

Who are *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā* gurus?

What is the function of the guru who dwells in the heart?

—Illuminations from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—

There are three types of spiritual masters, the initiating guru, the instructing guru, and the *caitya-guru*. The spiritual master is never ordinary. He is godly. It is an offense to separate the spiritual master from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya by considering him an ordinary, insignificant human being. In the form of the spiritual master, Kṛṣṇa alone awakens the living entity's spiritual consciousness and thereby helps him attain eternal benefit.

The initiating spiritual master awards transcendental knowledge, knowledge of the Absolute Truth. “Kṛṣṇa alone is my eternal master and I am His eternal servant”: this transcendental knowledge or *sambandha-jñāna* is imparted by the initiating spiritual master.

An instructing spiritual master first tells us how to remove *anarthas*, then teaches us the process of pure devotion. In most cases the initiating spiritual master acts as the instructing spiritual master. A conditioned soul cannot act as an initiating or instructing spiritual master.

Śrī Hari, who dwells in our hearts as the Supersoul, is the internal spiritual master, *caitya-guru*. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states, *kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare kona bhāgyavāne, guru-antaryāmi-rūpe śikhāya āpane*: “Kṛṣṇa is situated in everyone's heart as the *caitya-guru*, the spiritual master within. When He is kind to some fortunate conditioned soul, He personally gives him lessons so he can progress in devotional service, instructing the person as the Supersoul within and the spiritual master without.” (CC Madhya 22.47)

The *caitya-guru* awards us the qualification to realize the instructions we have heard from the initiating and instructing gurus. He also imparts the strength to follow those orders. Without His mercy, no one can understand the intention of either the initiating or instructing spiritual master. Lord Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva alone awards transcendental knowledge and pure devotional service through the initiating spiritual master, protects that pure devotion by sending the instructing spiritual masters (who are non-different from Him), and as the internal spiritual master personally awards the strength to follow the gurus' orders and teachings.

— Amṛta Vāṇī, *The Spiritual Master*, 84