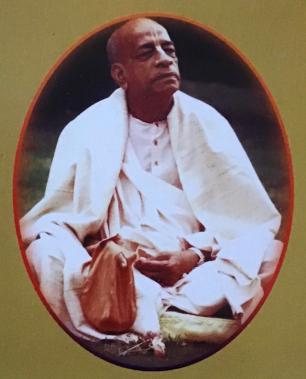


# WHAT IS THE VALUE OF A



## **GURU**

if he can't deliver you from the cycle of birth and death



by Kapindra Swami

Based exclusively on the teachings of

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Founder-Acarya of the

International Society for Krishna Consciousness









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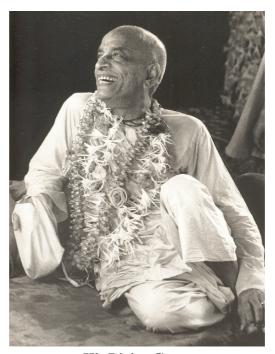


"Help can only be given by a spiritual master like Krishna."

-Bhagavad-gita As It Is 2.8

# Prabhupada

The Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead



His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krishna
Consciousness



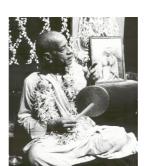
Only out of His immense compassion does the Personality of Godhead reveal Himself as the spiritual master. Therefore in the dealings of an acarya there are no activities but those of transcendental loving service to the Lord. He is the Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead. It is worthwhile to take shelter of such a steady devotee, who is called asraya-vigraha, or the manifestation or form of the Lord of whom one must take shelter.

If one poses himself as an acarya but does not have an attitude of servitorship to the Lord, he must be considered an offender, and this offensive attitude disqualifies him from being an acarya. The bona fide spiritual master always engages in unalloyed devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By this test he is known to be a direct manifestation of the Lord and a genuine representative of Sri Nityananda Prabhu. Such a spiritual master is known as acaryadeva. Influenced by an envious temperament and dissatisfied because of an attitude of sense gratification, mundaners criticize a real acarya. In fact, however, a bona fide acarya is nondifferent

from the Personality of Godhead, and therefore to envy such an acarya is to envy the Personality of Godhead Himself. This will produce an effect subversive of transcendental realization.

-Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 1.46 Purport





One who can deliver his disciple from this entanglement of material, miserable condition of life, he is guru.

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# "One who can deliver from this entanglement of material, miserable condition of life, he is guru."

#### ~751114MW-BOMBAY

There are many gurus. But we need to take refuge of a Godrealized guru, a spiritual master as good as Lord Krsna, who can deliver us from the cycle of birth and death. Otherwise, what is the value of having a guru?

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada came as such a guru to deliver us from the cycle of birth and death. Obviously none of us have the power to free conditioned souls from material bondage. So after November 14, 1977, the date of his departure, Srila Prabhupada naturally continued on as our beloved spiritual master to deliver all his disciples, old and new. "Please always try to remember me by my teachings and we shall always be together. Just like I have written in the first publications of Srimad-Bhagavatam, "The spiritual Master lives forever by his divine instruction and the disciple lives with him.", because I have always served my Guru Maharaja and followed His teachings I am now even never separated from

Him. Sometimes Maya may come and try to interfere but we must not falter, we must always follow the chalked out path layed down by the great acharyas and in the end you will see." (Srila Prabhupada letter to Cidananda, November 25, 1973) The principle being the same for all, past, present and future. Out of millions of liberated souls, only a pure devotee of Lord Krsna can deliver his disciples to the eternal abode of Lord Krsna, Krsnaloka. "It is illegal to become a spiritual master if one is unable to deliver the disciple." (Journey of Self-Discovery 4.2)

Therefore, it is easy to understand why serious devotees are seeking the shelter of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada as their eternal spiritual master, who is always present in his books, audio and video recordings and instructions, and present within the heart. Srila Prabhupada said, "I shall remain your personal guidance physically present or not physically just as I am getting personal guidance from my guru maharaj." (Conversation with Srila Prabhupada, July 14, 1977, Vrindavana)

"One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and death should never become a spiritual master (guru), a father, a husband, a mother or a worshipable demigod." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.5.18)

"There are many spiritual masters but Rsabhadeva advises that one should not become a spiritual master if he is unable to save his disciples from the path of birth and death. Ordinarily, the spiritual master, husband, father, mother or superior relative accepts worship from an inferior relative. Here Rsabhadeva forbids this. First, the spiritual master or superior relative must be able to release the dependent from repeated birth and death. If he cannot do this he plunges himself into the ocean of reproachment for his unlawful activities. All these responsibilities cannot be discharged honestly unless one can save the dependent from repeated birth and death." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.5.18 purport)

"Another meaning of guna is rope; it is to be understood that the conditioned soul is tightly tied by the ropes of illusion. A man bound by the hands and feet cannot free himself- he must be helped by a person who is unbound. Because the bound cannot help the bound, the rescuer must be liberated. Therefore, only

Krishna, or His bona fide representative the spiritual master, can release the conditioned soul." (Bhagavad-gita 7.14 purport)

Reading Srila Prabhupada's books, after his departure on November 14, 1977, thousands and thousands of innocent devotees took shelter of a new ISKCON, and accepted one of their "successor" gurus as their link to God. The "new" ISKCON then admitted that Srila Prabhupada never ordered any one to be a successor guru. Then the same "successor" gurus elected new gurus. However, a guru is never elected.

In the *Sri Caitanya-caritamrita Madhya-lila* 1.220 purport, Srila Prabhupada says, "*Mundane votes have no jurisdiction to elect a Vaisnava acarya.*"

As a result, today there are thousands of dejected and confused devotees of fallen "successor or elected gurus." Their spiritual lives shattered. The manufactured successor guru system or the manufactured elected guru system, are not systems given by our parampara spiritual master Srila Prabhupada, the

real guru. The manufactured guru systems of the "new" ISKCON is the system of a deep-rooted disease, a disease that cannot be cured by those whose minds are absorbed in the grand illusion that "I am perfect, I am all powerful, every one should worship me, I am the greatest devotee, I will protect you."

#### Srila Prabhupada instructed us...

- To accept the bona fide spiritual master, the acarya, the pure devotee of Lord Sri Krishna; not an illusioned conditioned soul.
- 2) Take association of devotees, disciples of Srila Prabhupada, new and old.
- 3) Cooperate and work under the direction of Srila Prabhupada's representatives.
- 4) Ask practical and philosophical questions to the elder devotees, sikshagurus, who represent the sat (eternal) guru, the initiating spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada.

### 1. Accept the Bona Fide Spiritual Master

"He [Arjuna] could understand that his so-called knowledge was useless in driving away his problems, which were drying up his whole existence; and it was impossible for him to solve such perplexities without the help of a spiritual master like Lord Krsna. Academic knowledge, scholarship, high position, etc., are all useless in solving the problems of life; help can be given only by a spiritual master like Krsna. Therefore, the conclusion is that a spiritual master who is one hundred percent Krsna conscious is the bona fide spiritual master, for he can solve the problems of life." (Bhagavad-gita As It Is 2.8)

Currently that spiritual master is His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Lord's representative, the pure devotee, the Founder Acarya and initiating spiritual master. His final instructions were to continue to formally initiate on his behalf, as thousands were previously initiated when he was not physically able to perform the formal ceremony.

On May 28, 1977 in Vrndavana, Satsvarupa das Goswami asked Srila Prabhupada, "...then our next question concerns initiations in the future when you are no longer with us. We want to know how first and second initiations would be conducted?"

Srila Prabhupada replied, "Yes, I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating Acarya."

Tamal Krsna Goswami said, "Is that called Ritvik Acarya?" Srila Prabhupada replied, "Ritvik yes."

#### July 8, 1977 room conversation:

Tamal Krsna Goswami: "But all these persons are still your disciples. Anyone who gives initiation is doing so on your behalf."

Srila Prabhupada: "Yes."

July 9, 1977 letter to all GBC's and Temple Presidents by Tamal Krsna Goswami, signed and authorized by Srila Prabhupada, "Recently when all the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrindavana [May 28], Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon he would appoint some of his senior disciples to act as "ritvik" representatives (officiating acarya) of the acarya, for the purpose of performing initiations both first initiation and second initiation. Temple presidents may henceforward send recommendations for first and second initiations. These representatives may accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada. The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The above eleven senior devotees acting as his representative.

Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrndavana, Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as "ritvik" - representative of the acarya, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation. His Divine Grace has so far given a list of eleven disciples who will act in that capacity:

...In the past Temple Presidents have written to Srila Prabhupada recommending a particular devotee's initiation. Now that Srila Prabhupada has named these representatives, Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple. After considering the recommendation, these representatives may accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada by giving a spiritual name, or in the case of second initiation, by chanting on the Gayatri thread, just as Srila Prabhupada has done. The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the above eleven senior devotees acting as his representative."

July 11, 1977 letter to Kirtanananda Swami by Tamal Krsna Goswami, "A letter has been sent to all the temple presidents and GBC which you should be receiving soon, describing the process for initiation to be followed in the future. Srila Prabhupada has appointed thus far, eleven representatives who will initiate on his behalf."

July 21, 1977 letter from Ramasvara Swami to GBC and devotees, "I have just received some letters from Tamal Krsna Maharaj, and am enclosing herein two documents.

- (1) Srila Prabhupada's final version of his last will and
- (2) Srila Prabhupada's initial list of disciples appointed to perform initiations for His Divine Grace. This list is also being sent to all centers."

From Srila Prabhupada's will, May 24-25, 1977 Referring To Lifetime Directors of His Will...

"A successor or director may be appointed by the remaining directors, provided the new director is my initiated disciple following all the rules and regulations."

**Note:** For the entire future of his mission only his initiated disciples could become a director of his will. Thereby confirming that the officiating acarya system was to continue for the life of his organization, where every devotee would be his disciple. Srila Prabhupada is always our eternal diksa and siksa guru.

## The Real Meaning of Diksa-Initiation

"Diksa actually means initiating a disciple with transcendental knowledge by which he becomes freed from all material contamination." (Caitanya-caritamrta Madya-lila, 4.111)

"Unless one is initiated by a bona fide spiritual master, all his devotional activities are useless. A person who is not properly initiated can descend again into the animal species." (Haribhakti-vilasa 2.6, cited in Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila, 15.108)

"The spiritual master awakens the sleeping living entity to his original consciousness so that he can worship Lord Visnu. This is the purpose of diksa, or initiation. Initiation means receiving the pure knowledge of spiritual consciousness." (Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 9.61)

"Unless one is initiated by the right person who always carries within his heart the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one cannot acquire the power to carry the Supreme Godhead within the core of one's own heart." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.2.18)

The real diksa (initiation) is much more than a formal ceremony, it destroys the sins of the initiate (divya-jnana), and officially connects him to the disciplic succession. How can those who manufactured an elected guru system, connect anyone to the

sacred disciplic succession (parampara) – to Lord Krsna, or destroy the sins of the initiate?

#### 2. Associate with Devotees

After accepting Srila Prabhupada as one's spiritual master, naturally such a devotee will want to associate with other disciples of Srila Prabhupada. Associating with like-minded devotees is necessary for spiritual growth. This association nourishes friendships, realizations and cooperative spirit between devotees. In such a noncompetitive atmosphere, devotees share love in the following ways:

- 1) Giving and receiving gifts from devotees.
- 2) Inquiring and advising in confidence from devotees.
- 3) Honoring and distributing prasadam between devotees.

#### Srila Prabhupada says in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 3.29.17:

"Friendships should be cemented between persons with mutual interests and understanding. Such persons are said to be svajati-'of the same caste'. The devotee should avoid a person whose character is not fixed in the standard of understanding; even though he may be a Vaisnava, or a devotee of Krsna if his character is not correctly representative, then he should be avoided. One should steadily control the senses and the mind,

and strictly follow the rules and regulations, and he should make friendship with persons of the same standard."

### 3. Cooperation

"The central figure of creation and of enjoyment is the Supreme Lord, and the living entities are cooperators. By cooperation they enjoy. The relation is also like that of the master and the servant. If the master is fully satisfied, then the servant is satisfied." (Bhagavad-gita As It Is, Introduction pg.12)

"When one of my Godbrothers began to fan my Guru Maharaja on a very hot day, Guru Maharaja asked, 'Why are you fanning me all of a sudden?' The boy replied, 'Because if you are satisfied, we are all satisfied.' This is the formula—we should not try to satisfy our senses separately, but should try to satisfy Krsna's senses. Then naturally we will become satisfied." (Science of Self Realization pg.300)

Srila Prabhupada says, "*This is the formula.*" By satisfying the spiritual master, the disciple automatically becomes satisfied. Srila Prabhupada wanted his disciples to cooperate, "*You'll show your love to me by how you cooperate together.*" We can satisfy our eternal spiritual master Srila Prabhupada, by cooperating with his bona fide representatives, who are actually following his instructions by pushing forward his original

movement. That is daily Harinama sankirtan; book distribution; and prasadam distribution; and establishing Srila Prabhupada as everyone's bona fide spiritual master and savior (Patita Pavana). By satisfying Srila Prabhupada in the above manner, all his disciples and everyone else will become satisfied eternally.

### 4. Counseling and Guidance

Srila Prabhupada arranged that his new disciples take counseling and guidance from his more advanced disciples... "and if you need some advice how to do it, you can ask the elder devotees of our New York temple." (Letter to Ben Varsalona, November 20, 1970)

A new disciple was able to choose elder devotees for guidance. Up until 1977, new disciples had ample loving guidance from many of their older Godbrothers and Godsisters. Under the direction of Srila Prabhupada, all devotees prior to December 1977, were completely satisfied following this system. Without much of Srila Prabhupada's physical association, they felt his personal presence through his elder disciples and through his instructions.

A senior devotee is a natural representative of Srila Prabhupada. It is the duty of the bona fide representatives of Srila Prabhupada, to direct new devotees to the pure devotee for service and worship. The representative never suggests that he is able to deliver a new devotee, but leads him to the shelter of the pure devotee, who can deliver him from the cycle of birth and death. By associating and cooperating with senior devotees who are always acting on behalf of Srila Prabhupada, new devotees are always directly associating with Srila Prabhupada, (Parampara) and feeling his presence.

# Associating with Srila Prabhupada and the Previous Acaryas

Since our movement is spiritual we should try to develop our spiritual loving relationship with our beloved spiritual master Srila Prabhupada.

"So we should associate by the vibration, and not by the physical presence. That is real association. Sabdad anavrtti. By sound. Just like we are touching Krsna immediately by sound. Sound vibration. So we should give more stress on the sound

vibration, either of Krsna or of the spiritual master. Then we'll feel happy and no separation." (Lecture Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.9.12, August 18, 1968, Montreal)

"When we feel separation from Krsna or the spiritual master, we should just try to remember their words of instructions, and we will no longer feel that separation. Such association with Krsna and the spiritual master should be association by vibration, not physical presence. That is real association." (Elevation to Krsna Consciousness)

"Never think that I am absent from you. Physical presence is not essential; presence by message (or hearing) is real touch... We feel always the presence of our past Acaryas simply by their immutable instructions." (Letter to students, August 2, 1967, Vrndavana)

"If, due to some righteous activities which provoke devotional service, one is influenced by the service attitude and takes shelter of the good association of pure devotees, he develops attachment for hearing and chanting... When attachment becomes pure, it exhibits the two characteristics of bhava and rati. When rati increases, it is called love of Godhead, and love of Godhead is the ultimate goal of human life." (Teachings of Lord Caitanya pg.137)

"Take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master." (a pure devotee) – Srila Rupa Goswami (Nectar of Devotion)

"When one associates with pure devotees, he becomes a pure devotee himself." (Teachings of Lord Caitanya pg.162)

"But for the association of pure devotees all other association is cheating." (Teachings of Lord Caitanya pg.162)

The GBC is the official philosophical representative of the "new" ISKCON. They say in their "guru asraya" report, "Now that Srila Prabhupada is no longer physically present, those who truly take shelter of Srila Prabhupada are those who take shelter of his servants."

*Note*: Srila Prabhupada's shelter is <u>never physical</u>. His shelter is <u>eternally spiritual</u>.

In their 15-page report, there is no definite instruction on developing a direct relationship with Srila Prabhupada, or taking shelter of him. Yet the "new" ISKCON's "guru asraya" says "Nonetheless, to fulfill the ongoing needs of spiritual life, a disciple of a fallen guru, should try to develop a sincere relationship with an advanced devotee and receive his mercy".

**Note:** How can a genuine guru fall down? What is the mercy of a devotee who is not free from maya?

In conclusion, the "new" ISKCON's "guru asraya" says, "Devotees should take shelter of the representatives of Srila Prabhupada, who are in the current link of the disciplic succession."

**Note:** Srila Prabhupada is the current link and remains as such, as long as the Krishna consciousness movement he inaugurated continues on. The guru parampara is a succession of *Acaryas* only. An acarya is a rare spiritual personality on the same level as Lord Caitanya, who can deliver all fallen souls of the universe. They teach by their life's example.

These above illogical speculative statements from the "new" ISKCON's "guru asraya" 1989, make it easy to understand why there is confusion, disorder and dissent amongst their devotees. Srila Prabhupada, the acarya, is the current spiritual master, and everyone has a direct personal relationship with him, as well as with all the previous acaryas. Srila Prabhupada says, "I will always be with you through my books and my orders". (Sri Namamrta, preface)

The "new" ISKCON (after 1977) has failed to give hope to the devotees,

what to speak of greater humanity. Burdened with one scandal after another

and entangled with legal implications, they have fallen from the original transcendental position to speculative philosophy.

"When the transcendental devotional service is mixed with a subordinate process, (fruitive work or speculative philosophy) it is <u>no longer transcendental</u> but is called mixed devotional service." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.6.35)

Srila Prabhupada says, "So our acarya in the Gaudiya Vaisnava Sampradaya, the sri-rupa sanatana bhatta-raghunatha, sri-jiva gopala-bhatta dasa-raghunatha, the Six Gosvamins, and if we associate with them... this book, Nectar of Devotion, Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu, if you read regularly, try to understand, this means you are associating with Srila Rupa Gosvami directly. And if you act accordingly, then you are serving their lotus feet." (Nectar of Devotion lecture, October 20, 1972, Vrndavana)

All the previous acaryas in the disciplic succession are pure devotees or paramahamsas. A new devotee should utilize his intelligence and accept a spiritual master on the same platform as the acaryas, such as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta and Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura, who form the disciplic succession of acaryas.

The Acarya or bona fide spiritual master is a mahatma, a great soul, not a devotee still struggling hard with his mind and senses.

"Without the mercy of a great soul, one cannot even be liberated from the material clutches, and what to speak of rising to the platform of love of Godhead." (Teachings of Lord Caitanya)

"One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of uttama-adhikari. A neophyte Vaisnava or a Vaisnava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an uttama-adhikari as a spiritual master." (Nectar of Instruction, Text 5)

#### Conclusion

The understanding that Srila Prabhupada is our present worshipable and initiating guru is based on his life's example, his writings, and is confirmed by his final instructions. For all of us original disciples of Srila Prabhupada (1966-1977), Srila Prabhupada was our guru/spiritual master, but we always referred to him as Srila Prabhupada, out of love, affection and reverence. In referring to Srila Prabhupada, the term "guru" was not utilized as widely as was his name, "Srila Prabhupada". He was so much to us. He was our mother, father, well-wisher, best friend, maintainer, protector, and savior (Patita-Pavana).

When Srila Prabhupada departed in 1977, the term guru was introduced in relation to eleven of our fellow godbrothers. Then the confusion began. Srila Prabhupada's sacred house became disrupted and by 1986, some 95% of the 5,000 original disciples of Srila Prabhupada, left the "new" ISKCON. After studying guru-tattva carefully from Srila Prabhupada's books, it can be understood clearly, that the guru, the one who delivers us-to the Kingdom of God can never be a devotee below the liberated stage: a) one who still makes mistakes, b) has imperfect senses, c) is subject to illusion, and d) is not completely free from the cheating propensity.

The special position of guru is always reserved for the topmost pure devotee, the paramahamsa, the uttama-adhikari, exclusively; the one who is free from all defects. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada is our guru, for he fits the requirement in full, being eternally liberated.

"For knowledge we have got to go to the right person, tattvadarsi. Tattva-darsi means 'one who has actually seen or experienced the Absolute Truth.' So unless we find out such a person who has actually seen the Absolute Truth or who has in his experience what is Absolute Truth, so there is very little chance of our spiritual advancement."

(Bhagavad-gita lecture, August 17, 1966, New York)

## Srila Prabhupada



## The Guru of ISKCON and The Entire World

When Srila Prabhupada announced the officiating acarya system for initiations, he was not establishing who was guru. That had already been established. He was the guru of ISKCON, the Founder Acarya. Thus continuing the divine disciplic succession of Acaryas. He repeatedly declared he was present in his books and instructions. Everyone who joined ISKCON, naturally accepted Srila Prabhupada as their spiritual master. That was the rule. We were not to change anything. Therefore the officiating acarya system for initiation was just the formality part for name giving, etc. The actual initiation takes place when the disciple accepts Srila Prabhupada as their guru, by agreeing to abide by his instructions. Srila Prabhupada simply asked us to cooperate with each other that's all. He didn't want anything changed.

"Please try your best to learn our Krsna philosophy very nicely, when you have some difficult point you can ask advice from Sriman Hayagriva or your elder Godbrothers. Chant Hare Krsna always, do your regular tasks in Krsna Consciousness, cooperate with the other devotees, follow strictly the four regulative principles and be happy in the service of the Lord." (Letter to Kenneth, November 7, 1970, Bombay)

"A self-realized soul having made tangible connection with the Supreme

Lord, is the transparent via media to help the willing candidate to the path of Vaikuntha." (Easy Journey to Other Planets, pg. 18)

Srila Prabhupada is the true guru, the self-realized soul and the transcendental expert. He and only he can deliver all of us conditioned souls from the cycle of birth and death to Lord Krishna's eternal abode. All other so-called gurus are powerless.

"Nobody shall be cheated if he adopts the guaranteed path of devotion for entering into the anti-material world." (Easy Journey to Other Planets, pg. 12)



There is no need to hesitate or worry.

Just take shelter of the lotus feet of Srila Prabhupada where there is no fear.



Kapindra Swami March 18, 1992 First printing March 1992

Second Printing June 2004

by Prabhupada Sankirtan Society "The Original ISKCON"

Third printing March 2021 by Hare Krsna Zentrum

