

Tridandiswami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja
WHEN CAN YOU CHANGE YOUR DIKSA-GURU?
Murwillumbah, Australia: Feb. 15, 2002 (Evening, Part 1)

Come with me, and give me your full attention. We are going again to Navadvipa, to Godrumakunja on the bank of Ganges. That place is very enchanting, full of beautiful creepers and flowers. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, the associate of Mahaprabhu, is seated there, and he is now instructing us about what he has seen in his trance. He is explaining how Sannyasi Thakura came from Kasi, Varanasi, to Premadasa Babaji Maharaja, took shelter at his lotus feet, and told him, "I want to be with you, serving you, for my whole life." Premadasa Babaji became very happy and replied, "You are a qualified devotee. I want you to be with me for the rest of your life."

Some days later, Premadasa Babaji Maharaja told Sannyasi Thakura, "I'm going to see my siksa-guru. He is very near here, across the Alakananda River (one of the branches of the Ganges) in Nrsimhapali." You should come with me today." If you have been with me in Gaura Mandala parikrama, you have seen that place. If not, you can come with me this year, and it will be very beautiful. Over twenty thousand devotees will be with me, and they will do nagara-sankirtana on the bank of Ganges in two, three, or four-mile long lines. We will all go to Nrsimhapali on our first day.

When they arrived, Paramahansa Premadasa Babaji saw his Gurudeva sitting at a very far distance. Calling out, "Jaya Gurudeva," he offered his sastanga pranama, falling down like a stick, with his hands, head, knees, and feet on the ground. And his Gurudeva at once stood up, came forward, and embraced him. This is the behavior of qualified disciples and gurus. Although Pradyumna Brahmachari is the guru and so superior, he picked up his disciple and embraced him as one would his own child.

The guru and disciple then began to glorify Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda, and they sometimes wept bitterly. Their conversation was reminiscent of that of Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Sanatana Gosvami. There was no need at all of asking, "How you are?" and no need to chatter. The guru asked only, "How is your bhajana?" If one's bhajana is okay, then everything will be okay. If one's bhajana is not okay, then nothing is okay.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja sees a devotee getting up to leave:] Don't go from here now. Everyone should remain here. Where are you going?

[Devotee:] My next-door neighbors have just arrived. I am getting a seat for them.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Don't lose this time. This time is mine. No one may go without my permission. Your guests should come in and kindly be seated. Please come in and sit down. Someone there can give them chairs. Try to hear very patiently and attentively, otherwise you cannot understand these topics.

That former mayavadi sannyasi watched this exemplary behavior of the guru and disciple. In the mayavada cult there is no offering of pranama like this, because the mayavadis misunderstand that everyone is brahma. Who will offer pranama to others? Thinking each other to be Narayana, they

only utter, "Namo Narayana, namo Narayana." Here, on the other hand, the disciple thinks himself very wretched, more so than a straw, and he considers that his gurudeva is saksad-hari, a manifestation of the Supreme Lord Himself. This is the proper behavior. This mood of the Vaisnava remains not only for one or two days, and it is not only external, but internal as well.

After one hour, when their discussion was over, Pradyumna Brahmachari asked Premadasa Babaji, "Who is he?" Sannyasi Thakura then offered sastanga pranama to his paramguru, just as his Gurudeva Premadasa Babaji had done. He had now learned how to properly behave with a guru, how to do pranama in the correct way, and how to discuss with him. He told him, "I am a disciple of Premadasa Babaji Maharaja." Pradyumna Brahmachari became very happy and said, "You are very fortunate to have a guru like Premadasa Babaji Maharaja." He then told him:

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya

["Whether one is a brahmana, a sannyasi or a sudra regardless of what he is he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Krsna." (Cc Madhya 8.128)]

Guru is he who is krsna-tattva-vetta. He knows the science of Krsna consciousness. It does not matter whether one is initiating others or not. Still he can be guru. If he gives initiation, that is okay, and if not, he may be giving siksa. Even if he does not give siksa, others will benefit simply by seeing his behavior. You should take the darsana of that high class of devotee-bhagavata and hear from him. Even if he does not speak, still, something will come from his body as rays of sunlight emanate from the sun. If you keep kerosene oil, you will be overpowered by its scent. Similarly, if you go to any high class of devotee, some rays, some fragrance, some power will enter your heart. Whether you can see this or not, whether you can realize this or not, it comes and affects you. Fire never speaks, but its rays and heat come automatically. And, Vaisnavas are still more powerful, for they can control the whole world with their energy. Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja came, and his fragrance emanated everywhere in a couple of years. He created so many changes; he created miracles.

In this way, Pradyumna Brahmachari was explaining, "Kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya." Even if one is born in a low-class family, there is no harm. As long as he knows krsna-tattva, maya-tattva, jiva-tattva, prema-tattva, and bhakti-tattva, he is guru. On the other hand, a very learned person who knows Sanskrit as well as Veda, Upanisads, and Brahma-sutra, and has memorized and can recite them all, is not guru if he has no realization of krsna-tattva.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is writing here that a sisya should go to a guru who is bona fide in krsna-tattva, who has realized it, who is always chanting the holy name, always detached from worldly desires and sense gratification, and who is greatly attached in Krsna. In the beginning the aspiring disciple should have some sraddha, not full sraddha, but a part of sraddha, by hearing. Then, he should do padasraya; he should take shelter at the lotus feet of that bona fide guru.

Thakura Bhaktivinoda writes that there are two kinds of guru, namely diksa-guru and siksa-guru. One should take diksa from the diksa-guru, and under such a guru's direction he should first do arcana. Cooking is also within the category of the practice of arcana. If you are not pure, you cannot

perform any arcana. Purity must be first. You are not fit to do anything if you are contaminated. [Some persons may hold their plate with their left hand and then use that left hand to touch clean articles. They may put their shoes in the same bag as their bead-bag, and they put money or keys in their bead-bag. They may touch their shoes and then, without washing their hands, offer something to their gurudeva.]

Especially, your heart should be pure. If you have bad desires in your heart, especially lust and anger, you are not qualified to do arcana. You are neither qualified to cook, nor to serve your gurudeva, nor even to touch his feet. First be pure, and then you can perform these activities. Otherwise, you will begin to see faults in guru. You will even see faults in Krsna, just as Duryodhana saw faults in Him.

There can only be one diksa-guru, although there may be so many siksa-gurus, and both types of gurus should be self-realized. Later in Jaiva Dharma, in chapter 20, Vijaya Kumara asked the question, "Sastra states that the diksa-guru should not be changed or not given up. If one has taken diksa from a guru who is not qualified to give krsna-tattva or krsna-bhakti, what should he do? If the guru cannot help the disciple, what should that disciple do?"

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains through the reply of Paramahansa Premadasa Babaji who quoted the verses:

yo vyaktir nyaya-rahitam anyayena srinoti yah
tav ubhau narakam ghoram vrajatah kalam aksayam

"He who poses as an acarya, but gives false instructions that are opposed to the sattvata-sastras, will reside in a terrible hell for an unlimited period of time, and so will the misguided disciple who mistakenly listens to such a false guru." Hari-bhakti-vilasa (1.62)

guror apy avaliptasya karyakaryam ajanatah
utpatha-pratipannasya parityago vidhiyate

It is one's duty to give up a guru who cannot teach the disciple what he should do and what he should not do, and who takes the wrong path, either because of bad association or because he is opposed to Vaisnavas." Mahabharata Udyoga-parva (179.25) and Narada-pancaratra (1.10.20)

avaisnavopadistena mantrena nirayam vrajet
punas ca vidhina samyag grahayed vaisnavad guroh

"One goes to hell if he accepts mantras from an avaisnava-guru, that is, one who is associating with women, and who is devoid of krisna-bhakti. Therefore, according to the rules of sastra, one should take mantras again from a Vaisnava guru." Hari-bhakti-vilasa (4.144)

Premadasa Babaji explained, "When you first select a guru, you should try to do pariksya. You should examine him to see whether or not he can give you krsna-bhakti, whether or not he will fall down, whether or not he is practicing bhakti-yoga properly, and whether or not he is actually following his gurudeva or not? Is he chanting one lakh of nama or not? Is he doing arcana or not?"

Does he have all the symptoms given by Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura in Gurvastakam? 'Saksad haritvena' means that all the qualities of Hari should be in him. If one has not examined and does not know the answer to these queries, and somehow he took initiation but afterwards he saw that this guru is not qualified in the abovementioned areas, he can give up that guru who is not actually bona fide.

One can change or give up that guru under two conditions or circumstances. At the time of selecting a guru and taking diksa, the sisya may not have examined him. He may have become overwhelmed and taken initiation at once, and afterward he may have heard so many things, from books like Srimad-Bhagavatam and from superiors, that this guru cannot actually help him. He may now think, "I took diksa fifteen years ago but there has been no advancement." He can quickly give up that guru. I know so many gurus who never chant. They say to others, "You should chant," but they have no time to chant. They are always talking on telephones, with one phone on each ear. They are absorbed in management, and they attend many meetings that bring no solution to anyone's problems. If the disciple later on understands this, he should give up that guru, and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has quoted so many slokas in this regard.

The second parastiti (condition) is as follows: Suppose at the time of taking diksa, one's gurudeva was really following the Vaisnava line, he was a madhyama-adhikari, and he knew many tattvas like krsna-tattva, and maya-tattva. Then, after some time, he began to take the association of a mayavadi, sahajiya, or materialist. He stopped chanting, and after that he began to criticize Vaisnavas, no longer accepting the guru-parampara. The sisya should at once give him up, as one passes stool. When one gives up stool, he becomes very happy and he feels fresh. Similarly, upon giving up all these 'kan-gurus', the aspiring devotee will be extremely happy.

On the other hand, if the guru is following all the principles of bhakti, if he is in the line of his gurudeva, if he is chanting and remembering but he is not learned enough to give you krsna-tattva, then don't give him up. With honor for him, take his permission, and go with his permission to associate with exalted Vaisnavas. And, if he does not give permission, you can consider that he is also among the kan-gurus meant for being given up. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has explained all this in chapter 20 of Jaiva Dharma, and I request you all to read this right away.

Sannyasi Thakura's character was extremely high. He knew brahma-tattva, which means he could discriminate between the transcendental and the material, this ability is called brahma-nistha. Bhagavad-gita states:

brahma-bhuta prasanna
na socati na kanksati
samah sarvesu bhutesu
mad-bhaktim labhate param

["One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me." (Bg 18.54)]

What is the meaning of brahma-bhuta prasanna?

[Sripad Pundarika dasa:] In this verse, Krsna is telling us that the person who has attained this high level is actually the proper candidate to receive or enter into the realm of para-bhakti: mad-bhaktim labhate param. He gets the opportunity to enter into the realm of devotion if he gets the association of highly advanced bona fide Vaisnavas. If he does not get such opportunity, there is all chance that he can lean towards impersonalism and go in a completely opposite direction. It is very important that at this point he seeks association of bona fide sadhus.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] What is the meaning of na socati? If anything has gone wrong, if one has lost his position, wealth, reputation, and everything else, such a person does not lament. If he one day finds himself homeless, he becomes very happy and thinks, "Now I am okay." If his wife divorces him, he thinks, "Very good; very good. I wanted this. She has done well." In either case he will not be unhappy. Na kanksati. He never has any worldly desire. He only and always wants the association of that high class of Vaisnavas. He wants to serve them, and he especially wants to serve the words coming from their lotus mouths.

tasmin mahan-mukharita madhubhic-caritra-
piyusa-sesa-saritah paritah sravanti
ta ye pibanty avitrso nrpa gadha-karnais
tan na sprsanty asana-trd-bhaya-soka-mohah

["My dear King, in the place where pure devotees live, following the rules and regulations and thus purely conscious and engaged with great eagerness in hearing and chanting the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in that place if one gets a chance to hear their constant flow of nectar, which is exactly like the waves of a river, one will forget the necessities of life—namely hunger and thirst—and become immune to all kinds of fear, lamentation and illusion." (SB 4.39-40)]

There is always a continuously flowing river of nectar from the mouth of pure devotees. There is no end; no end at all. Nectar ever-increasingly flows from his lotus mouth, and if anyone takes bath in that river of nectar, he will be purified. All kinds of unhappiness, difficulties, sorrows, and problems of life will leave him forever. He will come to this position of na socati na kanksati samah sarvesu bhutesu, and then he will enter into the realm of pure prema-bhakti.

Sannyasi Thakura was already accomplished in this nistha, because he had considered that all were brahma. Now, however, upon meeting Premadasa Babaji, he was becoming situated in krsna-prema pastimes, or lila-nistha. Now he wanted to know who is Krsna, how He plays in Vrndavana, how beautiful He is, and how He attracts all. This nistha took place by association of a high-class Vaisnava. If one is always in the association of a Vaisnava, he will never fall down or desire to be married. He will never be lusty. If such desires manifest, it will be because he is offending that Vaisnava and not actually associating. Something positive must certainly come from that real guru, who is extremely powerful, and the desire to serve Krsna was now coming to Sannyasi Thakura.

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