

What is Dīkṣā?

Dikṣa is comprised of two words Di and kṣa. Di means divya jñānam, and kṣa means kṣapayati.

So, we receive transcendental knowledge from the Spiritual Master and we are given protection by the Lord and the Spiritual master, so that we may make spiritual progress without any hindrance. So, for that the formal ceremony performed is called Dikṣa or initiation ceremony

Qualifications to take initiation in the Sampradaya :

- 1) The disciple must be chanting 16 rounds of Hare Krishna Mahamantra daily

2) Must be following the four regulative principles, namely :

- No meat eating
- No intoxication
- No gambling
- No illicit sex

What is Ashraya?

Ashraya means taking shelter. So, Ashraya means the process in which we take shelter of the spiritual master and Krishna. It is a preparatory stage for Diksa.

Qualifications to take Ashraya in the Sampradaya :

- 1) The student must be chanting at least one round of Hare Krishna Mahamantra daily

Common misconceptions (FAQs)

- Q. Do I need to leave everything for taking Diksa?

A . No, Diksa is the beginning of Spiritual life, not the end. What you will be getting in this ceremony is harinaam Diksa

Generally, there are three stages of Diksa (sometimes four)

- 1) Harinaam Diksa – must be taken by everyone who is chanting the Hare Krishna Mahamantra. This is considered to be our 2nd birth. First birth is by material mother and father. 2nd birth is by Spiritual father – the Spiritual Master and spiritual mother – the Scriptures
- 2) Brahmana Diksa – It is generally called 2nd initiation, whereby a person who strictly follows the laid down principles, can become a Brahmana and

perform deity worship in the temple and can perform Yajnas. He also receives sacred thread and Gayatri mantra by the Guru

- 3) Sanyasa Diksa – When a person takes renounced order of life and leaves every material relationship to develop his eternal relationship with Krsna
- 4) Babaji Diksa (rare) – generally very rare but the highest diksa where you become a Babaji and have only one possession – krsna

Srila Prabhupada on Initiations

Lecture on SB 1.16.1 -- Los Angeles, December 29, 1973:

So this birth you can get. This human form of birth you can get. That is the special significance. Father, mother, you can get anywhere. It doesn't matter. But you cannot get Kṛṣṇa and guru. That you can get in this birth. Therefore twice-born. You must get another birth, through the initiation of the spiritual master, dīkṣā. Dīkṣā means initiation. Di means divya jñānam, and kṣa means kṣapayati. From the day of initiation, you simply get spiritual knowledge, transcendental knowledge. That is the special significance of human form of body.

Lecture on SB 1.16.35 -- Hawaii, January 28, 1974:

So this initiation means by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa through His agent, the spiritual master, you are getting the seed of bhakti-latā. So you have to take care of yourself by the instruction.

1968 Correspondence

About the importance of initiation, it is to be understood that initiation means that power is coming from the Supreme by the bona fide disciplic succession. This is required. Of course, for anyone to hear the message of Srimad-Bhagavatam will produce a favorable result but formally one should receive this knowledge from the disciplic succession.

Lecture on CC Madhya-lila 20.119-121 -- New York, November 24, 1966:

Suppose a man is fallen in the pit and he's trying to come out, and another man drops a rope, "Please catch it. I shall take you out of the pit." He does not catch it. Then how he can be taken out? So sādhu and śāstra, they're always ready to give you mercy, but you have to take it. If you don't accept it, then how you can recover, recover? Therefore initiation means to accept the mercy of the sādhu and spiritual master. If you don't accept, so there is no other way. If you think... If you cry that "I am fallen in the pit. Please take me," and when

somebody comes to help you, you say, "No, I'll not catch it," then you remain there. Who'll help you?

1970 Correspondence

An initiated devotee is given the chance for becoming free from the entanglement of karma wheel. Initiated means beginning, not perfection. The Spiritual Master's business is to guide him to the perfectional point.

Letter to Jaya Gopala -- Los Angeles 11 January, 1970

Lecture on BG 2.40-45 -- Los Angeles, December 13, 1968:

Prabhupāda: *So initiation means the beginning.* The very word initiation means if you are engaged in some work, just in the beginning, that is called initiation. *Initiation is not the end. Initiation means you agree to enter into the world of enlightenment. And if you make progress, then more you make progress, more you become enlightened.* Initiation means the beginning. This is the dictionary word meaning, initiation.

"the guru, or the spiritual master, who shows the way." Such a guru is sometimes called śikṣā-guru. Although Nārada Muni was his (Dhruva Maharaja's) dīkṣā-guru (initiating spiritual master). It is the duty of the śikṣā-guru or dīkṣā-guru to instruct the disciple in the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. According to śāstric injunctions, there is no difference between śikṣā-guru and dīkṣā-guru --- (Srimad Bhagavatam 4.12.32 Purport)

According to the pāñcarātriṁkā system, however, even though everyone is a śūdra due to the absence of the garbhādhāna-saṁskāra, if a person has but a little tendency to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, he should be given the chance to elevate himself to the transcendental platform of

devotional service. *Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement adopts this pāñcarātriḱa-vidhi, as advised by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, who says:*

yathā kāñcanatām yāti

kāmsyam rasa-vidhānataḥ

tathā dīkṣā-vidhānena

dvijatvaṁ jāyate nṛṇāṁ

"As bell metal, when mixed with mercury, is transformed to gold, a person, even though not golden pure, can be transformed into a brāhmaṇa, or dvija, simply by the initiation process."
(Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.12)

Thus if one is initiated by a proper person, he can be accepted as twice-born immediately. *In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we therefore offer the student his first initiation and allow him to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.*

--- (Srimad Bhagavatam 4.31.10 Purport)

As indicated here by the word manastah, the Supreme Personality of Godhead was transferred from the core of Vasudeva's mind or heart to the core of the heart of Devakī. We should note carefully that the Lord was transferred to Devakī not by the ordinary way for a human being, but by dīkṣā, initiation. Thus the importance of initiation is mentioned here. Unless one is initiated by the right person, who always carries within his heart the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one cannot acquire the power to carry the Supreme Godhead within the core of one's own heart.

--- (Srimad Bhagavatam 10.2.18 Purport)

dikṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa
sei-kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama

TRANSLATION

At the time of initiation, when a devotee fully surrenders unto the service of the Lord, Kṛṣṇa accepts him to be as good as Himself.

---(Caitanya Caritamrita Antya 4.192)

Dīkṣā actually means initiating a disciple with transcendental knowledge by which he becomes freed from all material contamination.

--- (Caitanya Caritamrita Purport Madhya Lila 4.111)

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also states that although one is situated as a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra, brahmacārī, vānaprastha, gṛhastha or sannyāsī, *if he is conversant in the science of Kṛṣṇa he can become a spiritual master as vartma-pradarśaka-*

guru, dīkṣā-guru or śikṣā-guru. The spiritual master who first gives information about spiritual life is called the vartma-pradarśaka-guru, the spiritual master who initiates according to the regulations of the śāstras is called the dīkṣā-guru, and the spiritual master who gives instructions for elevation is called the śikṣā-guru. Factually the qualifications of a spiritual master depend on his knowledge of the science of Kṛṣṇa. It does not matter whether he is a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, sannyāsī or śūdra. This injunction given by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is not at all against the injunctions of the śāstras. In the Padma Purāṇa it is said:

na śūdrā bhagavad-bhaktās te 'pi bhāgavatottamāḥ

sarva-varṇeṣu te śūdrā ye na bhaktā janārdane

One who is actually advanced in spiritual knowledge of Kṛṣṇa is never a śūdra, even though he may have been born in a śūdra family. However, even if a vipra, or brāhmaṇa, is very expert in the six brahminical activities (pāṭhana, pāṭhana, yajana, yājana, dāna, pratigraha) and is also well versed in the Vedic hymns, he cannot become a spiritual master unless he is a Vaiṣṇava. But if one is born in the family of caṇḍālas yet is well versed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can become a guru. These are the śāstric injunctions

--- (Caitanya Caritamrita Madhya 8.128 purport)

Caitanya Caritamrita – Madhya Lila 22.115

guru-pādāśraya, dīkṣā, gurura sevana

sad-dharma-śikṣā-prcchā, sādhu-mārgānugamana

TRANSLATION

On the path of regulative devotional service, one must observe the following items: (1) One must accept a bona fide spiritual master. (2) One must accept initiation from him. (3) One must serve him. (4) One must receive instructions from the spiritual master and make

inquiries in order to learn devotional service. (5) One must follow in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas and follow the directions given by the spiritual master.

Divyam jñānam is technically called tad-vijñāna, or knowledge about the Supreme. Tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet: [Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.12]

when one is interested in the transcendental subject matter of the Absolute Truth, he should be initiated. Such a person should approach a spiritual master in order to take dīkṣā.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.3.21) also prescribes: tasmād gurum prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam. "When one is actually interested in the transcendental science of the Absolute Truth, he should approach a spiritual master.

----- (Upadeshamrita verse 5 purport)

The process by which a devotee becomes attached to Kṛṣṇa is described in Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 4.192):

dīkṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa

sei-kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama

"At the time of initiation, when a devotee fully surrenders to the service of the Lord, Kṛṣṇa accepts him to be as good as He Himself."

One birth is calculated during the seed-giving saṁskāra, and the second birth is calculated at the time of spiritual initiation. One who has been able to undergo such important saṁskāras can be called a bona fide twice-born.

--- (Srimad Bhagavatam 1.4.25)

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, he offers the sacred thread to the disciple just so that he will be recognized as one-hundred-percent equal with a brāhmaṇa.

--- (Srimad Bhagavatam 3.33.6)

Sanātana Gosvāmī says *that as bell metal can turn to gold when mixed with mercury in a chemical process, so, by the bona fide dīkṣā, or initiation method, anyone can become a Vaiṣṇava. One should take initiation from a bona fide spiritual master coming in the disciplic succession, who is authorized by his predecessor spiritual master. This is called dīkṣā-vidhāna.* Lord Kṛṣṇa states in Bhagavad-gītā, vyapāśritya: one should accept a spiritual master. By this process the entire world can be converted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

--- (Srimad Bhagavatam 4.8.54 purport)

Thus devotional life is divided into two stages—sādhana-bhakti and bhāva-bhakti. Sādhana-bhakti refers to the development of devotional service through the regulative principles. *The basic principle for the execution of devotional service is faith. Above that, there is association with devotees, and after that there is initiation by a bona fide spiritual master. After initiation, when one follows the regulative principles of devotional service, one becomes freed from all unwanted things. In this way one becomes firmly fixed and gradually develops a taste for devotional service.*

--- (Caitanya Caritamrita Madhya Lila 23.13 purport)
