

BONAFIDE GURU'S ASSOCIATION DEPENDS NOT ON PHYSICAL PRESENCE

SRILA PRABHUPADA: I AM ALWAYS THINKING OF YOU

You write that you have desire to avail of my association again, but why do you forget that you are always in association with me? When you are helping my missionary activities I am always thinking of you, and you are always thinking of me . That is real association. Just like I am always thinking of my Guru Maharaja at every moment, although he is not physically present, and because I am trying to serve him to my best capacity, I am sure he is helping me by his spiritual blessings. So there are two kinds of association: physical and preceptorial. Physical association is not so important as preceptorial association. (*SP Letter to Govinda Dasi, 18/8/69*)

But always remember that I am always with you. As you are always thinking of me, I am always thinking of you also. Although physically we are not together, we are not separated spiritually. So we should be concerned only with this spiritual connection. (*SP Letter to Gaurasundara, 13/11/69*)

You write to say,I really miss Swamiji and my God-brothers' association so much." But I may remind you that I am always with you. And so wherever I am there, and you are there, all your God-brothers are there. Please remember always the humble teachings that you have received from me, and that will make you always associated with me, and with your other God-brothers. (*Letter to: Sivananda dasa. Montreal, 24 August, 1968*)

"However, the disciple and spiritual master are never separated because the spiritual master always keeps company with the disciple as long as the disciple follows strictly the instructions of the spiritual master. This is called the association of vani (words). Physical presence is called vapuh. As long as the spiritual master is physically present, the disciple should serve the physical body of the spiritual master, and when the spiritual master is no longer physically existing, the disciple should serve the instructions of the spiritual master." (*SB 4.28.47 purport*)

I am always thinking of you, and I am feeling separation. I wish to return at the earliest opportunity. I cannot stop my western world activities and I have taken leave from you for only six months; and it may be that on or before I will come to you again. So continue your activities with great vigor. I shall always pray to Krishna for your steady advance, but try to follow the principles which are necessary to strengthen oneself in the matter of spiritual advance. Never think that I am absent from you. Physical presence is not essential; presence by message (or hearing) is real touch. Lord Krishna is present by His message which was delivered 5,000 years ago. We feel always the presence of our past Acaryas simply by their immutable instructions. I hope you will understand me right and do the needful. (*Letter to Students: Vrindavan 2 August, 1967*)

"To feel separation from the Spiritual Master or Krishna is very good position. That means one who is in pure love with Krishna and His Representative, Spiritual Master, he thinks always of Them. And this thinking process is Krishna consciousness. If we can think always of Krishna even in separation, that is Krishna Consciousness. And in the absolute platform, there is no

difference of separation and meeting. The separation is also meeting, rather in separation one relishes the loving relationship more tasty. So don't be disappointed that you are separated from me, I am also always thinking of you how you are making progress there. And I am always expecting your letters that you have already opened a center there, and you are working very nicely." (*October 21, 1968 Seattle, Washington Letter to: Dear Krishna das*)

My Dear Jayananda, Please accept my blessings. I am in receipt of your letter dated November 13, 1973. I was very happy to hear from you. I am always thinking of you and praying to Krsna for your advancement in Krishna Consciousness. (*1 December, 1973 Los Angeles*)

I am always with you. Never mind if I am physically absent. (*Letter to Jayananda, 16/9/67*)

ASSOCIATE WITH SRILA PRABHUPADA THROUGH HIS VANI

Physical presence is immaterial. Presence of the transcendental sound received from the Spiritual Master should be the guidance of life. That will make our spiritual life successful. If you feel very strongly about my absence you may place my pictures on my sitting places and this will be source of inspiration for you. (*Letter to Brahmananda and other students, 19/1/67*)

But always remember that I am always with you. As you are always thinking of me, I am always thinking of you also. Although physically we aren't together, we are not separated spiritually. So we should be concerned only with this spiritual connection. (*Letter to Gaurasundara, 13/11/69*)

So we should associate by vibration, and not by the physical presence. That is real association. (*Lectures SB, 68/08/18*)

There are two conceptions, the physical conception and the vibrational conception. The physical conception is temporary. The vibrational conception is eternal.[...]When we feel separation from Krsna or the Spiritual Master, we should just try to remember their words or 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, BBT 1973, Page 57*)

Although according to material vision His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarsavati Thakura Prabhupada passed away from this material world on the last day of December 1936, I still consider his Divine Grace to be always present with me by his vani, his words. There are two ways of association - by vani and by vapuh. Vani means words and vapuh means physical presence. Physical presence is sometimes appreciable and sometimes not, but Vani continues to exist eternally. Therefore, one must take advantage of the Vani, not the physical presence. (*CC, Antya 5 Conclusion*)

Therefore we should take advantage of the Vani, not the physical presence. (*Letter to Suci Devi Dasi, 4/11/75*)

I shall remain your personal guidance, physically present or not physically present, as I am getting guidance from my Guru Maharaja. (*Room Conversation, Vrindavan, 14/7/77*)

It is sometimes misunderstood that if one has to associate with persons engaged in devotional service, he will not be able to solve the economic problem. To answer this argument, it is described here that one has to associate with liberated persons not directly, physically, but by understanding, through philosophy and logic, the problems of life. (*SB 3:31:48*)

I am always with you. Never mind if I am physically absent. (*Letter to Jayananda, 16/9/67*)

Paramananda: We're always feeling your presence very strongly, Srila Prabhupada, simply by your teachings and your instructions. We're always meditating on your instructions. Srila Prabhupada: Thank you. That is the real presence. Physical presence is not important. (*Room Conversation, Vrindavana, 6/10/77*)

You write that you have desire to avail of my association again, but why do you forget that you are always in association with me? When you are helping my missionary activities I am always thinking of you, and you are always thinking of me. That is real association. Just like I am always thinking of my Guru Maharaja at every moment, although he is not physically present, and because I am trying to serve him to my best capacity, I am sure he is helping me by his spiritual blessings. So there are two kinds of association: physical and preceptorial. Physical association is not so important as preceptorial association. (*Letter to Govinda Dasi, 18/8/69*)

As far as my blessing is concerned, it does not require my physical presence. If you are chanting Hare Krsna there, and following my instructions, reading the books, taking only Krsna prasadam etc., then there is no question of your not receiving the blessings of Lord Caitanya, whose mission I am humbly trying to push on. (*Letter to Bala Krsna, 30/6/74*)

'Anyone who has developed unflinching faith in the Lord and the Spiritual Master can understand the revealed scripture unfolding before him'. So continue your present aptitude and you will be successful in your spiritual progress. I am sure that even if I am not physically present before you, still you will be able to execute all spiritual duties in the matter of Krsna Consciousness, if you follow the above principles. (*Letter to Subala, 29/9/67*)

So although a physical body is not present, the vibration should be accepted as the presence of the Spiritual Master, vibration. What we have heard from the Spiritual Master, that is living. (*General lectures, 69/01/13*)

Devotee: ...so sometimes the Spiritual Master is far away. He may be in Los Angeles. Somebody is coming to Hamburg Temple. He thinks 'How will the Spiritual Master be pleased?'

Srila Prabhupada: Just follow his order, Spiritual Master is along with you by his words. Just like my Spiritual Master is not physically present, but I am associating with him by his words. (*SB Lectures, 71/08/18*)

Just like I am working, so my Guru Maharaja is there, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati. Physically he may not be, but in every action he is there. To serve master's word is more important than to serve physically. (*Room Conversation, Vrindavan, 2/5/77*)

So that is called prakata, physically present. And there is another phrase, which is called aprakata, not physically present. But that does not mean, Krsna is dead or God is dead. That does not mean, prakata or aprakata, physically present or not present, it does not matter. (*Lectures SB 73/12/11*)

So, spiritually, there is no question of separation, even physically we may be in far distant place. (*Letter to Syama Dasi, 30/08/68*)

I went to your country for spreading this information of Krsna Consciousness and you are helping me in my mission, although I am not physically present there but spiritually I am always with you. (*Letter to Nandarani, Krsna Devi and Subala, 3/10/67*)

We are not separated actually. There are two - Vanior Vapuh - so Vapu is physical presence and Vani is presence by the vibration, but they are all the same. (*Letter to Hamsadutta, 22/6/70*)

So in the absence of physical presentation of the spiritual master, the Vaniseva is more important. My Spiritual Master Sarsavati Goswami, may appear to be physically not present, but still because I try to serve his instruction, I never feel separated from him. (*Letter to Karandhara, 22/8/70*)

I also do not feel separation from my Guru Maharaja. When I am engaged in his service, his pictures give me sufficient strength. To serve master's word is more important than to serve him physically. (*Letter to Syamasundara, 19/7/70*)

So far personal association with the Guru is concerned, I was only with my Guru Maharaja four or five times, but I have never left his association, not even for a moment. Because I am following his instructions, I have never felt any separation. There are some of my Godbrothers here in India who had constant personal association with Guru Maharaja, but who are neglecting his orders. This is just like the bug who is sitting on the lap of the king. He may be very puffed-up by his position, but all he can succeed in doing is biting the king. Personal association is not so important as association through service. (*Letter to: Satadhanya dasa. Calcutta, 20 February, 1972*)

The disciple and spiritual master are never separated because the spiritual master always keeps company with the disciple as long as the disciple follows strictly the instructions of the spiritual master. This is called the association of vani (words). Physical presence is called vapuh. As long as the spiritual master is physically present, the disciple should serve the physical body of the spiritual master, and when the spiritual master is no longer physically existing, the disciple should serve the instructions of the spiritual master. (*SB 4.28.47*)

In conclusion, if a disciple is very serious to execute the mission of the spiritual master, he immediately associates with the Supreme Personality of Godhead by vani or vapuh. This is the

only secret of success in seeing the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Instead of being eager to see the Lord in some bush of Vrndavana while at the same time engaging in sense gratification, if one instead sticks to the principle of following the words of the spiritual master, he will see the Supreme Lord without difficulty. *(SB 4.28.51)*

Prabhupada: So I cannot speak. I am feeling very weak. I was to go to other places like Chandigarh program, but I cancelled the program because the condition of my health is very deteriorating. So I preferred to come to Vrndavana. If death takes place, let it take here. So there is nothing to be said new. Whatever I have to speak, I have spoken in my books. Now you try to understand it and continue your endeavor. Whether I am present or not present, it doesn't matter. As Krsna is living eternally, similarly, living being also lives eternally. But KIRTIR YASYA SA JIVATI: "ONE WHO HAS DONE SERVICE TO THE LORD LIVES FOREVER." So you have been taught to serve Krsna, and with Krsna we'll live eternally. Our life is eternal. Na hanyate hanyamane sarire. A temporary disappearance of this body, it doesn't matter. Body is meant for its appearance. Tatha dehantara-praptih. So live forever by serving Krsna. Thank you very much. *(770517ar.vrn Conversations)*

Reporter (2): What will happen to the movement in the United States when you die? Prabhupada: I WILL NEVER DIE. Devotees: Jaya! Hari bol! (laughter) Prabhupada: I SHALL LIVE FROM MY BOOKS, AND YOU WILL UTILIZE. Reporter (2): Are you training a successor? Prabhupada: Yes, my Guru Maharaja is there. Where is my photo of Guru Maharaja? I think... Here is. *(750716pc.sf Conversations)*

He reasons ill who tells that Vaishnavas die When thou are living still in sound. The Vaishnavas die to live and living try to Spread a holy life around! *(Bhaktivinode Thakur)*

Indian Lady: ... is that spiritual master still guiding after death? Srila Prabhupada: Yes, yes. Just like Krsna is guiding us, similarly spiritual master will guide us. *(General lectures, 69/09/23)*

Devotee: Srila Prabhupada when you're not present with us , how is it possible to receive instructions? For example in questions that may arise... SRILA PRABHUPADA: Well the questions are answered... answers are there in my books. *(Morning Walk, Los Angeles, 13/5/73)*

So utilise whatever time you find to make a thorough study of my books. Then all your questions will be answered. *(Letter to Upendra, 7/1/76)*

Every one of you must regularly read our books at least twice, in the morning and evening, and automatically all questions will be answered. *(Letter to Randhira, 24/01/70)*

If I depart there is no cause for lamentation. I will always be with you through my books and orders. I will always remain with you in that way. *(BTG 13:1-2, December 1977)*

In my books the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness is EXPLAINED FULLY so if there is anything which you do not understand, then you simply have to read again and again. By reading daily THE KNOWLEDGE WILL BE REVEALED TO YOU AND BY THIS PROCESS YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE WILL DEVELOP. *(74-11-22 Letter: Bahurupa)*

Note: This clearly indicates that Srila Prabhupada's books are understood through their own potency, and that there is therefore no need for a physically present guru to understand the books. Our Srimad Bhagavatam is unique because the verses of the Bhagavatam are directly complemented with the purports of Srila Prabhupada, who is the bonafide maha-bhagavata ; therefore, the book Bhagavata and the person Bhagavata are combined in Srila Prabhupada's Srimad Bhagavatam. Therefore, there is no need for a third party, "the so called current Iskcon links" to (mis)interpret what Srila Prabhupada "really means to say". sic

Cidananda I should be returning to Los Angeles the last week of November and I should be more than happy to see you there. 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 acharya's and in the end you will see. (73-11-25. Letter)

Prabhupada: So there is nothing to be said new. Whatever I have to speak, I have spoken in my books. Now you try to understand it and continue your endeavor. Whether I am present or not present, it doesn't matter. (770517ar.vrn Conversations)

"I shall remain your personal guidance, physically present or not physically, as I am getting personal guidance from my guru maharaja" (Srila Prabhupada to Tamal Krishna, 14 July 1977)

Srila Prabhupada's position is nicely explained in His purports of the second canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam:

“...and this love of Godhead can be attained only by the practice of transcendental loving service of the lord and nothing

Else... the lord's name, form, quality, pastimes, entourage, etc as they are described in the revealed scriptures or as

Performed in the Vaikuntha lokas, far, far beyond the cosmic manifestation are factually being televised in the heart of

the devotee... The spiritually developed person is able to have the television of the Kingdom of God always reflected within

his heart. This is the mystery of knowledge of the Personality of Godhead...”

Srimad-Bhagavatam Bhaktivedanta Purports 2.9.35