

The Crucial Role of Śrī Gurudeva in Our Lives

—Meditations from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s “*Amṛta Vāṇī*”—

In the beginning, we have to know about our relationship with the Supreme Lord. Initiation is another name for the kind of knowledge we gain when we come to understand our relationship with the Supreme Lord. Merely receiving instructions regarding how to chant *mantras* is not initiation. Initiation is that act by which we attain transcendental knowledge. The living entities cannot benefit themselves even after studying hundreds of pieces of literature or by making a show of whimsical worship. Mercifully, the spiritual master imparts transcendental knowledge unto his sincere disciples who are inclined to serve the Lord. Only a devotee who completely follows his spiritual master’s orders by renouncing his independence is eligible to receive the spiritual master’s mercy and become successful in attaining actual transcendental knowledge.

— The Spiritual Master, 67



It is not possible to worship Kṛṣṇa without taking shelter at the spiritual master’s feet. The spiritual master is not an ordinary human being. He is as good as the Supreme Lord. That is why the spiritual master is described as God. He is the object of love and devotion. Those who know that the spiritual master is as good as the Supreme Lord are his genuine followers. Such followers are eligible for his mercy. Because the spiritual master, who is dear to Kṛṣṇa, is pleased with unalloyed disciples, Kṛṣṇa, his dearest friend, also becomes pleased with them.

Just consider how Hari, guru, and the Vaiṣṇavas are placed in succession. The spiritual master sits in the center, placing the Supreme Lord and the Vaiṣṇavas on his lap. By firmly catching hold of the spiritual master’s lotus feet, we will automatically receive the mercy of the Lord and His devotees. If the spiritual master is pleased, Śrī Hari and the Vaiṣṇavas will also be pleased. If we cannot become unalloyed devotees of the spiritual master, if we cannot make the spiritual master our life and soul, then we will spoil everything and will not be able to receive the mercy of either the Lord or His devotees. Ultimately, we will be deceived and not attain the Lord’s service.

— The Spiritual Master, 15



A spiritual master awards his surrendered disciples Kṛṣṇa’s holy name and the *mantras* in relation to Kṛṣṇa. *Kṛṣṇa-mantras* are topmost. There is no *mantra* as powerful as a *kṛṣṇa-mantra*. If we learn to chant these *kṛṣṇa-mantras* perfectly, all our mental speculation will be destroyed. As long as we consider our spiritual master an ordinary being, we will not be able to understand the Holy Name’s glories. We will not become spiritually successful if we consider Śrī Caitanyadeva an ordinary human being. Simply by the spiritual master’s mercy can we understand the glories of Śrī Gaurasundara and Vraja-dhāma.

— The Spiritual Master, 15



The guru and Vaiṣṇavas are the transcendental home of the Supreme Lord. The Lord does not manifest just anywhere. He appears and remains in the hearts of guru and the Vaiṣṇavas. Many people want to see the Lord, but they do not know that the Lord's *darśana* can be had only through the spiritual master's *darśana*. It is not possible to begin devotional service without a spiritual master. The spiritual master is the *via media* between us and Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. This is Kṛṣṇa's mercy: He sends His topmost servant or Vaiṣṇava into this world to deliver everyone. Thus the spiritual master is the personification of that causeless mercy.

The spiritual master is our ever well-wisher. Therefore it is not enough simply to serve him with awe and reverence from a distance. Instead, we must serve him with firm conviction and love. Then only will we attain perfection. The spiritual master is more important to us than Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva is the spiritual master of all gurus. He revealed to us that even though the spiritual master is nondifferent from the Supreme Lord, he is the Lord's principal devotee. We cannot serve the Lord without our guru's mercy, because our guru is the Lord's topmost devotee. The living entities have no way to achieve auspiciousness other than to serve the spiritual master.

— **The Spiritual Master, 62**



Before awakening pure devotional service, we must certainly learn of our relationship with the Supreme Lord. The spiritual master alone is able to bestow such knowledge. Therefore the root of devotional service is firm faith in the transcendental spiritual master. This faith is the first principle on the devotional path. The first requirement any devotee must fulfill is to give up the blind conception that there are many religions. He must also reject the path of argumentation and maintain faith in his spiritual master's auspicious instructions.

What is faith? Faith means full confidence in Śrī Gurudeva's words. We cannot rely on the words of worldly persons but trust only Gurudeva. Everyone else is a pretender. Therefore we should give up all worldly topics and have complete faith in the spiritual master's words. We cannot find success in any other way. By the spiritual master's mercy, our *anarthas* will be destroyed, our desires fulfilled, and we will certainly attain the Lord's mercy and *darśana*.

— **The Spiritual Master, 12**



To give up material pride based on being the enjoyer, doer, seer, or maintainer is the purport of offering obeisances. When by the guru's mercy one give up the mentality of being the doer, one can attain transcendental knowledge and actually become initiated. It is a symptom of intelligence that one works for perfection by faithfully serving his spiritual master, who is dear to Kṛṣṇa, as long as he is present in this world. But if we cannot attain such perfection because we are not respectful toward our immortal spiritual master, if we cannot serve selflessly even after knowing him to be the lord of our heart, then we are deceived. Unfortunately, we will have lost our best friend, well-wisher, protector, and deliverer despite having received his association. I am such an

unlucky person! After approaching the Ganges I run toward the desert to accumulate water! After finding a mine of jewels I am attracted to pieces of glass in a shop!

— Surrender, 6



All our inauspiciousness is destroyed and our auspiciousness created simply by the spiritual master's mercy. It is impossible to know Kṛṣṇa either by sinful endeavor or worldly morality. We can understand Him only through pure devotional service. It is possible to learn to practice this pure devotion only by the spiritual master's mercy.

— The Spiritual Master, 53



However hard we may try to achieve knowledge about the transcendental Absolute Truth without the spiritual master's mercy, we will find that we are laboring uselessly. It will be as if we were beating a husk after the grain had been removed. Our attainment of scriptural knowledge depends on the spiritual master's mercy. To try to attain scriptural knowledge with the help of academic qualifications is as futile as pouring ghee onto ashes.

— The Spiritual Master, 82



From whatever our current position if we surrender body, mind, and speech to the *sādhus*, hearing submissively from them without the desire of maintaining the evil motive of *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, and *yogīs*, and without being driven by material temptations or the desire for liberation, then we will conquer the unconquerable Supreme Lord. It does not matter how learned or foolish we may be — or wherever else we are: simply hear about Vaikuṅṭha from the lotus mouth of the saints. We are presently in an incompatible situation in this world of anxiety.

If we study the scriptures under the guidance of our own minds we will be cheated. To think we can discuss the scriptures by interpreting them according to our own urges for material enjoyment or liberation means we think we can control the scriptures. But the scriptures are directly Lord Kṛṣṇa's incarnation. *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34) states:

***tad viddhi pranipātena, paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ, jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ***

Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth.

Those who wish to become masters of the material energy practice *karma-kāṇḍa*. By making a show of accepting instructions while maintaining the desire to become the master, they deceive themselves. The *sāstras* do not reveal themselves to them. The *sāstras* are revealed only to surrendered souls. The *Vedas* state:

***yasya deve parā bhaktir, yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ, prakāśante mahātmana***

Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed. (*Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

— **Surrender, 3**