHUS ARE ALWAYS PRESENT

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Many say that no *sādhu* is available. “I cannot see a *sādhu*, I cannot find a *sādhu*.” But Bhaktivinoda Thakura and other *ācāryas* have said, “If there were no sun and moon, how could the world go on? Similarly, if there were no *sādhus*, how could Krishna's world go on?”

We have defective vision. Because we cannot see *sādhu*, therefore we say, “No such devotee is present.” But that is not correct. *Sādhu* is always there. But how can you see a *sādhu*? You cannot see a *sādhu* with your eyes. No. You see a *sādhu* through the ears. A *sādhu* never speaks anything but *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. He is completely Krishna conscious and he is always with Krishna. He is fully joyful, and as soon as he opens his mouth *kṛṣṇa-kathā* comes out like the flow of a river. By these symptoms you can understand, “He is a *sādhu*. He only speaks *kṛṣṇa-kathā*.”

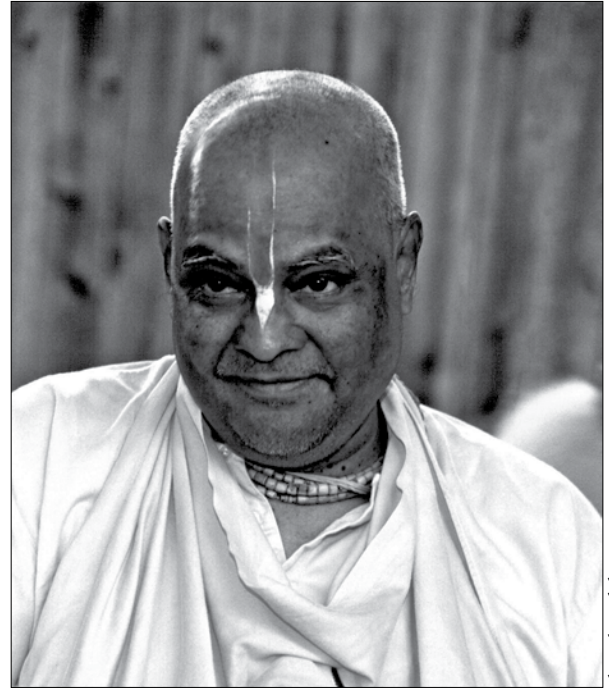


Photo by Adidev Das

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

One should develop greed, “How can I associate more and more with a *sādhu*?” Prahlada Maharaja, Dhruva Maharaja, and all exalted personalities have asked only for this. “O Lord, please give us *sādhu-saṅga*.” The Prachetas also asked for that boon. When Lord Vishnu offered, “What benediction do you want?” they said:

*tulayāma lavenāpi na svargaṁ nāpunar-bhavam
bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya martyānām kim utāśiṣaḥ*

“O Lord, we are residents of this *martya-pura*, this earth planet where there is birth and death. What boon is there for us? The only boon is *sādhu-saṅga*. There is no other boon. Even one moment's association with such a *sādhu* cannot be compared to the attainment of heavenly opulence or even liberation.” (*Bhāg*. 4.30.34)

By getting *sādhu-saṅga*, you get everything. You will develop pure *bhakti* and thereby you will get Krishna. This is the only greed that should be developed. Develop such greed! Then Krishna, who is there in your heart, will fulfill your desire.

*sādhu-saṅga kṛṣṇa-nāma ei-mātra cāi
saṁsāra jinite āra kona vastu nāi*

Jagadananda Pandit has said, “This is the only requirement. How can I get real *sādhu-saṅga* and chant the name of Krishna?” [*Prema-vivarta* 6.13] Then I will be able to very easily cross this dreadful ocean of material existence and go back home, back to Godhead. ❀

— From a lecture in Accra on 20 January 1996.

A PITEOUS PLEA TO NITAI

The Medieval Poet Krishnadas

(Refrain) jaya jaya nityānanda rāya
aparādha pāpa mora tāhāra nāhika ora
uddharaha nija karuṇāya

O Lord Nityananda Ray! Glory, glory to you! Please do not think of my sins and offenses but kindly deliver me.

āmāra asata mati tomāra nāme nāhi rati
kahite nā bāsi mukhe lāja
janame janame kata kariyāchi ātma-ghāta
atae se mora ei kāja

My heart is very sinful. It is not attracted to your holy names. I do not like to speak of these things. Shame fills my mouth. In how many births after births did I kill any chance to make spiritual advancement? That is why I am in such a state.

tumio karuṇā-sindhu pātakī janāra bandhu
ebāra karaha yadi tyāga
patita-pāvana nāma nirmala se anupāma
tāhāte lāgaye baḍa dāga

You are an ocean of mercy! You are the friend of the sinners! If you abandon me now, then your peerless and glorious reputation as *patita-pāvana* (purifier of the fallen) is only a great trick.

pūruve yavana-ādi kata kata aparādhi
tarāicha śuniyāchi kāṇe
kṛṣṇadāsa anumāni thelite nāribe tumi
yadi ghrṇā nā karaha mane



Sri Nityananda Prabhu

How many *yavanas* and other offenders have you already delivered? With my own ears I heard how you delivered them. It is the firm conclusion of Krishnadas that if in your heart you do not hate me then you will not push me away. 🙏

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ALWAYS PRESENT

Padma Purāṇa 6.2.81

saṁsāro vaiṣṇavādhīno deva vaiṣṇava pālitaḥ
ahaṁ ca vaiṣṇavādhīnas tasmāt śreṣṭhas ca vaiṣṇavāḥ

[Krishna to Arjuna:] “The whole world is under the care of the *vaiṣṇavas*. All of the demigods are supplying heat, light, air, water, etc., due to the support and nourishment of the *vaiṣṇavas*. I, myself, am dependent on the *vaiṣṇavas*. Therefore, *Vaiṣṇava* is the highest position of all.” 🙏

— Translated by Matsya Avatar Das. From the Nag Publishers edition. 2003. Delhi. Sanskrit.

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