

How to "choose" a spiritual master? -- Digest 223: June 3rd 2007.

550) I am coming to realize that a ship without a captain can have no direction and could get lost; in the same way I'm constantly thinking of choosing a Guru to help me understand and lead my life in the proper guided direction. How to make this difficult choice with so many great learned spiritual teachers (Gurus) out there?

Answer: It is essential for a prospective disciple to gain a clear, scripturally-based understanding of the qualifications and duties of a guru, as well as that of a disciple. We have briefly discussed the characteristics by which one can ascertain a bona fide spiritual master in Digest 10 (Q 100, 101 <http://www.romapadaswami.com/Inquiries>). "The Spiritual Master and The Disciple", a BBT publication, gives a detailed compilation from Prabhupada's writings on this subject - you may find this book beneficial. It is also available in electronic form on Vedabase.

Before making the decision of accepting a particular spiritual master, it is the duty of the aspiring disciple to carefully examine and ascertain whether one can actually surrender to such a spiritual master and follow him. Thus, in addition to preparing yourself by seeking a basic scriptural understanding on this subject, one should also seek opportunities to regularly associate with an advanced devotee or, if possible, one who is an authorized spiritual master --- hear from them, and simultaneously observe their nature and qualities in the light of the scriptural indications mentioned in the scriptures. This builds confidence and trust in how the devotee is purely and faithfully representing the disciplic succession.

When presenting one's concerns or doubts before a prospective spiritual master, one should examine whether one's doubts can in fact be dispelled. See SB 11.3.21. Also Tad-vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet samitpani srotiyam brahma-nistham [MU 1.2.12].

Likewise, it is also the duty of the spiritual master to test the disciple in turn to ensure they are sincere and eligible to receive confidential spiritual knowledge..Establishing a relationship based on service and inquiry (as indicated in BG 4.34) before initiation is important for this mutual confidence to grow and strengthen. Thus, generally, in most cases, choosing or accepting a spiritual master is not an instantaneous affair, but a carefully deliberated decision.

Choosing a spiritual master is quite different from a mundane exercise of 'choosing' some physical article or a relationship in this material world based on the mind's likes and dislikes. Going by personal appeal or by some superficial criteria such as popular acclaim or some other external traits, or making comparisons --- these are likely to be misleading. Rather, one must look for the symptoms of a self-realized soul manifesting in the person of such a spiritual master, in the light of scriptural directions as stated above.

In the course of this process, the most important criterion on the part of the aspiring disciple is to nurture and strengthen their own internal convictions, sincerity and commitment for spiritual life.

If the disciple harbors ulterior motives for some temporary, material benefits, then one is likely to be misled in the search for a guru. Therefore one should progressively cultivate one's own sincerity of purpose in seeking a bona fide spiritual master competent to guide one to ultimate spiritual perfection. (jijnasuh shreya uttamam SB 11.3.21).

When the disciple's heart is ready and prepared in this way, Lord Krishna reciprocates with such sincerity and prayers by sending the bona fide spiritual master into the devotee's life. It will become amply clear who one's spiritual master is at that time and the earnest disciple will be able to readily recognize and thus proceed to solidify that relationship as described above.

Spiritual advancement : Digest 52: Feb 12th 2003

274) I wish to know when a person is eligible to take diksha (spiritual initiation). I am chanting sixteen rounds and following the four regulative principles. What more conditions are to be followed before taking diksha - initiation. Please specify in detail.

Answer: Srila Prabhupada established a bare minimum general condition within ISKCON that if one is chanting sixteen rounds daily and following the regulative principles under the guidance of a spiritual master for six months to a year, they can be considered for initiation. Since that time, ISKCON has established further criteria for receiving diksa. For further details about these regulations, please refer to Digest 10 Q2 at <http://www.romapadaswami.com/Inquiries>, and write directly to the GBC Secretary requesting a copy of the regulations which are the formal standards within ISKCON for receiving diksa.

It is an approved vaishnava principle and is welcome that an aspiring disciple approach a bona-fide spiritual master, take shelter of his lotus feet and request initiation, as recommended by Krishna in Bg 4.34. The process of making submissive inquiries & receiving instructions and the rendering of service lays the foundation for a relationship of strong faith between the spiritual master and the candidate for initiation. During this time the devotee is also encouraged to understand the philosophy through study of Srila Prabhupada's books such as Bhagavad-gita, Nectar of Instruction etc, and develop a deeper understanding of the import of diksa and spiritual master and disciple relationship.

There is a book published by BBT, called "The Spiritual Master and The Disciple" which describes in great detail about the qualities and duties of a spiritual master and also that of the disciple. When opportunity arises, you could study this book to gain deeper understanding of the spiritual master and disciple relationship. <http://www.romapadaswami.com/Inquiries/SpiritualMasterAndDisciple.doc>

Spiritual Master : Digest 10: June 22nd 2001

100) How to recognize a self-realized spiritual master and how to approach for spiritual initiation?

101) It is said in Bhagavad-gita that we must approach a bonafide spiritual master who has seen the truth. Now how is it possible for a candidate to identify the person who has seen the truth?

Answer: One of the primary characteristics of a bona fide spiritual master is that such a guru himself belongs to a bona fide disciplic succession, beginning from the Supreme Lord Himself, and is authorized to perform the service of a spiritual master.

The intelligence of a conditioned living entity is subject to defects. A bonafide guru would never present any invented, self-made defective teachings, but will always simply repeat what the scriptures and Supreme Lord say, without any modification or distortion. Only these teaching can be considered flawless, and they constitute the teachings of a bona fide spiritual master.

When asked how to recognize which of the various translations of Bhagavad-gita was best to read, Srila Prabhupada replied, 'Who do you think will represent the Bhagavad-gita better - one who is cent percent devoted to Krishna, and who is always speaking about and glorifying Krishna, or one who lectures on Bhagavad-gita for two hours and never mentions the name of Krishna?' Thus, one who knows the science of Krishna and is devoted to Krishna is the topmost guru.

Most importantly, they never claim to be God themselves. Also they themselves are strict followers of sastra and guide their followers on the path of liberation from material attachment.

Your specific question addresses the symptoms of a self-realized soul. This is addressed directly in both Bhagavad-gita and in Srimad Bhagavatam. For some sample references see BG 2.54-58, 14.21-26, and 7.28, and SB. 4.22.20-14, and 27-28. There are many such references in Srimad Bhagavatam.

You also asked how to approach a spiritual master for initiation. Bhagavad-gita (4.34) describes the process of approaching the spiritual master very clearly. One should surrender to him with submission, render humble service to him, and inquire about spiritual topics. Through the medium of submissive inquiry and service, one can develop a meaningful relationship with a particular spiritual master, and by this same process one can also become gradually eligible to receive spiritual initiation. (For further references on this topic, there is a book published by BBT, "The Spiritual Master and The Disciple" which describes in great detail about the qualities and duties of a spiritual master and disciple.)

One has to directly request the spiritual master to accept one as a disciple. This direct request is best done after some mutual understanding and confidence are established in the relationship.

102) Can somebody act like a guru without actually initiating somebody? In the sense I accept somebody as my guru and follow his instructions. And when I am able to fully follow all his instructions take initiation?

Answer: This is called *siksa guru*, and it is most certainly a very real consideration in making spiritual advancement. Most likely there are persons who are guiding you at present, and those persons are a type of spiritual guide or leader in your life. To accept someone in the role of guru, however, means that their guidance is accepted in an absolute manner by you. That is to say, even if your present practices are not yet so mature that you are eligible for *diksa*, you can still take shelter of someone whose instructions you accept in an absolute manner. This is of course a very 'heavy' kind of submission to present unto another person, and therefore should not be taken in any light manner by you. But to answer your question directly, most certainly one can fully follow the instructions of someone, prior to being an initiated devotee.

144) I had taken shelter from a spiritual master and he from his pure lips mentioned, "I can initiate you anytime," and later confirmed that he will be initiating me in the coming initiation function. However, later by Krishna's mercy the spiritual master left his body. As I have already accepted him as my spiritual master, is it still necessary for me to get initiated from a different spiritual master. Isn't the promise from the spiritual master indicative that I am already his initiated disciple?

Answer: The confirmation of the spiritual master most certainly affirms his acceptance of you as his disciple, and so also have you accepted him as your spiritual master in your heart. However, although what happened is unfortunate, according to the teachings of our scriptures and previous acaryas, we learn that the formal *diksa* ceremony is an essential and vital event or milestone in spiritual life for a devotee. Initiation or acceptance and taking shelter of a spiritual master is essentially a matter of the heart; however, the formal ceremony of initiation and formal acceptance of a spiritual master is not unimportant either.

It is through the *diksa* ceremony that a devotee is formally connected to the guru-parampara and ultimately to Krishna. Therefore the scriptural recommendation is that one must accept the formal *diksa* initiation from a bona fide spiritual master through whom one is connected to the parampara. Taking initiation from another spiritual master will not hamper your feelings of devotion and gratitude to the other spiritual master, nor will it nullify that acceptance of the heart; rather the shelter and guidance of your *diksa-guru* should only support and strengthen your connection with the former relationship.

Initiation and Karma: Digest 225: June 17th 2007

553) When you give 1st initiation you take all of your disciples Karma right,so if when you give 2nd initiation do you also take the karma that has accumulated in the time span between the two initiations or do you not take it until they are ready for the third initiation. This question has been a topic of debate also, but this time in my mind.

Answer: This is an interesting question -- to address this, let us first try to understand what is involved in the absolving of karma during initiation.

At the time of initiation, specifically the 1st initiation (or harinama diksha), a devotee surrenders himself at the lotus feet of Krishna, through His representative, the spiritual master: "My dear Lord Krishna, from this day, I am yours." When a disciple surrenders in this way, Krishna relieves the devotee from all their past karma, just as He promises in the Bhagavad-Gita, "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear." (BG 18.66)

Krishna is the Supreme Pure and He alone can take away the sinful reactions of someone without becoming affected, just as the sun can burn up any impurity without itself getting contaminated. But the spiritual master, as the empowered representative of Krishna, acting on His behalf and in a mood of very deep compassion, takes the sinful reactions of the disciple, and by the fire of his own intense devotional service burns up the reactions to these sins.

However, the surrender and initiation is not a matter of formal ceremony only. It calls for actual surrender of the heart, and conducting one's life in a mood of surrender from that point onwards, under the direction of Guru and Krsna. The devotee thus vows at the time of initiation to 'SIN NO MORE' -specifically by giving up the four pillars of sinful activity viz. meat-eating, intoxication, illicit sex and gambling. They also vow to regularly chant the Holy Names and sincerely follow the guidance of the spiritual master - by doing so they will be insulated from accumulating any further sins, because actions done for pleasing Krishna under the direction of scriptures & guru have no karma (BG 3.9).

Srila Prabhupada gave the example that initiation is like unplugging a fan. The idea is that one should not continue to keep sinning after initiation. That would be like plugging in the fan once again, which means the cycle of karma will continue to spin again. If a disciple thinks, "I will keep engaging in karmic and sinful activities, and my spiritual master will take the reactions, or I will chant the Holy Name and nullify the reactions", such a mentality is considered most offensive.

It is on this basis that Srila Prabhupada often expressed deep unhappiness whenever he came across so-called followers of Christianity who professed that one can go to the church every Sunday and confess their sins without ever rectifying themselves, or that one can accept Jesus Christ as their savior and carry on with their sinful ways, with the idea that Christ will suffer on the cross for their sins. Such an attitude is not at all in a loving devotional spirit, is it not? Rather it is very heinous.

The Bhagavatam also censures such a method of repeated sinning and atoning as useless like the bathing of an elephant. Have you ever observed elephants bathe? They would take a nice, fresh bath in the lake but as soon as they return to the land, they throw dust all over their bodies. Thus, if after initiation a disciple does not gratefully and sincerely endeavor to abide by Krishna's teachings and live a pure life, they will not be able to experience the efficacy of the initiation process nor make further progress.

In short, initiation is not a sort of periodic cleansing of karmic reactions, rather it is meant to put a full-stop to all karma and embark on a life of purity and surrender to Krishna. The second initiation (or brahminical initiation) is taking another forward step by making further commitments to deepen one's purity, whereupon the

disciple receives the Gayatri mantra and can formally worship Deities and so on. Thus one makes further and further spiritual advancement, moving closer to one's eternal relationship with Lord Krishna.

I hope this clarifies your doubt! Yes it is true that the spiritual master takes all the sinful reactions/karma of a disciple immediately after the disciple's initiation. Here is a quote from Bhagavatam that supports this:

“As Krsna takes away all the sinful reactions of a person immediately upon his surrender unto Him, similarly the external manifestation of Krsna, the representative of Krsna who acts as the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, takes all the resultant actions of the sinful life of the disciple immediately after the disciple's initiation. Thus if the disciple follows the principles instructed by the spiritual master, he remains purified and is not contaminated by the material infection. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu therefore states that the spiritual master who plays the part of Krsna's representative has to consume all the sinful reactions of his disciple.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 4.21.31) If after initiation the disciple again commits sinful activities, his spiritual master has to suffer. Below is what Srila Prabhupada said regarding this: ~~~

Srila Prabhupada: He [Jesus Christ] took the sinful reactions of all the people. Therefore he suffered. He said - that is in the Bible - that he took all the sinful reactions of the people and sacrificed his life. But these Christian people have made it a law for Christ to suffer while they do all nonsense. Such great fools they are! They have let Jesus Christ make a contract for taking all their sinful reactions so they can go on with all nonsense. That is their religion. Christ was so magnanimous that he took all their sins and suffered, but that does not induce them to stop all these sins. They have not come to that sense. They have taken it very easily. "Let Lord Jesus Christ suffer, and we'll do all nonsense." Is it not?

Bob: It is so.

Srila Prabhupada: They should have been ashamed: "Lord Jesus Christ suffered for us, but we are continuing the sinful activities." He told everyone, "Thou shall not kill," but they are indulging in killing, thinking, "Lord Jesus Christ will excuse us and take all the sinful reactions." This is going on. We should be very much cautious: "For my sinful actions my spiritual master will suffer, so I'll not commit even a pinch of sinful activities." That is the duty of the disciple. After initiation, all sinful reaction is finished. Now if he again commits sinful activities, his spiritual master has to suffer. A disciple should be sympathetic and consider this. "For my sinful activities, my spiritual master will suffer." If the spiritual master is attacked by some disease, it is due to the sinful activities of others. "Don't make many disciples." But we do it because we are preaching. Never mind - let us suffer -still we shall accept them. Therefore your question was - when I suffer is it due to my past misdeeds? Was it not? That is my misdeed - that I accepted some disciples who are nonsense. That is my misdeed.

Bob: This happens on occasions?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. This is sure to happen because we are accepting so many men. It is the duty of the disciples to be cautious. "My spiritual master has saved me. I should not put him again into suffering." When the spiritual master is in suffering, Krsna saves him. Krsna thinks, "Oh, he has taken so much responsibility for delivering a fallen person." So Krsna is there. Kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranasyati [Bg. 9.31]. ["O son of Kunti, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes."] Because the spiritual master takes the risk on account of Krsna.

Bob: Your suffering is not the same kind of pain...

Srila Prabhupada: No, it is not due to karma. The pain is there sometimes, so that the disciples may know, "Due to our sinful activities, our spiritual master is suffering."

Bob: You look very well now.

Srila Prabhupada: I am always well ... in the sense that even if there is suffering, I know Krsna will protect me. But this suffering is not due to my sinful activities.

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After initiation, the disciple must not cause trouble for his spiritual master by committing sinful acts:

“A devotee sometimes accepts a sinful person as his disciple, and to counteract the sinful reactions he accepts from the disciple, he has to see a bad dream. Nonetheless, the spiritual master is so kind that in spite of having bad dreams due to the sinful disciple, he accepts this troublesome business for the deliverance of the victims of

Kali-yuga. After initiation, therefore, a disciple should be extremely careful not to commit again any sinful act that might cause difficulties for himself and the spiritual master. Before the Deity, before the fire, before the spiritual master and before the Vaisnavas, the honest disciple promises to refrain from all sinful activity. Therefore he must not again commit sinful acts and thus create a troublesome situation.”(Srimad-Bhagavatam 8.4.15)

#### Difference Between 1st and 2nd Initiation

Within our Krsna Consciousness Movement there are two stages of initiation, each having their particular significance and function. There is a great science to their inter-relationship, as revealed to us specifically by the writings of the six gosvamis in their expanding upon the teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

In quick summary, first initiation of Hari Nama initiation can theoretically be sufficient for going back to Godhead if the devotee can come to the stage of pure and offenseless chanting. However, the added purification that comes from the chanting of the Gayatri mantra and from the strict observance of the rules and regulations involved in Deity worship are practically essential for bringing us to the stage of pure chanting.

In the sections below you will find what our devotional scriptures teach on this topic.

#### **What is initiation (Diksa):**

Diksa is a compound word which is derived from the verb "diyate", "to give" and "ksiyate" to "destroy". Knowledge and liberation are given while sins are destroyed. Srila Jiva Gosvami explains diksa in his Bhakti-Sandarbha (283):divyam jnanam yato dadyat kuryat papasya sanksayam tasmad dikseti sa proktadesikais tatva-kovidaih

"Diksa is the process by which one can awaken his transcendental knowledge and vanquish all reactions caused by sinful activity. A person expert in the study of the revealed scriptures knows this process as diksa."

#### **The Necessity and Purpose of Initiation:**

One's actual connection with Krsna is established at the time of initiation by a bona fide spiritual master: This relationship [with Krsna] is established by connecting oneself with the bona fide spiritual master who is the direct representative of Krsna in disciplic succession. The connection with the spiritual master is called initiation. From the date of initiation by the spiritual master, the connection between Krsna and a person cultivating Krsna consciousness is established. Without initiation by a bona fide spiritual master, the actual connection with Krsna consciousness is never performed. (The Nectar of Devotion)

#### **The purpose of initiation:**

It is the spiritual master who delivers the disciple from the clutches of maya by initiating him into the chanting of the Hare Krsna maha-mantra. In this way a sleeping human being can revive his consciousness by chanting Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. In other words, 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. (Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 9.61)

#### **The requirements of initiation:**

We do not immediately initiate disciples in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. For six months, a candidate for initiation must first attend arati and classes in the sastras, practice the regulative principles and associate with other devotees. When one is actually advanced in the purascarya-vidhi, he is recommended by the local temple president for initiation. It is not that anyone can be suddenly initiated without meeting the

requirements. When one is further advanced by chanting the Hare Krsna mantra sixteen rounds daily, following the regulative principles and attending classes, he receives the sacred thread (brahminical recognition) after the second six months. (Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 15.108)

### **First Initiation:**

For the holy name to have effect, it must be received from the spiritual master:

One has to learn about the beauty and transcendental position of the holy name of the Lord by hearing the revealed scriptures from the mouths of devotees. Nowhere else can we hear of the sweetness of the Lord's holy name.

**PURPORT:** It is said in the Padma Purana, *atah sri-krsna-namadi na bhaved grahyam indriyaih* [Cc. Madhya 17.136]. Chanting and hearing of the transcendental name of the Lord cannot be performed by the ordinary senses. The transcendental vibration of the Lord's holy name is completely spiritual. Thus it must be received from the spiritual sources and must be chanted after having been heard from a spiritual master. One who hears the chanting of the Hare Krsna mantra must receive it from the spiritual master by aural reception. Srila Sanatana Goswami has forbidden us to hear the holy name of Krsna chanted by non-Vaisnavas, such as professional actors and singers, for it will have no effect. It is like milk touched by the lips of serpents. (Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Antya-lila 1.101)

The teachings of Sanatana Goswami and his worship of Madana Mohana Deity both represent the perfectional stage of sambanda-jnana, or that which can bring the conditioned soul to the point of understanding his relationship with God. It is this function, namely sambanda-jnana, which is manifested in all those activities which precede initiation and finally culminate in initiation.

In Hari-bhakti vilasa by Sanatana Goswami we find these preliminary activities described as the purascarya process. The word "purah" means "before" and "carya" means "activities".

Srila Prabhupada explains that we observe this injunction of Sanatana Goswami within our ISKCON Temples' program. Of course, the same should apply to all non-initiates living outside of the temples: rising early, performing mangala-arti, the worship of Tulasi (if only by reciting prayers), chanting the holy name, hearing from the scripture, offering of all foodstuffs to Krsna, etc. As far as possible, considering household circumstances, etc., these items should all be carefully observed as part of purascarya-vidhi, just to purify us in a preliminary way from the grosser contamination of material life. Vidhi means rules and regulations. Animals are not subject to such rules and regulations any more than animals can be restricted from jaywalking at a street corner; whereas a human being may be subject to a police arrest or summons. All the regulations we find in Nectar of Devotion, as well as the items mentioned above, constitute our regulative duties thus releasing us from animal like unregulated life and preparing us for initiation into the holy name.

If one wishes to perfect his initiation, he must first undergo the purascarya activities. The purascarya process is the life-force by which one is successful in chanting the mantra. Without the life-force, one cannot do anything; similarly, without the life force of purascarya vidhi, no mantra can be perfected." (Hari-bhakti-vilasa 17.47).

### **Second Initiation:**

"Even though born in a brahmana family, one cannot engage in Vedic rituals without being initiated and having a sacred thread. Although born in a brahmana family, one becomes a brahmana only after initiation and the sacred thread ceremony. Unless one is initiated as a brahmana, one cannot worship the holy name properly." (Hari-bhakti-vilasa (2.3-4) and the Bhakti-sandarbha (283))

The spiritual master offers the sacred thread (brahminical initiation) to a disciple who has become competent and purified by chanting, by his own judgment:

Usually, initiation depends on the bona fide spiritual master, who directs the disciple. If he sees that a disciple has become competent and purified by the process of chanting, then he offers the sacred thread to the disciple

just so that he will be recognized as one hundred percent equal with a brahmana. This is also confirmed in the Hari-bhakti-vilasa by Sri Sanatana Goswami: "As a base metal like bell metal can be changed into gold by a chemical process, similarly any person can be changed into a brahmana by diksa-vidhana, the initiation process."

... Whether one has acquired the qualification of a brahmana depends on the judgment of the bona fide spiritual master. He bestows upon the disciple the position of a brahmana by his own judgment. When one is accepted as a brahmana in the sacred thread ceremony, under the Pancaratric system, then he is dvija, twice-born. That is confirmed by Sanatana Gosvami: dvijatvam jayate. By the process of initiation by the spiritual master, a person is accepted as a brahmana in his purified state of chanting the holy name of the Lord. He then makes further progress to become a qualified Vaisnava, which means that the brahminical qualification is already acquired. (Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.33.6) To chant the holy name of the Lord, one need not depend upon other paraphernalia, for one can immediately get all the desired results of connecting or linking with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It may therefore be questioned why there is a necessity for initiation or further spiritual activities in devotional service for one who engages in the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. The answer is that although it is correct that one who fully engages in chanting the holy name need not depend upon the process of initiation, generally a devotee is addicted to many abominable material habits due to material contamination from his previous life. In order to get quick relief from all these contaminations, it is required that one engage in the worship of the Lord in the temple.

The worship of the Deity in the temple is essential to reduce one's restlessness due to the contaminations of conditional life. Thus Narada, in his pancaratrici-vidhi, and other great sages have sometimes stressed that since every conditioned soul has a bodily concept of life aimed at sense enjoyment, to restrict this sense enjoyment the rules and regulations for worshiping the Deity in the temple are essential. Srila Rupa Gosvami has described that the holy name of the Lord can be chanted by liberated souls, but almost all the souls we have to initiate are conditioned. It is advised that one chant the holy name of the Lord without offenses and according to the regulative principles, yet due to their past bad habits' they violate these rules and regulations. Thus the regulative principles for worship of the Deity are also simultaneously essential. (CC Adi 7.76)

### **The purpose of the Gayatri mantra:**

[In the Srimad-Bhagavatam] Vyasadeva purposefully invokes the Gayatri mantra: dhimahi. This Gayatri mantra is especially meant for spiritually advanced people. When one attains success in chanting Gayatri mantra, he can enter into the transcendental position of the Lord. First, however, one must acquire the brahminical qualities and become perfectly situated in the mode of goodness in order to chant the Gayatri mantra successfully. From that point one can begin to transcendently realize the Lord, His name, His fame, His qualities, etc. (Teachings of Lord Caitanya)