



Fondo Editorial Bhaktivedanta

Fundador-Ācārya Su Divina Gracia A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

ALL GLORIES TO SRI GURU AND GAURANGA!

October 16, 1984

Dear *Subhananda Prabhu,*

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada, our life and soul.

This is just a short note to thank you for your ecstatic association in the Towaco meeting, which I'm looking forward to have again. I'm also enclosing a slightly revised version of "THE FIRST THOUSAND," featuring a few more quotes (pgs. 7-14) that because of the rush to go to the meeting, I wasn't able to include in the first version. The new quotes are important in regards to the diksa-siksa issue and the question of self-effulgence. Otherwise the paper is the same. Whenever referring to this paper (or divulging it), please make sure it's the second version. Thank you.

Hoping this meets you in the best of health, and awaiting any comments you may have, I beg to remain

your servant,

Virabahu Dasa

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Senior Editor
Spanish BBT

THE FIRST THOUSAND

"THERE IS NO bar against anyone; anyone can become a spiritual master provided he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa. This is the only qualification, and this science in essence is contained in Bhagavad-gītâ. AT THE PRESENT MOMENT, THOUSANDS OF SPIRITUAL MASTERS ARE NEEDED TO SPREAD THIS GREAT SCIENCE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD."

--Śrīla Prabhupāda, Rāja Vidyâ pg.88

nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine

namas te sârasvate deve gaura-vāñī-pracârīṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavâdi-pâścâtya-deśa-târīṇe

vâñchâ-kalpatarubhyaś ca krpâ-sindhubhya eva ca
patitânâṃ pâvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ

FALLING AT THE lotus feet of our most
beloved lord and master, His Divine Grace A.C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupâda, the founder-
âcârya of ISKCON, which is the embodiment of
his mercy, meant to save the world by housing
it under the shade of the golden lotus feet of
Śrīman Mahâprabhu, we pray that this humble
attempt to please him receive his inspiration
and will thus become a welcome contribution to
the expansion of his great movement. We pray
as well for the mercy of all the Vaiṣṇava
devotees of the Lord, so that this attempt may
meet with success.

THE TIME HAS COME

IT IS TIME for all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples to take on more responsibility in his Society. So many of us are feeling greatly this need, as a growing dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs is gradually becoming all-pervading. The latest temple presidents' meeting was an eye-opener to many: "Prabhu, I thought I was the only one...!"

Now it is obvious that most of us are seeing the same things and feeling alike. Let's not miss the opportunity afforded by this consensus. Too many times things have just remained the same... except for the decreasing number of remaining disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda. And this time it could be the last chance for many more.

But, hopefully, this time we are together.

ISKCON'S A-B-C: LOVE, TRUST & COOPERATION

WE HAVE "LOVED, trusted and cooperated." And, of course, that will continue. But now it is necessary to see it happening in both directions --reciprocation. Specially as far as trust is concerned. Now it is our turn to be trusted. Not for our own sake. For the sake of the unlimited propagation of the glories of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and our dearest Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda. For the sake of the beginning of the ten thousand golden years. For the sake of the relief of billions and trillions of suffering, conditioned souls.

TOGETHER WE REMAIN

SO, HOPEFULLY, this time we will remain together up to the end. We are agreeing in most of the points, we are equally despondent about our enthusiasm and our potential vs. actual participation, and we are similarly --and extremely-- worried for the future of our Society. This is why we feel that the time has come.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR WHAT?

THE TIME HAS COME for more of our Godbrothers to become initiating spiritual masters. Let's face it once and for all. This is the issue. Just like Śrīla Vyāsadeva's dejection that is depicted in the First Canto. No matter how much he had done, he was despondent. He was analyzing so many factors, but he was missing the point. Until it was pointed out by his guru, Śrīla Nārada Muni. Similarly, we feel that Śrīla Prabhupāda has come to our rescue. In the form of his instructions.

IT IS THE LAW OF DISCIPLIC SUCCESSION

"EVERY STUDENT IS expected to become Acarya. Acarya means one who knows the scriptural injunctions and follows them practically in life, and teaches them to his disciples...Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bonafide Guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette it is the custom that during the lifetime of your Spiritual Master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession. I want to see my disciples become bonafide Spiritual Master and spread Krishna consciousness very widely; THAT WILL MAKE ME AND KRISHNA VERY HAPPY." (Letter to Tusta Krishna Swami, 12/2/75)

IT IS ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S PROGRAM

"Next January there will be an examination on this Bhagavad-gītā. Papers will be sent by me to all centers, and those securing the minimum passing grade will be given the title as Bhaktishastri. Similarly, another examination will be held on Lord Caitanya's Appearance Day in February, 1970, and it will be upon Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Bhagavad-gītā. Those passing will get the title of Bhaktibaibhava. Another examination will be held sometime in 1971 on the four books, Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Teachings of Lord Caitanya and Nectar of Devotion. One who will pass this examination will be awarded with the title of Bhaktivedanta. I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the

generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. MAYBE BY 1975 ALL OF MY DISCIPLES WILL BE ALLOWED TO INITIATE AND INCREASE THE NUMBERS OF THE GENERATIONS. THAT IS MY PROGRAM." (Letter to Hansadutta Swami, 12/3/68)

YOU WILL HAVE TO

"YOU WILL HAVE TO become spiritual master... you... all my disciples... you... everyone should become spiritual master. It is not difficult. It is difficult when you manufacture something, but if you simply present whatever you have heard from your spiritual master, it is very easy. If you want to become over-intelligent... to present something, to interpret something... whatever you have heard from your spiritual master you can make some further addition or alteration, then you will spoil the whole thing; then you spoil everything... Remain always a servant of your spiritual master and present the thing as you have heard --you will be spiritual master. This is the secret. (Vyâsa-pûjâ Address, LON 73-52)

YOU MAY NOT BE A SANNYÂSÎ

"...SO CAITANYA MAHÂPRABHU SAYS âmâra âjñâya guru hañâ târa' ei deśa, yâre dekha, târe kaha 'kr̥ṣṇa'-upadeśa... He says âmâra âjñâya... 'by My order you become a spiritual master....' So one may be very illiterate, no education, no scholarship, may not be born in a brâhmaṇa family, OR MAY NOT BE A SANNYÂSÎ --there are so many qualifications. But one may not have all these qualifications. HE MAY BE RASCAL NUMBER ONE. But still he can become spiritual master. ...How? Âmâra âjñâya !!! As Kṛṣṇa says, as Caitanya Mahâprabhu says, if you follow, then you become spiritual master. One may be Rascal Number One from material estimation, but if he simply strictly follows whatever is said by Caitanya Mahâprabhu or His representative spiritual master, then he becomes a guru. (Vyâsa-pûjâ Address, LON 73-52)

YOU ARE QUALIFIED!

"SO IT IS NOT very difficult. ONE MAY NOT THINK THAT, 'I AM NOT QUALIFIED TO BECOME GURU.' No! you are qualified! ...if you follow strictly the paramparâ system, then you are qualified. That's all. ...Don't feel any difficulty, because as spiritual

master what do you have to do? ...Whoever you meet, you simply speak to him the instruction which Kṛṣṇa gives." (Vyâsa-pūjā Address, LON 73-52)

"PRABHU, THAT MEANS SIKṢA, NOT DIKṢA"

"HE SAID THAT all his disciples should become gurus and each make THOUSANDS OF DISCIPLES, JUST AS HE HAD, THUS SPREADING KṚṢṂA CONSCIOUSNESS EVERYWHERE." (Līlāmṛta VI, pg.167)

"DID HE REALLY MEAN THAT MANY?"

"REGARDING YOUR question... it is just like I have got my disciples, so in the future THESE MANY disciples may have many branches of disciplic succession." (Letter to Kīrtanānanda Swami, 1/25/69)

"AS I HAVE..."

"YOU EACH BE GURU," he said. "As I have five thousand disciples or ten thousand, so you have ten thousand each. In this way, create branches and branches of the Caitanya tree. (continues)

BUT...

"BUT YOU HAVE to be spiritually strong. This means chanting your rounds and following the four rules. It is not an artificial show. It is not a material thing. Chant and follow the four rules and pray to Kṛṣṇa in helplessness." (Līlāmṛta VI, pg.169)

"...BUT, I'M A HOUSEHOLDER!!!"

"...ACCORDING TO THE pañcarâtra injunction, only a householder brâhmana can initiate. Others cannot. ...Actually, people beg to be initiated by these householder brâhmanas just to become successful in the varṇâśrama institution or to become free

from material desires. It is therefore necessary for a spiritual master in the gr̥hastha-âśrama to be a strict Vaiṣṇava. (C.c. M.4.111 purp.)

SANNYÂSIS CAN ALSO INITIATE

A SPIRITUAL MASTER from the sannyâsa order has very little opportunity to perform arcana, ...but when one accepts a spiritual master from the transcendental sannyâsis, the principle of Deity worship is not at all neglected. To implement this conclusion, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave us His opinion in the verse kibâ vipra kibâ nyâsī, etc. This indicates that the Lord understood the weakness of society in its maintaining that only a gr̥hastha-brāhmaṇa should be a spiritual master. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu indicated that IT DOES NOT MATTER WHETHER THE SPIRITUAL MASTER IS A GR̥HASTHA (HOUSEHOLDER), a sannyâsī or even a śūdra. A spiritual master simply must be conversant in the essence of the śāstra; he must understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Only then can one become a spiritual master." (C.c. M.4.111 purp.)

AS GOOD AS SANNYÂSIS

"THE KṛṣṇA CONSCIOUSNESS society was based on renunciation, said Prabhupāda, and therefore all sincere devotees were as good as sannyâsis. The actual dress didn't matter, whether white or saffron, although an ideal gr̥hastha should eventually come to the stage of formal sannyâsa." (Līlāmṛta VI, pg.167)

"In our society everyone, either a brahmachary or sannyasi or grihastha, who has dedicated his life and soul for this movement, they are all on the same level of sannyasi." (Letter to Brahmananda Swami, 8/30/69)

HOUSEHOLDER NO... VAISNAVA

"...ONE WHO ACTS strictly in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is competent to offer blessings to sannyâsis, even though he be a gr̥hastha householder. Although he is in an exalted position, a sannyâsī yet must elevate himself to the transcendental platform by rendering service to the Lord. By His actual behavior, Caitanya Mahāprabhu begged the blessings of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭâcārya a householder. He set the example of

how one should expect blessings from a Vaiṣṇava, regardless of his social position." (C.c. M.7.69 purp.)

OVER AND OVER AGAIN

"AGAIN SRÎLA PRABHUPÂDA quoted the verse that had become a theme for the festival: kibâ vipra, kibâ nyâsî, sûdra kene naya. 'Either he is a grhastha or a sannyâsî, it doesn't matter. He must become a guru. How? Yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettâ. One who knows the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one who understands Kṛṣṇa, he can become a guru.' " (Lîlāmṛta VI, pg.180)

ALL HIS DISCIPLES

"HE ALSO STRESSED THAT ALL his disciples should be training to become qualified as gurus. He quoted, 'Yâre dekha târe kaha kṛṣṇa-upadeśa. Anywhere, either you are in this district or that district, it doesn't matter. You become a guru --everyone.' " (Lîlāmṛta VI, pg. 181)

HE JUST SAID ONE QUALIFICATION

" 'HOW SHALL I become guru? I have no qualification.' Caitanya Mahâprabhu said that you don't require any qualification. You simply require one qualification, that you repeat the instruction of Bhagavad-gîtâ, that's all. Yâre dekha târe kaha kṛṣṇa-upadeśa. You become a guru. Don't adulterate kṛṣṇa-upadeśa like a rascal or nonsense. Present it as it is ---- Bhagavad-gîtâ. Then you can become a guru. You can become a guru in your family, you can become a guru in your society, your nation --wherever you are. And if it is possible, you go outside and preach this mission of Bhagavad-gîtâ. Therefore our movement's name is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whatever Kṛṣṇa says, you accept and preach. You become guru.' " (Lîlāmṛta VI, pg. 181)

DON'T GIVE IN

DON'T GIVE IN to the critics. It is not a material desire per se.

IT'S OUR DUTY

HAVEN'T WE HEARD Prabhupâda present this --his-- vision of guru, many, many times? Well, he means it! And it is not a question of it being an illicit desire. It is our duty. It is the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahâprabhu (âmâra âjñâya guru hañâ, "Under My ORDER become a spiritual master," C.c. M.7.128). If by chance you also have the desire, then so much the better, because you are going to feel very happy while fulfilling your obligations towards Prabhupâda and Kṛṣṇa.

IT IS ŚRĪ CAITANYA'S WISH

"IT IS ŚRĪ CAITANYA'S WISH that everyone should become a Vaiṣṇava and guru. Following the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahâprabhu and His disciplic succession, one can become a spiritual master, for the process is very easy. One can go everywhere and anywhere to preach the instructions of Kṛṣṇa. (...)The DUTY of every Vaiṣṇava is to travel and preach Bhagavad-gîtâ, either in his country or a foreign country." (C.c. M.24.277)

ACTUALLY

ACTUALLY, when your own spiritual master and Lord Caitanya Mahâprabhu (who, incidentally, happens to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself) are URGING you OVER AND OVER to become a guru, aren't you supposed to develop some kind of a desire for it? What is so suspicious about it?

Actually, it makes you wonder why your Guru Mahârâja and the Lord are so intent in telling you to become a guru. An obvious idea that comes to one's mind in these modern days is that you don't get much of an encouragement from other sources.

Actually, isn't the really suspicious thing that someone be so interested in DISCOURAGING you from that very same thing that your spiritual master and the Lord are asking you vehemently to do --i.e. to become a guru?

DON'T KILL THE ENTHUSIASM

"KṚṢṢMA CONSCIOUSNESS movement is for training men to be independently thoughtful and competent IN ALL TYPES OF DEPARTMENTS OF KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION, not for making bureaucracy. Once there is bureaucracy the whole thing will be spoiled. There must be always individual striving and work and responsibility, competitive spirit, not that one shall dominate and distribute benefits to the others and they do nothing but beg from you and you provide. No.

"...Our leaders shall be careful not to kill the spirit of enthusiastic service, which is INDIVIDUAL and SPONTANEOUS and VOLUNTARY. They should try always to generate some atmosphere of fresh challenge to the devotees, so that they will agree enthusiastically to rise and meet it. That is the art of management: To draw out spontaneous loving spirit of sacrificing some energy for Krishna.

"...All of us should become expert managers and preachers. We should not be very much after comforts and become complacent and self-contented. There must be always some tapasya, strictly observing the regulative principles. Krishna Consciousness movement must be always a challenge, a great achievement to be gained by voluntary desire to do it, and that will keep it healthy. So...now try to train up more and more some competent preachers and managers like yourselves. Forget this centralizing and bureaucracy." (Letter to Karandhar Dâsa, 12/22/72)

WE HAVE TO KEEP OUR ENTHUSIASM

" 'WE HAVE TO HAVE enthusiasm. If we lose our enthusiasm, everything will become slack. In old age I came out from Vṛndâvana. I had no money, nothing. But I thought, 'Let me try.' (Līlāmṛta VI, pg. 169)

PRABHUPÂDA WOULD ALWAYS GIVE YOU MORE
(or, "You don't want us to rot, do you?")

"PRABHUPÂDA BEGAN crying and reached out, trying to stroke Harikeśa's head.... 'He was rotting here, typewriting,' said Śrīla Prabhupâda, referring to when Harikeśa had been his secretary, just before going to preach in Europe. 'I said, you go. I had ten servants. You thought that I was degrading you by sending you away. No. Now you understand? ...Here is an

intelligent boy, I thought.... Why should he rot here typewriting?" (Lilâmrta VI, pgs.392-393)

IT'S NOT JUST THREE OR FOUR MORE

"SO THERE IS NO bar against anyone; anyone can become a spiritual master provided he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa. This is the only qualification, and this science in essence is contained in Bhagavad-gītâ. AT THE PRESENT MOMENT, THOUSANDS OF SPIRITUAL MASTERS ARE NEEDED TO SPREAD THIS GREAT SCIENCE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD." (Râja-vidyâ, pg.88)

"PLEASE BE MERCIFUL UNTO THEM!!!"

"WE ARE ACTUALLY suffering due to our ignorance.... The whole world is lacking this knowledge, and therefore THOUSANDS OF TEACHERS OF THE SCIENCE OF KṚṢṂA ARE NEEDED. There is a great necessity for this knowledge NOW." (Râja-vidyâ, pg. 92)

BUT, OF COURSE...

BUT, OF COURSE, we belong to a very large worldwide institution, so as soon as you speak of appointing many, many new gurus, a most natural question arises.

HOW?

FOR THE MOST PART, the two papers that the G.B.C. issued in this connection ("The Descending Process of Selecting a Spiritual Master," March 1981, and "THE PROCESS FOR EXPANDING THE NUMBER OF INITIATING GURUS IN ISKCON," 1982) deal sufficiently with the formalities. What is lacking is, first, the proper and practical understanding throughout the Society that, in principle, EVERY disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda can become a guru, and, second, the practical implementation for them to start being so --i.e. will they start in an already established program, what would the process be for those who are not close with any G.B.C., etc. Undoubtedly, the new guru has to be qualified, but this should mainly be centered in his being self-effulgent.

IT IS A QUESTION OF SELF-EFFULGENCE

"A VAIṢNAVA ÂCÂRYA is self-effulgent, and there is no need for any court judgment." (C.c. M.1.220)

"His (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta's) idea was acarya was not to be nominated amongst the governing body. ...a SELF-EFFULGENT acarya would AUTOMATICALLY be selected." (Letter to Rupanuga Prabhu, 4/28/74)

This in no way means, however, that you don't want to receive the blessings of the Vaiṣṇavas, or that the authorities of the institution will not give the formal approval for the peace of mind of the rest of the members of the Society, who may not know the character of the new guru --whether he is or not bonafide. What it really means is that there should be a "fair ground" for any disciple of Prabhupāda to exhibit his self-effulgence. Not that every time that by his preaching he attracts a prospective disciple, someone else, specially his Godnephews, will come very diligently to explain to the candidate that "Forget it! This guy is a Mr. Nobody. Wait a couple of months so you can meet my guru, who is a truly authorized âcârya."

CONCLUSION

BECAUSE OF THE TIME FACTOR, this paper could just deal mainly with trying to document how our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted ALL of his disciples to become gurus, as well as did Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu for all His followers, and how it should be started to be implemented as soon as possible, there being no good reason not to. The exact ways and means remain in the hands of our ISKCON authorities and the sanga of the seniormost vaiṣṇavas. Thus, soon we will have THE FIRST THOUSAND ISKCON GURUS, inundating the world with the nectar that emanated from HIS lotus mouth.

ALL GLORIES
TO ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA
AND HIS STAUNCH FOLLOWERS
