

## 87.04.29, Successor Chosen

Dr. Asthana: I am a little worried about Srila Govinda Maharaj's position.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I have given him, I have empowered him, to do all these things on my behalf: ritvik. I have appointed him to do all spiritual activity on my behalf.

Dr. Asthana: But this "ritvik" word is misinterpreted by many people.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: They may do so.

Dr. Asthana: Some do not consider him as a direct successor; they consider him only as a ritvik.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: More than ritvik.

Dr. Asthana: Eh?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: More than ritvik. Whatever it may be, I am giving power. Just as "yauva-rajā". When the King installs his son as King and retires himself, what will be the result? As Dasarath wanted to do with Ramachandra. The King gives all the authority of a king to the son and retires to go to the jungle although he is living with full power and glory.

Dr. Asthana: Many people I have talked to do not consider the ritvik to be the direct Guru. They say the ritvik is ritvik.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ritvik is ritvik, but if such transfer of power is done then what harm? For those that have got no sraddha, they may go away. They may not accept. I do not care. I don't accept them.

Dr. Asthana: Does ritvik mean the direct successor?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ritvik means the representative. It may be temporary or it may be permanent. It may be partial or it may be full, as empowerment is there.

Dr. Asthana: Is the empowerment to Govinda Maharaj now temporary or permanent?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Permanent. Wholesale—both property and the function—transferred. If anyone has no recognition of this opinion of mine, I do not want them to live in the Mission. I drag them out.

Dr. Asthana: But can they operate from outside and still operate as a part and parcel of you?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: As a revolt. That is revolt—without sanction—anyone can do. I have deserted them. But they may do anything and everything as they wish and reap the results far from the spiritual world, from God. Unlawful.

Power may be extended and withdrawn also—I want to withdraw myself from them. Those that won't have faith in my decision, I withdraw from them. It is not a fashion but a question of faith. If they have no such faith in me, I withdraw myself from them.

Dr. Asthana: Some devotees may consider, "That power {of ritvik} was given to me in 1982 or '84, and he got that power in '86 so I am more senior."

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: No position of seniority. No position of senior. That only seniority will be considered as the qualification—no.

Dr. Asthana: I was thinking of sending all the senior devotees a letter trying to make this thing clear so that later on no complication like that comes up because at that time we will be very insecure when other types of interpretation start.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: According to their faith—what to think? What to say? Those that do not obey me after my departure means automatically they will be left by me. Only it is a transaction of faith. No right but faith. If no faith in my word, they are automatically rejected.

Dr. Asthana: Some people have no particular obligation of faith to anyone. They go to many persons to gather something. They are just interested in knowledge and position.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: We have no concern with them. We hate them. We hate them: we don't think that they have any religious line in life.

In a very crude position maybe there will be some -collecting {knowledge} here and there when one cannot understand who is who.

Dr. Asthana: They are just like an encyclopedia.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: They are not fit {to see} that God is coming to him through whom.

If I am sincere in my search for God then God also will come to me from His side and, where we meet, he should be considered the Guru. Guru means representative of God Himself.

Dr. Asthana: Yes, I fully agree with it. There are many traps and loopholes in these type of things, Maharaj, and some will play on this their whole life. They will think out how to manipulate the situation.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: The importance of life—life-giving and {life-} taking is not so important to them.  
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Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Govinda Maharaj has told some of them, "No, you are a disciple of Guru Maharaj, and I am your Godbrother."

Dr. Asthana: He can leave that instruction and give new instruction. Or we can call the devotees here and ask you to tell them.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: You may classify them into two {my disciples and Govinda Maharaj's disciples}. There are my disciples also, and if what they do Govinda Maharaj does not accept, then they will be rejected.

Dr. Asthana: Although I have taken both initiations from you, under your instructions I am taking all instructions also from Govinda Maharaj. I am considering Govinda Maharaj as Siksa-Guru.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, Siksa-Guru.

Dr. Asthana: So, they {the new initiates} should all consider him as Diksa-Guru. But I know that some people can twist each matter to their convenience and ultimately put {down} Govinda Maharaj.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: The ambitious party and those who want name and fame rather than the substance itself.

Dr. Asthana: I want that you make it absolutely clear once again. They will not oppose you and it will be beneficial.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I have told on many occasions that "If you cannot take from Govinda Maharaj and accept him as Guru, you are to go away."

Dr. Asthana: Is it advisable to write letters to all the people saying that whoever has taken initiation from Srila Govinda Maharaj will be considered as a direct disciple of Srila Govinda Maharaj?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Not to create havoc now. What will be—after me.

[Srila Govinda Maharaj comes and joins the conversation]

Srila Govinda Maharaj: They are respecting me, no doubt, but I am thinking that everyone is Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja's disciple. And that is good for me. But what you are saying, that also has some right.

Dr. Asthana: But Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has made you the successor to run this Math.

Srila Govinda Maharaj: Yes, that is correct—

Dr. Asthana: So how will this Math run? Once Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja disappears they will all go away, then what will you do alone? You will run the whole thing alone?

Srila Govinda Maharaj: Not alone.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Whoever will support him, he will run the Math with them.

Srila Govinda Maharaj: I am with my Godbrothers. I am not alone.

Dr. Asthana: This is why I'm saying, you have to have a certain number who you can consider now as your disciples.

Srila Govinda Maharaj: If anybody wants to take initiation from me, that is another thing, but everyone is coming from outside and they are asking for initiation from Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and I am officiating by way of giving initiation on behalf of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja. This is the position at present.

Dr. Asthana: So how to stop this position?

Srila Govinda Maharaj: Yes, we can stop it immediately that is no problem. The problem is that they have some special regard and respect for Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja.

Dr. Asthana: I may have special regard and respect for Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, but that does not mean that I can ask Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja to give me initiation on behalf of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur.

Srila Govinda Maharaj: That is not applicable in this case.

Dr. Asthana: Yes. I may have some special regard for Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur, but it is not that I can come to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and say, "Give me initiation on behalf of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur."

Srila Govinda Maharaj: No. You are to think this: they have a special regard for Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja therefore they are coming here. They are not coming for me.

Dr. Asthana: If they are not coming for you, they should not come here.

Srila Govinda Maharaj: That is your desire maybe.

Dr. Asthana: I wish for Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja to express his desire. I feel that Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja should make this absolutely clear.

Srila Govinda Maharaj: Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja said that those who cannot respect Govinda Maharaj, they cannot stay in this Math.

If Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja will say, "If anyone wants to take initiation from me, then he must take initiation from Govinda Maharaj and that is enough for him {the devotee}." This statement is a correct statement as per your idea.

Dr. Asthana: My idea is that Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja has stopped giving any initiations and anyone who wants to accept the disciplic succession of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja should now come to Srila Govinda Maharaj. And all the grace of Srila Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj will come more if you worship Srila Govinda Maharaj than if you try to worship Srila Sridhar Maharaj directly. It is like one trying to worship Krsna directly and another trying to worship Krsna through Radharani. I do not have any confusion.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Now please stop.

Dr. Asthana: There may be some chaos and confusion, so, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, please make this clear.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: We do not want any quantity, but quality.

Dr. Asthana: I am insisting upon this because I know what is going to happen later on.

Srila Govinda Maharaj: The seed of initiation is only sraddha. Sraddha is the only seed for initiation. They have sraddha to Guru Maharaj—full faith—then they are coming here. Therefore it is very difficult to transfer them to another person. Later we can settle. Now Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja wants to {stop}.

Dr. Asthana: If they want to be Srila Sridhar Maharaj's direct disciple, it is not good for them. Now they should go to Srila Govinda Maharaj. Therefore they should accept this decision.

Srila Govinda Maharaj: Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja told it before.

Dr. Asthana: I have more mercy from Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur because I am a disciple of Srila Sridhar Maharaj. I have more mercy from him than a direct connection

with Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur, because I have accepted his disciple as my Guru. It is the same way in your case, otherwise how will the disciplic succession run?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Parvati Devi asked Siva, "Who is the highest lord to be served?" Siva replied, "Narayana." aradhananam sarvvesam visnor aradhanam param. Then Parvati Devi was a little mortified to think, "I am not serving Narayana."

Tasmat parataram devi tadiyanam samarchchanam  
—this next line came from Siva, meaning, "Those who serve the servants of Narayana are greater devotees than those who serve Narayana directly."

This is because they serve both of them.

Do you follow?

Dr. Asthana: I don't understand the Sanskrit.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: If anyone loves you, and if anyone loves your son, the one who loves your son will be considered to love you more than those who love you directly and not your son. Do you follow that?

Dr. Asthana: Yes, I follow.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: It is like that. Siva said, aradhananam sarvvesam visnor aradhanam param—"Of all the worshippers, the worshippers of Visnu are the highest." Tasmat parataram devi tadiyanam samarchchanam—"And even it is the case that those who worship the servants of Visnu—they are higher worshippers of Visnu."

Hearing this, Parvati Devi was very much satisfied to think, "I am serving the servant of Visnu, my Lord, Siva."

{There is an English expression} "If you love me, love my dog.".....etc.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja {to Srila Govinda Maharaj}: Sometimes I consider you more than myself, but it is rare for me to find this in anyone else.

Srila Govinda Maharaj: You consider me more than Your Divine Grace?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, in many circumstances. On many occasions I feel your suggestions are novel and valuable to me. But I don't easily find this in others. Before, I sometimes felt it in Vasudev Prabhu. But the way I sometimes consider you more efficient than myself—I cannot find this in any of my disciples nor even my Godbrothers