

Questions Nobody
Dares to Answer

FALSE GURUS

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False Gurus

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False Gurus: Questions Nobody Dares to Answer

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A la Luz del Shastra

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*To all who have a question
that nobody dares to answer.*

And to the teacher who never stopped answering.

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A Note to the Reader

If you have ever felt that something doesn't add up in a spiritual group, in a church, in a teacher everyone admires—this book is for you. It doesn't matter what your tradition is. It doesn't matter if you don't have one. The pattern is the same everywhere. Only the names change.

The first time someone asked me one of these questions, I was in my forties. It was after a class, in a temple in Spain. A young woman approached with a low voice and the restless eyes of someone who knows she is about to say something she shouldn't:

"What if my spiritual master isn't what he seems?"

I remember the silence that followed. I remember looking around to make sure no one was listening. And I remember feeling ashamed—not for her, but for myself. Because I knew the answer. I had known it for years. But I didn't dare say it out loud.

This book is everything I should have answered her that afternoon and didn't. Because in certain circles, your sincerity doesn't just go unnoticed—it's unwelcome.

There are ten questions. Nine answered here—and one that's missing: yours. The questions people ask in private but don't dare ask in public. Questions nobody answers because there is too much to lose: status, position, comfort. Questions that, if you ask them in the wrong place, earn you a label of troublemaker.

I come from the Hare Krishna movement. It's what I know, what I've lived for half a century. Most of the examples in this book come from there—because those are the ones I can tell firsthand, with names and dates. But the mechanism is universal. If you come from Catholicism, Buddhism, a yoga group, an evangelical church, or if you're simply searching for something real and don't know whom to trust—you'll recognize the pattern. The names change. The script is the same.

The answers aren't mine. They come from the *shastra*—the spiritual texts: the Bhagavad-gita, the Srimad Bhagavatam, the Puranas. Texts thousands of years old that have been saying the same thing long before the institutions that today would prefer you not read them too carefully.

And if you finish with your own question, send it to me. That's what A la Luz del Shastra exists for—my weekly program where I answer questions like these, uncensored and unscripted.

The Deception

«Why does it seem like in spirituality everyone is deceiving everyone else?»

Coaches selling "awakening" in monthly installments. Pastors preaching poverty from mansions. Spiritual influencers whose only mantra is the algorithm. Spirituality has become a marketplace where the product is you—your search, your vulnerability, your need for answers.

This isn't new. It's been happening for thousands of years. Ask any Catholic who has watched their parish priest live better than his flock. Any Buddhist who has swallowed a scandal about their lama. Anyone who has paid for a "healing" retreat and left with less money and the same questions.

And decades ago, someone said it better than anyone.



There is a recording I have listened to dozens of times. It's early morning. The sun hasn't risen yet. A group of young Westerners walks behind an elderly Indian man along a dusty path. The old man carries a walking stick, wears a saffron robe, and has the kind of calm that only belongs to people who no longer need anything from the world.

It was Srila Prabhupada. The founder of the Hare Krishna movement. A monk who arrived in New York in 1965 with seven dollars and a trunk full of books. On that morning walk, someone asked him a question that still

haunts us half a century later.

The conversation went like this. Prabhupada spoke in English, with his unmistakable Bengali accent:

"Everyone is cheating. Everyone is presenting some knowledge."

Everyone is cheating. Everyone is presenting some knowledge as if it were the truth.

One of the young men responded with something that sounded like a joke but was completely sincere: "We were cheaters too before we met you."

And Prabhupada, without missing a step, said what is for me one of the most lucid phrases I have heard in half a century:

"Don't hear the cheaters, and don't try to cheat others. Be honest."

Don't listen to the cheaters. Don't try to deceive others. Be honest.

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It sounds like grandmother's advice. But the first time I heard that recording, decades ago, I didn't feel the simplicity. I felt the blow. Because the phrase doesn't point outward—it points inward. It doesn't say "beware of cheaters." It says "don't try to cheat *yourself*." Start with yourself.

It forced me to ask myself things I didn't want to ask. Am I being honest with myself? In my practice, in my motivation, in what I present to the world? Or am I also presenting "some knowledge"—something I half-know, disguised as complete truth?

That discomfort is the starting point of this entire book.

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Because deception isn't just a problem of spiritual leaders. It's the human condition. Politicians who promise what they can't deliver. Scientists who adjust data. Friends who tell you what you want to hear. Deception is

everywhere. But in spirituality it hurts more, because that's where you're opening what's most intimate.

The Srimad Bhagavatam—one of the central scriptures of the Vedic tradition—opens without beating around the bush:

dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra

"Here all forms of cheating religion are completely rejected." (Srimad Bhagavatam 1.1.1)

Not "some forms." All of them. The text makes no exceptions. And if the sacred texts themselves warn of deception within religion, perhaps we should listen.



Let's return to the morning walk. A disciple asked Prabhupada something I too have asked myself many times: why do some people accept the spiritual truth and others don't?

Prabhupada answered with one word: fortune. But when asked if that fortune was God's mercy, his response was direct:

"Krishna's mercy is already there. It is your misuse of free will."

The mercy is already there. Always. It is you who misuses free will. The opportunity is given. To accept it or waste it is your decision.

The first time I heard all this, I felt something very uncomfortable. Not anger toward the cheaters—that's easy. I felt discomfort with myself. That discomfort has been with me ever since. And it's the reason I'm writing this book.

The Recognition

«How am I supposed to recognize an authentic spiritual master?»

I have a memory that won't leave me. It must have been in the late seventies. I was young, hadn't been in the movement long, and a swami—a renounced monk—came to visit our temple. I don't remember his name. I remember his presence.

He walked into the room and something changed. I'm not speaking in metaphor. Something changed. People went still. He didn't do anything spectacular—he sat down, spoke softly, quoted the scriptures. But there was something behind his words that made them weigh differently. As if he wasn't reciting them but remembering something he had seen.

Years later I met other swamis. Many others. Some had more erudition. Some spoke more beautifully. Some had more followers. But that *something* wasn't there. They had memorized the same scriptures, but recited them like someone reading a menu. There was nothing behind them.

The difference between one and the other is exactly what the texts have been explaining for centuries. And when I read it for the first time, it hit me like a bucket of cold water—because it explained what I had felt in that room without finding the words.

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The texts speak of levels of spiritual development. They call them *adhikara*—qualification. There are sincere but limited beginners, intermediate practitioners with genuine compassion, and there is a level—the highest—where the connection with God is direct, constant, uninterrupted.

I have met many sincere beginners in positions of leadership. Not because they were bad people, but because the system put them there. They were given a title that didn't correspond to their level. And the texts are clear: only someone at the highest level has what they call *shakti*—a real spiritual potency that transforms the consciousness of others.

The Bhagavad-gita (4.34):

*tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattva-darsinah*

"Try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth."

Tattva-darsinah. Those who have *seen* the truth. Not those who have studied it. Not those who recite it. Those who have seen it.



Another text goes even further: the genuine master must be considered a direct representative of God (Srimad Bhagavatam 11.17.27). It's an exalted position. And that has an implication that shakes any religious organization: if the qualification comes from the level of consciousness, no institution can grant it. You can appoint someone "guru" by vote, by seniority, by politics. You can give them a throne and an entourage. But if they haven't reached that level, the appointment is a costume.

It's like putting a crown on someone and expecting them to become a king. The title is there. The capacity is not.

I remember that swami from the temple, the one who transformed the atmosphere of the room. Nobody had appointed him anything. He had no committee behind him. But when he spoke, you knew he was speaking from a place you hadn't yet visited.

That is *tattva-darsinah*. You feel it in your bones.

But there is a nuance that few explain.

Not everyone who teaches has the same responsibility. One thing is someone who transmits the knowledge faithfully—who repeats what they received without adding or subtracting. That is valuable and does not require perfection. It requires honesty.*

Another thing is someone who accepts to be your definitive spiritual guide—one who commits to taking you to the end of the path. That responsibility demands much more. It's the difference between a good teacher and a surgeon: you ask the teacher to explain well; you ask the surgeon not to kill you.

Much of the problem comes from confusing these two roles. People who would be good instructors present themselves as absolute guides. And an institution that treats them as interchangeable multiplies the damage. How do you tell the genuine one from the fake? The texts give concrete signs. But I'll save those for later—for the chapter where we talk about how to protect yourself.

For now, keep this: qualification is not granted by a committee. It comes from the level of consciousness. And if you want to know how many spiritual leaders you know—from any tradition—who truly have that qualification, count on the fingers of one hand.

That number is your answer.

* In the Vedic tradition, these two roles have specific names: *siksha guru* (instructing guru) and *diksha guru* (initiating guru). The *siksha guru* transmits knowledge as received. The *diksha guru* accepts a spiritual commitment with the disciple—to channel their karma toward God and guide them to liberation. The qualification the texts demand for each is radically

different.

The Corruption

«Why do spiritual communities always end up becoming corrupt?»

Every spiritual tradition has a golden age. Catholics speak of the Church of the first apostles. Buddhists, of the original community. Sufis, of the first dervishes. In the beginning there was something real, and then it was lost.

In my case, I saw it up close. In the seventies and eighties, the Hare Krishna movement was something else. I say this without blind nostalgia. I say it because I lived it and because it's true. There was a freshness. An energy. When you walked into a temple you felt something I can't describe with exact words, but that everyone who lived it recognizes instantly when we look each other in the eye. It was as if the air had a different weight. People had given up everything—literally everything—to serve. There was no plan B. There was no "my career" on one side and "my spirituality" on the other. Everything was the same. And that totality generated something I can only call magic.

Mystical experiences every five minutes.



What happened? What happens to all spiritual communities. If you come from another tradition, change the names and you'll recognize the script.

The same thing that happened to the communities of the great yogis. The same thing happening today to evangelical megachurches.

It took me years to understand why. The Srimad Bhagavatam (1.2.6) explains it in two words: spiritual service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted. No personal agenda. No pauses. When it is like this, the soul is fully satisfied. When it isn't, no matter what you do: there's a void.

Personal desires replaced unconditional surrender. That simple. That devastating.



Today's leaders say it's better now. More people, more infrastructure, more temples.

But we all know something was lost.

Not everyone needs to have total surrender. Most won't. But there does need to be a group—even a small one—that sets the example. People who are happy in their surrender. Who don't have material problems because they don't seek them. Who show others where the path leads. Who are, in themselves, living proof that the philosophy and practice work.

When that group disappears, what remains is a shell. The original message fades. It becomes hard to tell genuine spirituality from personal motivations. And a vicious circle forms: leaders with personal desires attract people with similar desires. Each generation is a little less authentic.

It went from being a spiritual movement where mystical experiences were frequent, to a kind of corporate religion where too many leaders are there for personal benefit. Some clearly for money. Others for prestige. Others for power.

The question that remains is: what do you surrender to? A structure that has become an end in itself? Or what that structure once pointed toward?

Not to an institution. Not to a committee. To the truth—through whoever truly connects you with it.

The Test

«Is there a reliable way to know if someone is authentic or just pretending?»

Yes. One.

How they face suffering.

Words can be imitated. Spiritual clothing can be bought. Rituals can be memorized. Charisma can be cultivated. I have known people who recited scriptures for hours, who had an imposing presence, who spoke with a sweetness that melted—and who inside were empty.

But suffering cannot be faked.

The Bhagavad-gita (2.14-15) describes it this way: happiness and distress come and go like winter and summer. The person who is not disturbed by either—*sama-duhkha-sukham*, equal before pain and pleasure—is worthy of liberation.

Not insensitive. Equanimous.

That cannot be faked.

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When a false guide faces a real difficulty—illness, accusation, crisis—what you see is anguish. Regret. Fear. Anger. Victimhood. They crumble. They look for someone to blame. They hide.

I have seen spiritual leaders—ones at whose feet people would prostrate—cry with rage in private when things didn't go their way. I've seen beatific smiles evaporate at the first serious problem. I've seen panic in the eyes of someone who is supposedly "beyond the material world."

And I have seen the opposite.

A practitioner I know, an older woman, suffered a heart attack. When she described the experience, she said she felt the physical pain—of course—but it was like watching it from outside. Her mind was calm. There was no fear. No existential anguish. There was the serenity of someone anchored in something deeper than the body.

That is *sama duhkha-sukha*. It can't be bought. It can't be studied. It can't be imitated.

Suffering is the thermometer. Not words. Not titles. Not clothing. Not the entourage.

How they live the moment when everything falls apart.

You don't need anyone to tell you. Observe it yourself.

The Consequences

«What are the consequences of pretending to be a spiritual guide?»

If a doctor practices without a license, they go to jail. If a lawyer pretends to be one, they face charges. If an engineer signs plans without certification, they answer when the building collapses.

But a spiritual guide who pretends... apparently nothing happens.

Or does it?

I know what happens to them. Not in the abstract. In concrete people. The consequences, according to the Vedic texts, are not divine punishment. They are natural law. Putting your hand in fire burns without anyone having to decide to burn you. And it's not distant suffering. It's almost immediate.

I have seen spiritual leaders who seemed untouchable fall apart. Sudden illnesses. Scandals out of nowhere. Lives unraveling like sandcastles. I don't say this with satisfaction. I say it with sadness. Many started well. They had something genuine at the beginning. But at some point they crossed a line.

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But the gravest thing is not what happens to them. It's what happens to those who follow them. And I understood this not by reading a text, but by seeing the face of a friend who had spent twenty years following someone

who turned out to be a fraud. It was like watching someone wake up from a dream and discover that all that time was wasted.

The Srimad Bhagavatam (7.15.36) says it bluntly: if the person who occupies the position of guide does not have a real connection with God, it doesn't matter how much the disciple practices. They don't advance. They don't become purified. Nothing arrives. It's like watering a plastic plant—the gesture is the same, but there's no life inside.

A genuine master functions as a transparent channel: the disciple's spiritual weight passes through him toward God, who is the one who truly dissolves it. The master doesn't absorb anything. He only transmits. But a guide who pretends doesn't have that connection. He can't channel anything. The disciple's weight reaches him—and stays. He absorbs it without being able to process it. And the opposite of what he promises occurs: instead of relieving the burden, he multiplies it. For himself and for everyone who follows him.

And when the weight becomes unbearable—when he falls ill, when he loses his balance, when his life falls apart—whom does he blame? His disciples. "They don't follow properly." "They're not surrendered enough." "Their sins are affecting me." The irony is brutal: the one who can't channel anything accuses others of what he himself can't handle.

The disciples don't advance. They get frustrated. They feel they're doing everything right but something isn't working. They start to doubt themselves, the practice, God.

I've witnessed it dozens of times. And it's always the same: the sincere disciple suffers in silence, thinking the failure is theirs.

No. It's not always yours.

Sometimes it's the person you accepted as guide without anyone helping you verify whether they were qualified.

The Potency

«Can just anyone become a spiritual master?»

Nowadays anyone can. An online course, a good photographer, an Instagram account. There's no barrier to entry. If you have charisma and know how to talk, the spiritual marketplace welcomes you with open arms.

But being able to present yourself is not the same as being able to guide.



What happened in my tradition is a perfect example of what occurs when that qualification doesn't exist.

In 1977 Srila Prabhupada left this world. He left a worldwide movement, thousands of followers, hundreds of temples. And a question no one wanted to face: who comes next?

Eleven of his students self-appointed themselves as successors in a conclave. They went from students to being venerated as absolute spiritual masters. Not because of their level of realization. By their own decision.

Most of them failed.

Sexual scandals. Financial fraud. Abuses of power. The disciples who had placed their faith in them were devastated.

The institution's response? Appoint more. Today there are just over a hundred—the number rises and falls depending on who is appointed and

who fails. The question remains unanswered: how many have the qualification the texts demand?



Because the texts are clear. The function of the genuine spiritual master is not just to teach. It is to transmit *shakti*—a spiritual potency that transforms from within.

The Hari-bhakti-vilasa (2.6) defines spiritual initiation as the process by which divine knowledge—*divyam jnanam*—is transmitted and sinful reactions are destroyed. Not information. Knowledge that transforms. That transmission requires a potency that is not acquired through study; it doesn't come with an appointment. It comes from the level of consciousness.

The difference between someone who has read everything about swimming and someone who knows how to swim. If you're drowning, you need the second.

A guide without that potency is a lamp without oil. It illuminates nothing. And whoever follows it walks in the dark.



But there is something that needs no one's permission:

The scriptures.

You don't need anyone to authorize you to read the Bhagavad-gita. You don't need a committee to access the Srimad Bhagavatam. The knowledge is there, open, waiting. It's been waiting for millennia.

If the genuine master is not available—or if the one before you isn't genuine—going to the texts directly is infinitely better than following a blind man with a guide's sign.

But what happens when the blind man has an entire organization behind him holding up the sign?

The Cover-Up

«*Why do religious institutions protect their leaders when they fail?*»

It's the same pattern. Always.

A leader falls. The organization finds out. Instead of acting, they cover it up. Those who report it are silenced. Years pass. The truth comes out anyway. The damage is already done.

The Catholic Church. Shambhala. Evangelical megachurches. The Hare Krishna movement.

In 2018, a Pennsylvania grand jury report documented more than a thousand cases of abuse by three hundred Catholic priests—covered up for decades by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. They knew. They transferred the accused to other parishes. Files were destroyed. Whistleblowers were ignored or pressured. Some victims were twelve years old.

In Tibetan Buddhism the same thing happened. Sogyal Rinpoche, author of *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*—a worldwide best-seller—was accused by multiple female students of sexual and physical abuse over decades. The Rigpa organization knew. Internal complaints were silenced. When the scandal went public in 2017, the initial response was to protect the master's image, not the victims.

This is not a Catholic problem. Not a Buddhist problem. Not a Hare Krishna problem. It is a problem of power without accountability.

I know it from the inside. I'm going to tell a case from the Hare Krishna movement. Not rumors. Facts in the public domain.

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One of the movement's gurus—I won't name him, but the case is public knowledge—was accused of inappropriate conduct with a minor. A letter of apology signed by him exists. The governing body was aware of the facts.

I remember the day I found out. I was at a friend's house in the south of Spain. Someone brought it up during dinner. There was a long silence. And then, one by one, people began to speak in whispers—as if the walls could hear. Everyone knew something. Nobody had said anything.

They covered it up. For years.

According to the public testimony of someone close to him, if it had been up to him, he would have resigned. But the institution couldn't allow it. If he resigned, the leadership would have to explain. And explaining meant admitting they had failed.

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Compare with the original standard.

There is a story that today feels uncomfortable. Chaitanya—the teacher who founded this movement five hundred years ago—had a monk in his inner circle. One day, that monk harbored an inappropriate thought about a woman. He did nothing. He said nothing. A thought.

Chaitanya expelled him. Permanently. Without appeal.

One thought. That was the standard.

Today, a documented case is swept under the rug.

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The same person who knew about the case summed it up in one sentence: first came the mistake of the eleven who self-appointed themselves as successors. When they failed, instead of fixing the system, they appointed a hundred more. Dilute the error with volume.

The falls continue. But they are managed. Hidden for two or three years. Negotiated in private. Buried.

Why? Because protecting the structure becomes more important than protecting the people. When an organization grows large enough, its first priority stops being its mission and becomes its own survival.

It's not malice. It's institutional inertia. But the result is the same.

The Crisis

«What do I do if I discover that my spiritual community isn't what it seemed?»

I know that feeling. It's like living in a house for years and discovering one day that the foundations are rotten. Everything is still standing, but you no longer trust the floor.

You have invested years. Perhaps decades. You have built relationships, identity, purpose. And one day you start noticing things that don't add up. Friends who tell you "don't ask" when you ask.

And nobody wants to look. Because there is an entire life of identity—personal and institutional—built on certain assumptions. Examining them too closely would require rebuilding that identity. And that is scarier than what you've discovered.

It doesn't matter if it's a Hare Krishna community, a Catholic parish, a Buddhist center, a yoga group. The experience is the same.

I've been through this. And I know many people who have too.

I tried to change it. I wrote letters. I had conversations. I proposed concrete changes. I thought that if I explained it well, if I argued it with the texts, people would listen.

They didn't listen. I ran into the system—cold, efficient, impersonal—and it crushed me like a fly against a windshield. Without malice. Without effort. It simply kept going and I was in the way.

That was the hardest part. Not the corruption. Not the scandals. Discovering that the system doesn't care about you. That your sincerity doesn't just go unnoticed—it's unwelcome.



You don't have to leave. But you have to be honest. And that's the hardest thing.

The Bhagavad-gita doesn't stop being profound because an institution fails. The teachings of Christ don't lose their value because the Vatican ignores them. Meditation doesn't stop working because your yoga teacher is a fraud.

The real question isn't "do I stay or do I go?" It's: "how do I become honest with myself from now on?"

The Bhagavad-gita (6.5) says that one must elevate oneself by means of one's own mind, not degrade oneself. The mind is your friend and your enemy. Elevate yourself through your own effort. Don't wait for the system to change. Before pointing out the hypocrisy of leaders: am I completely honest in my own practice? Not as self-punishment. As a starting point.

It's not about burning everything down at once. It's gradual. And what has worked for me is seeking—or creating—a small nucleus of authentic people. Inside or outside the institution. Not thousands. Not perfect. Honest. And a warning: those who have tried know that the system doesn't take it well. They label you, marginalize you, you lose relationships built over years. That's the cost. But the alternative—continuing to pretend everything is fine—is worse.

The Bhagavad-gita (3.21): "Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues."

If there is a small group that lives with authenticity, that group becomes the example. You don't need to change the institution. You need to be the

example it stopped being.

I chose my path. What you do with yours is up to you. But let it at least be a decision, not inertia.

The Protection

«*In practice, how do I protect myself from a false spiritual master?*»

Someone asked me this question after a talk in Madrid. He was a man in his thirties, short hair, professional appearance. He didn't come from any tradition. He had been to a meditation retreat and something had smelled off. "How do I know if they're trustworthy before I get in deeper?" he said.

I answered him with what I'm going to write here. These aren't my rules. They are the distillation of half a century observing up close people who pretended and people who didn't.



The Vedic texts have names for what a false guide feigns: *kapatya*—duplicity, saying one thing and doing another; and *dambha*—false pride, believing oneself superior without real basis. And one of the classic texts on spiritual instruction opens with a requirement that says it all: to be qualified as a master, a person must be able to control the impulses of speech, the mind, anger, the tongue, the stomach, and the genitals. Six forms of control. Not as an ideal. As a minimum.

I translate it into signs that anyone can observe:

Six warning signs.

First: no equanimity in the face of difficulty. When a problem comes, they react with anguish, anger, victimhood, or manipulation. A genuine master

has no personal plans—he follows the plan of the Lord and his spiritual master. That's why he accepts whatever comes: he sees it as a test or as a circumstance that will lead to something better. An impostor has his own agenda, and when reality doesn't match it, frustration comes. And from frustration: anger, anxiety, victimhood—or blaming you: that you don't follow enough, that you don't listen, that his problems are your fault.

Second: their decisions are political. Don't look at what they say. Look at how they live. Do they accumulate wealth? Do they need an entourage? Are their decisions guided by strategy to maintain their position—at the cost of betraying the truth, looking the other way, or neglecting the suffering of others, sometimes caused by the very institution in which they are a leader?

Third: they avoid direct questions. If you ask an honest question and the response is to minimize you, mock you, tell you that you lack faith or that you're on the enemy's side—leave. The entire Bhagavad-gita was born from a question. Whoever can't tolerate questions fears the answers.

Fourth: their authority depends on the institution. If tomorrow they lost their title, would they still radiate the same thing? A genuine master needs no sign.

Fifth: their followers get worse. Look at the disciples. Are they freer, more compassionate, more equanimous? Or more dependent, more fanatical, more closed off? The fruit reveals the root.

Sixth: they isolate their followers. If they tell you to only read what they authorize, not to look at the internet because there's too much garbage, not to listen to other voices—that's control. Genuine knowledge does not fear comparison.

Five questions before following anyone.

Do they practice what they teach? Not what they say they practice. What I can observe.

Can I ask them any question without fear?

Are their closest disciples people I admire?

How much of what attracts me is the teaching and how much is the charisma?

And the most important: if I discovered they had serious flaws, could I maintain my practice without this person?

If the answer is no, ask yourself whether what you follow is the teaching or the person. The teachings don't change. Your connection to them shouldn't depend on an intermediary.

How to maintain your spiritual life.

Read the texts directly. Form your own discernment from the source.

Seek honest company. People who practice with sincerity and whom you can look in the eye.

And when you find someone who truly lives what they teach—someone who helps you better understand what you read and deepen your practice—there you have a mentor. There's no rush. Better without a guide than with the wrong one.

Prabhupada, on that morning walk:

"Be honest, and hear from Krishna."

Be honest. Go to the direct source.

You don't need more.

The Final Question

«If God exists and is good, why does He allow false masters?»

It's the spiritual version of the oldest question. If there is a good God, why does evil exist? If spiritual truth exists, why is it full of impostors?

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I return to the morning walk.

"Krishna's mercy is already there. It is your misuse of free will."

The mercy is already there. Always. The opportunity to awaken is offered constantly. In every encounter with the truth, in every verse of the scriptures, in every moment of sincerity.

Why do so few accept it?

Because free will exists. And free will, misused, leads to preferring the comfortable over the true.

Prabhupada pointed out something that hurts: despite decades of preaching, the number of those who truly accepted was, in his words, "very insignificant."

He didn't say it with bitterness. He said it with the serenity of someone stating a fact.

False masters exist because there is demand. Demand for a spirituality that demands nothing. That tells you what you want to hear. That sells

"awakening" without asking you to give up anything. The impostor is not the cause of the problem. It's the symptom.



The Bhagavad-gita (7.19): "After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare."

Su-durlabhah. Extraordinarily rare.

But the few who accept change everything. A single sincere seeker is worth more than a million lukewarm followers.

And if you are reading this book. If you have made it this far. If you ask yourself these questions instead of looking the other way.

That is already something. It's not an accident.

Don't waste it.

The Bhagavad-gita ends with an invitation that sounds radical but must be properly understood:

*sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksaisyami ma sucah*

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear."

It doesn't say abandon your practice. It says don't cling to the form. Religion—any religion—is a vehicle. If the vehicle works, use it. But don't confuse the vehicle with the destination. The destination is direct connection with God. Institutions, structures, titles—all of that are tools. When a tool stops serving, find another. But don't stop walking. The path hasn't broken. The impostors haven't destroyed it. They've only made it harder to see. But it's still there. And you, with honesty and the teachings in hand, can walk it.

Your Question

These ten questions are just the beginning.

If you have made it this far, you probably have your own. One you've carried inside for months. Maybe years. One you don't dare ask out loud because you know that as soon as you do, something changes.

I want to hear it.

That's not a platitude. I've been in this for decades and I know what it feels like when you have a question that burns and there's no one to ask. Or worse: there are people, but you know they'll give you the official answer, not the honest one.

If you've lived something similar to what I describe in these pages—if you've seen something that didn't add up, if you swallowed the doubt, if you left, if you stayed without knowing why—tell me. You don't have to give your name. You don't have to give details you don't want to give. But speak. Even if just to me.

Every week, on A la Luz del Shastra, I answer questions like these. Uncensored. Unscripted. If you write to me, I answer you personally. And if your question can help others, I answer it on the podcast—without giving your name, unless you want me to. You can write to me at:

shastra.bhaktiyoga.es/pregunta



Sometimes I think about that woman from the temple in Spain. The one who approached with a low voice and asked me what I didn't dare to answer. I hope she found her answers. This book is my belated way of giving them.

If you have yours, don't wait another twenty years.

About the Author

Jagannatha Mishra Dasa has been practicing bhakti yoga for half a century. He discovered the Hare Krishna movement at the age of fourteen, when its founder, Srila Prabhupada, was still present. He became a monk at nineteen. He has lived in communities, preached in direct contact with people for decades, and has seen up close both the best and the worst of organized spiritual life. He has not lived in a bubble: he has worked, paid bills, and led a normal life outside the temple.

Today he dedicates his time to the study of the Vedic texts and to sharing that knowledge without institutional filters. He is the creator of bhaktiyoga.es and the host of A la Luz del Shastra—the weekly uncensored Vedic philosophy program. He lives in Alicante, Spain.