

ceremony, but to accept initiation means to accept the spiritual master to be as good as God Himself because he is the representative of God. It is of no value to go through the motions of accepting someone as spiritual master in the formal sense without actually accepting him as the representative of God. Therefore, we are advised by Srila Jiva Goswami not to accept a spiritual master on the basis of ecclesiastical principles or family tradition. In fact, he says such a guru should be rejected and a real guru should be found. In other words, simply because someone is the head of a religious organization, appointed by the church, or happens to be my family guru, etc., does not mean I should accept him as my spiritual master. For example, we have many churches and religious organizations around the world and these religious organizations all have their "spiritual masters" whom the followers are supposed to be accepting as representatives of God. But in the depths of their hearts, the people are not finding it possible to accept the so-called priests, elders, swamis, bishops and popes

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as the actual representatives of God. They just go through the formality of it. Just like they formally accept baptism from the local priest, and this is supposed to be initiation, because Jesus was initiated in that way by John the Baptist. Anyway, one is supposed to accept initiation or be baptized by the representative of God, but for these people it is all simply official, formal business.

If you say, "Have you given your life, your heart, your soul, your entire being to him?" "Oh, no. I don't need to do that." "Oh, why not?" "Because I only need to give my life to God or Jesus." "You say you want to give yourself to Jesus but you're not sure of giving yourself to the priest, so this means that you must think that the priest is not purified of his false ego or his own will—is that not right? If this is the case, how can you say you receive Jesus through him?" How can the pure be received through the impure? If a person is not doing the will of God, then how can he be the representative of God? Representative of God means he only does God's will. So, if a person is just doing God's will, why do you feel any hesitation or qualms about giving yourself to him? It is because there is no trust that this person is doing God's will completely, that's why!

So, a professional guru or ecclesiastical spiritual master appointed by the church or one who is the head of the parish, can never actually gain the love of the people. He may gain the following and official allegiance of many foolish people in the church or temple, but no one will ever be able to give their life or their love to such a person. Rather, it will simply be official business.

What is the actual gain of accepting such a



guru? The foolish people's idea is that "I will get salvation if I go through this ritual and I make believe I am loving this person or I am accepting this person as my guru." There is no question of love involved, so in this way there is no actual change of heart. They all have gurus, they all have their priests, they all have their cardinals, they all have the pope, but because there is no love there it is all official, ecclesiastical business; therefore, there's no change of heart.

Guru means one who can actually change my life; one who is actually helping me to

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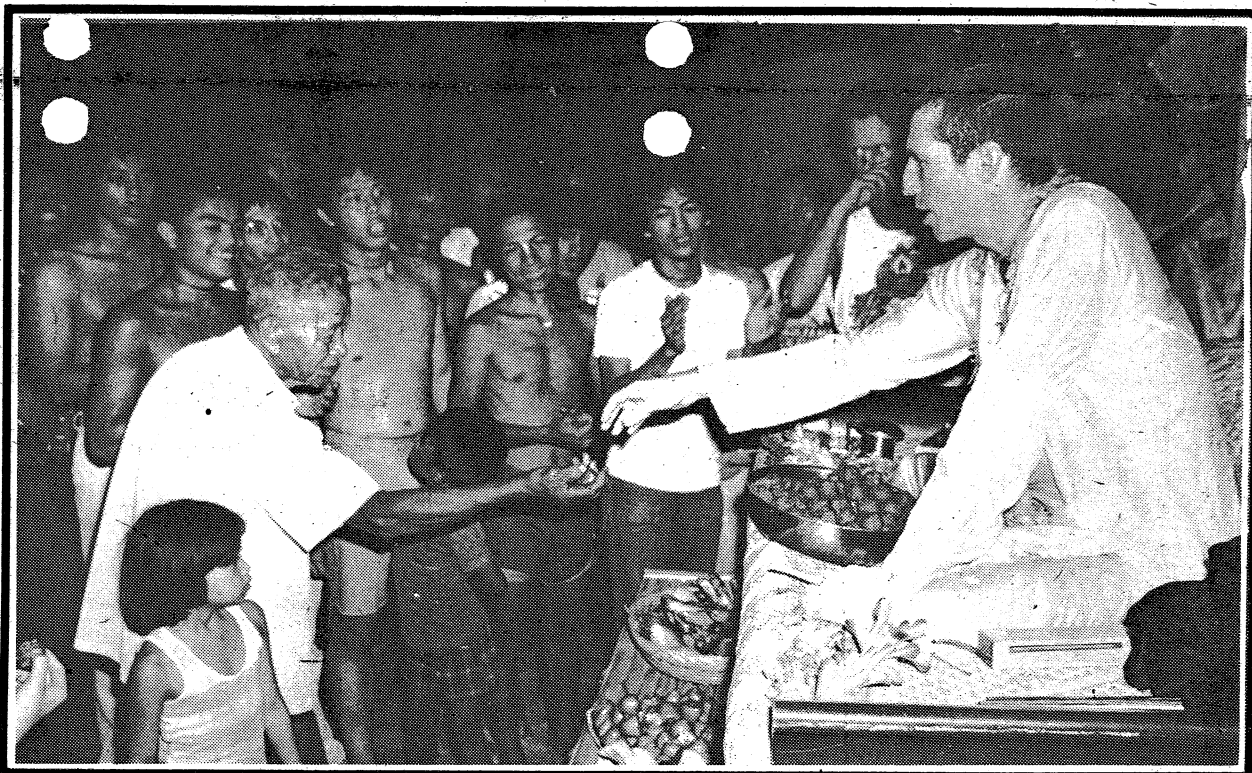
change my heart from lover of matter to lover of Krishna.

"Hearing Mukunda das give this proper decision, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu confirmed it, saying, 'Yes, it is correct. One who awakens devotion to Krishna is certainly a spiritual master.' " (*Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya-lila*, 15:127)

This is the actual test of guru and it has nothing to do with having ecclesiastical credentials or church diplomas. If one accepts an ecclesiastical guru he may impress others in the community that he is a religious person, but it will not help him advance to the goal of life.

**Question:** *But if a person is genuinely sincere, won't he still be able to advance?*

**Jagat Guru:** If he's sincere, then he'll find a real spiritual master. For there to be pregnancy, the man must be potent and the woman fertile, not barren. If the man is not potent, even if the woman is fertile, there will be no pregnancy. Similarly, even if the student is bona fide, if the spiritual master is not bona fide, there will be no fruit of love of God developed within the disciple.



## Surrender to the Church

Although the neophyte devotees may formally accept an official spiritual master or church-appointed guru, they don't care for or relate to the personality involved. It is simply impersonalism. When they speak of surrender, they mean surrender to the temple or the church. "You must join the church, surrender to the church." This is impersonalism, because obviously they're not going to have a loving relationship with the church. Surrender means love, so when someone says, "Surrender to the church, surrender to the temple", then what am I supposed to do? Love the building, or maybe the organization? Am I supposed to love the system? What am I supposed to love? The lights maybe?

For example, before becoming my disciple, Devahuti devi dasi for many years used to be an inmate of SRF. She used to receive letters and

they were always signed "Mother Center" in handwriting just like a signature. "Mother Center", who is "Mother Center"? Is it the building? And when you see the signature, you think of the building—"Mother Center is so kind to me."

So, people relate to the church, the big spires in the buildings and the organization and the systems, the rituals, everything—but they don't relate to the persons. Therefore they don't really care what the preacher is like, whether he's qualified or not, about his habits and so forth. As long as they've got someone there to keep the rituals going, everything's "okay". Of course, the actual idea is that the preacher or the priest is supposed to be the representative of God, and you're supposed to have a personal relationship with him and be able to

hear from him about God, and in this way come to know God. People do not trust such ecclesiastical gurus however, so they relate to the system instead of to the personality. Just like in the Catholic faith, supposedly the people are accepting the pope as their guru, as their spiritual master, as the representative of God. But they don't care to follow his instructions. The pope says, "Don't take intoxicants, don't have abortions," but what do they care for it? The pope who just passed away was a very pious man, but nobody listened to him. They didn't care what he said, he was just a figurehead.

**Question:** *Why do they want that kind of a guru?*

**Jagat Guru:** A person wants that kind of a guru because he doesn't want to give his heart to him.

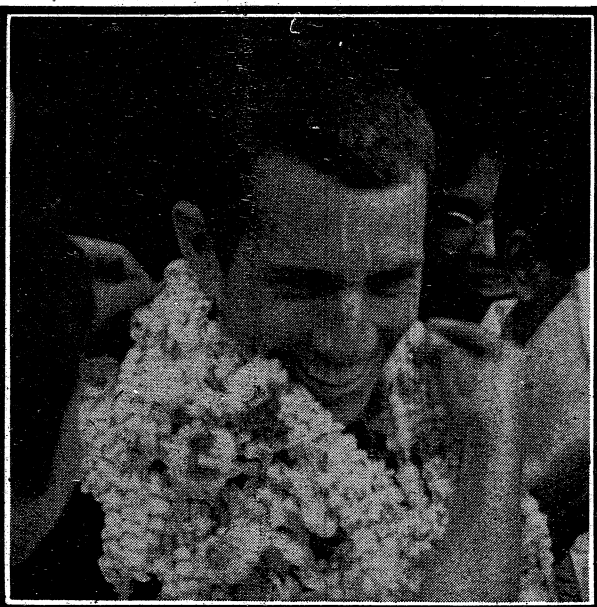
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he wants to keep it on the superficial level. Their supposed spiritual master, the pope, says, "Stop having illicit sex." And they say, "The pope doesn't know anything. He's out of tune with the times." Even abortion—most of the polls taken show that 60 to 70 per cent of the Catholics are for abortion. That means that they are directly against the pope. So, as soon as you get official gurus, your followers are worthless; they're just like dogs. Cheap, cheap, cheap. Even if the leader is pious, the whole relationship is perverted because of this system. I'm saying that this pope who has just passed away (Pope Paul VI), was a very pious man, but nobody cared for him. And he couldn't speak the truth anyway. He could speak a certain amount, and after that he couldn't say any more or else he would lose all of his followers. In fact, he had to argue with the priests. And the threat was, "If you keep arguing, you're going to get thrown out!" Thrown out of what? Either there's a relationship or not. This is politics, power.

**Question:** *So, they don't really care. They only follow what they want to follow?*

**Jagat Guru:** Yes. They'll take what they like and

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they'll leave what they don't. So it's more or less a business of simply joining a religion and taking the guy on top along with it. It is not actually personal because the relationship is with the post. In fact, one pope can leave this world, one guru can leave and another one comes, and they no longer relate to the previous one; they now relate to the new spiritual master who's there. This is not correct. What they're really relating to is the post or the chair. Whoever sits in the chair becomes empowered, as if the chair is God. Anyone who sits on the big throne becomes empowered and infallible. This is not a fact. The fact is, a person becomes infallible when he is purely loving God.

So you're really relating to the chair, and whoever sits on it, that's your guru. You're relating to the church, but the church is not a person. God is a person and His representative is also a person. When we speak of surrender to God we are speaking of love, and when we talk about surrender to His representative, we're also speaking of love. You don't love the "Mother Center". To surrender to the church or surrender to the temple is impersonalism.

## The "Infallible" Election

As we have already described before, guru is not a post or a position in the hierarchy. It is a state of being or consciousness. You cannot elect somebody to a state of consciousness. If a guru can be by elected men, then what kind of guru is that? He is not the representative of God, he is the representative of men.

In some churches, when the guru or prophet of that organization dies, the quorum of 11 or 12 or 58 or 116, depending upon the particular organization, get together and choose the next prophet or guru. How's that? They have an election. They vote on whether or not this person is the representative of God. That means that the people are choosing who's the representative of God; it means they are "infallible". The question is this: if they are infallible, why do they always disagree? If they are actually infallible, then all their meetings would be unanimous. In fact, there would be no need to have any meetings. If each of them were infallible, then whatever he thought or did or said would be right, and therefore acceptable by all the other "infallible" members. There would be no disagreement on whether somebody else is qualified to be guru or not. Yet, this is not the case. In fact, you will find so much political manipulation amongst all the "infallible representatives of God". Just like in the Catholic Church, there is very, very, very intense lobbying for weeks sometimes, before finding out who the next pope is going to be. And sometimes before he dies, the present pope puts in his two cents, or he backs a particular candidate and lobbies for him, hoping to keep his own policies going after he's gone. So, in this way they fight for the seat. "We will give you our vote if . . ."

Thus, you get official ecclesiastical spiritual masters, church gurus, etc. You get a guru of the church elected by many different cardinals or temple presidents or something, and in this way

they control him; because, after all, "We made you guru so we can take you down."

**Question:** *If they are saying they can decide who is God's representative, aren't they saying that they are God's representatives?*

**Jagat Guru:** What they are actually saying is that they are God, because they have set themselves up as the ones who appoint, elect, or decide who is guru. "If we okay him, he's okay." The fools think, "Well, that's all I need to know. If he's

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okayd by the quorum, then he's okay. If he's not, then he's not okay." So ultimately they are saying they are God.

**Question:** *I've heard they are going to start doing this in Iskcon—if someone wants to become an initiating spiritual master, then the eleven "appointed acharyas" will take a vote on whether or not he's qualified.*

**Jagat Guru:** Why do they need to vote? Supposedly they are all on the same wave length,

aren't they? If they are all acharyas, or representatives of God then why do they need to have an election? The fact that they have introduced this election business is another unconscious admission on their part that they are not really qualified. Because they have introduced the idea of appointed acharyas, they have put themselves on the spot. Now they have to appoint somebody else as acharya, but because they are thinking that no single one of them is powerful enough to appoint anyone else, they have come up with this election idea. So now it has gone from appointment to election. They are making a baby Catholic Church. It's kind of like eleven of them equals one acharya or something, because if each of them individually is acharya, then how come they have to have elections to decide who another acharya might be? As it is now they have to get together to decide whether another person is really a bona fide candidate to be guru, whether he gets to initiate any people or not. This means they are admitting they have no vision, it means that none of them is empowered.

It will be very difficult for them if, when they have their election, the result is not unanimous. What if seven of them say, "Yes, this person is qualified," and four of them say, "No"? It means either that four of them are wrong or seven of them are wrong. If some of them are wrong, it means they're fallible, i.e. not representatives of God. If they are fallible, how is it that a fallible person has been appointed as an "acharya"?

These same people that are now playing this game of appointed and elected acharyas used to put that whole scene down. They put it down because of its absurdity. They used to say that the reason the Christian disciplic succession was broken was because this idea of elections was introduced. But you don't hear them saying it now.

## Conclusion

The foolish people may be happy to accept a guru by this method, but those who are sincere, those who really want to know God, cannot be satisfied by such a superficial process. Instead, they take instructions from the scripture and they go within their hearts and they pray, "Show me your devotee," and in this way actually come to know from God Himself who the representative of God is.

Mundane votes have no jurisdiction to elect a Vaishnava acharya. A Vaishnava acharya is

self-effulgent . . . (A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, 1:220, purport)

**Question:** *But they would say that their votes are not mundane.*

**Jagat Guru:** I have already defeated that argument. If they were not mundane personalities there wouldn't be any need to vote, since whatever they said would be the word of God. The very fact that they do vote, or even talk of it, admits that they are mundane.

For additional information contact: