

# Transcendental Insights on *Ācārya-tattva*

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

## Who can be called an *ācārya*? What are the activities of a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*?

Only one who teaches *dharma* by practising it himself is an *ācārya*. One who propagates misconceptions [about the Absolute Truth] to achieve worldly gain cannot actually attain the position of an *ācārya*. It is proper for those who have assumed the post of *ācārya* in the Gauḍīya-sampradāya to endeavor to remove all of the *sampradāya's anarthas*, or superfluous and unnecessary influences.

— *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol. 4, No. 1

## How does an *ācārya* capture the *śraddhā*, intrinsic devotional faith, of a living entity?

Those who assume the position of an *ācārya* must themselves follow the righteous path of eternal *dharma*. If they do so, other living entities will note their spotless character and their *śraddhā* will be captured. Everyone honors and respects the *sadācāra* (impeccable personal conduct) of an *ācārya*.”

— *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol. 8, No. 9

## Does an *ācārya* give *mantra-dīkṣā* (*mantra* initiation) without careful consideration?

The revered *mantra-ācārya* gives the *mantra* to a genuine candidate according to the injunctions of the scriptures, having considered the candidate's eligibility. Although *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* mentions the necessity of both the guru and disciple first examining each other before the initiation takes place, this is not generally practised. Consequently, there have been cases of both the spiritual master and disciple falling down. The result of this must be that deviations take place in the *sampradāya*.

— *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol. 4, No. 1

## What damage is incurred by behavior that opposes the principles of *bhakti*?

Those Vaiṣṇavas whose behavior is contrary to the conclusive truths of *bhakti* are the root cause of creating disturbances for the *sampradāya*.

— *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol. 4, No. 1

## What is the most significant task of an *ācārya's* immediate followers?

In the past four hundred years, many *anarthas* have surfaced in the Gauḍīya-sampradāya. The most prominent duty of the followers of the *ācārya* is to eradicate all such *anarthas* at the root.

— *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Vol. 4, No. 1

## **Do the *ācāryas* ever differ in their opinions?**

A self-realised soul is situated in his eternal identity. Whatever such a soul expresses in India, will be expressed by another self-realised soul in the North Pole. And a soul in Vaikuṅṭha will state the same opinion. This is because the conceptions of pure souls are untainted by the slightest material interpretation; thus they can never differ.

— *Tattva-viveka, Anuccheda 1.2*

## ***Ācāryas* advent throughout each *yuga*. Does each *ācārya* serve to fulfil the mission of the previous *ācārya*?**

The great reformers will always assert that they have come not to destroy the old law, but to fulfil it. Vālmīki, and Caitanya Mahāprabhu assert the fact either by their words or by their conduct.

— *The Bhāgavata: Its Philosophy, its Ethics & its Theology*

*Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's writings were the source of a book called Bhaktivinodavāṇī-vaibhava, which was compiled on the order of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. These excerpts are from that book.*