

Below you will find that In February 1936, in Bombay, (parts of a) Vyasa Puja talk give by AC Bhaktivedanta Swami on behalf of his guru maharaj, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Maharaj. His words then, are still relevent today .

SSR 2 Choosing a Spiritual Master

Gentlemen, the offering of such an homage as has been arranged this evening to the Acaryadeva is not a sectarian concern, for when we speak of the fundamental principle of gurudeva, or acaryadeva, we speak of something that is of universal application. There does not arise any question of discriminating my guru from yours or anyone else's. **There is only one guru, who appears in an infinity of forms to teach you, me, and all others.**

Thus it has been enjoined herewith that in order to receive that transcendental knowledge, one must approach the guru. Therefore, if the Absolute Truth is one, about which we think there is no difference of opinion, the guru also cannot be two. The Acaryadeva for whom we have assembled tonight to offer our humble homage is not the guru of a sectarian institution or one out of many differing exponents of the truth. On the contrary, he is the Jagad-guru, or the guru of all of us; the only difference is that some obey him wholeheartedly, while others do not obey him directly.

acaryam mam vijaniyan
navamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyasuyeta
sarva-devamayo guruh

"One should understand the spiritual master to be as good as I am," said the Blessed Lord. "Nobody should be jealous of the spiritual master or think of him as an ordinary man, because the spiritual master is the sum total of all demigods." That is, the acarya has been identified with God Himself. He has nothing to do with the affairs of this mundane world. He does not descend here to meddle with the affairs of temporary necessities, but to deliver the fallen, conditioned souls--the souls, or entities, who have come here to the material world with a motive of enjoyment by the mind and the five organs of sense perception. He appears before us to reveal the light of the Vedas and to bestow upon us the blessings of full-fledged freedom, after which we should hanker at every step of our life's journey.

... **One who interprets the divine sound, or sabda-brahma, by his imperfect sense perception cannot be a real spiritual guru,** because, in the absence of proper disciplinary training under the bona fide acarya, the interpreter is sure to differ from Vyasadeva (as the Mayavadis do). Srila Vyasadeva is the prime authority of Vedic revelation, and therefore such an irrelevant interpreter cannot be accepted as the guru, or acarya, howsoever equipped he may be with all the acquirements of material knowledge.

... Gentlemen, our knowledge is so poor, our senses are so imperfect, and our sources are so limited that it is not possible for us to have even the slightest knowledge of the absolute region without surrendering ourselves at the lotus feet of Sri Vyasadeva or his bona fide representative. **Every moment we are being deceived by the knowledge of our direct perception.** It is all the creation or

concoction of the mind, which is always deceiving, changing, and flickering. We cannot know anything of the transcendental region by our limited, perverted method of observation and experiment. But all of us can lend our eager ears for the aural reception of the transcendental sound transmitted from that region to this through the unadulterated medium of Sri Gurudeva or Sri Vyasadeva. Therefore, gentlemen, we should surrender ourselves today at the feet of the representative of Sri Vyasadeva for the elimination of all our differences bred by our unsubmitive attitude.

To receive the transcendental knowledge we must completely surrender ourselves to the real acarya in a spirit of ardent inquiry and service. Actual performance of service to the Absolute under the guidance of the acarya is the only vehicle by which we can assimilate the transcendental knowledge.

Katha Upanisad (1.3.14)

uttisthata jagrata

prapya varan nibodhata

ksurasya dhara nisita duratyaya

durgam pathas tat kavayo vadanti

"Please wake up and try to understand the boon that you now have in this human form of life. The path of spiritual realization is very difficult; it is sharp like a razor's edge. That is the opinion of learned transcendental scholars."

Gentlemen, although it is imperfectly that we have been enabled by his grace to understand the sublime messages of our Acaryadeva, Om Visnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacarya Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja, we must admit that we have realized definitely that the divine message from his holy lips is the congenial thing for suffering humanity. All of us should hear him patiently. If we listen to the transcendental sound without unnecessary opposition, he will surely have mercy upon us. The Acarya's Message is to take us back to our original home, back to God. Let me repeat, therefore, that **we should hear him patiently, follow him in the measure of our conviction, and bow down at his lotus feet for releasing us from our present causeless unwillingness for serving the Absolute and all souls.**

Gentlemen, do not for a moment think that my Gurudeva wants to put a complete brake on the modern civilization--an impossible feat. But let us learn from him the art of making the best use of a bad bargain, and let us understand the importance of this human life, which is fit for the highest development of true consciousness. The best use of this rare human life should not be neglected.

... "One is said to be situated in the fully renounced order of life if he lives in accordance with Krsna consciousness. He should be without attachment for sense gratification and should accept only what is necessary for the upkeep of the body. On the other hand, one who renounces things that could be used in the service of Krsna, under the pretext that such things are material, does not practice complete renunciation.

The purport of these slokas can only be realized by fully developing the rational portion of our life, not the animal portion.

Sitting at the feet of the Acaryadeva, let us try to understand from this transcendental source of knowledge what we are, what is this universe, what is God, and what is our relationship with Him. The

message of Lord Caitanya is the message for the living entities and the message of the living world. Lord Caitanya did not bother Himself for the upliftment of this dead world, which is suitably named Martyaloka, the world where everything is destined to die. He appeared before us four hundred fifty years ago to tell us something of the transcendental universe, where everything is permanent and everything is for the service of the Absolute.

Personally, I have no hope for any direct service for the coming crores of births of the sojourn of my life, but I am confident that some day or other I shall be delivered from this mire of delusion in which I am at present so deeply sunk. Therefore let me with all my earnestness pray at the lotus feet of my divine master to allow me to suffer the lot for which I am destined due to my past misdoings, but **to let me have this power of recollection: that I am nothing but a tiny servant of the Almighty Absolute Godhead, realized through the unflinching mercy of my divine master. Let me therefore bow down at his lotus feet with all the humility at my command.**