

A MANUAL  
OF  
VAIṢṆAVA ETIQUETTE  
AND  
LIFESTYLE

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

FOUNDER ĀCĀRYA : HIS DIVINE GRACE A. C. BHAKTIVEDĀNTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

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*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale  
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-ṭracārīṇe  
nirviṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tārīṇe*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet”.

“Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Saraswatī Goswāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya deva and delivering the Western countries which are filled with impersonalism and voidism”.

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# Preface

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu says in the Caitanya Caritāmṛta that the observance of Vaiṣṇava etiquette is an ornament, which makes a devotee beautiful and attractive in the eyes of God and in the eyes of the world. It is therefore very important for all devotees of the Lord to be well versed in the matters of such etiquette and lifestyle

Such information is scattered in different books and a need was felt here for a comprehensive manual that would enumerate not only the basic general principles of Vaiṣṇava etiquette and lifestyle, but also that would take into account specific issues and problems that pertain to the conditions in our Indian centres.

This work is a humble attempt to fulfil the above need, at present standardised norms of devotees in India. Due to limitation of time it was not possible to make it more elaborate to cover in detail every issue. In time, based on feedback from devotees, further additions and modifications may be made. Meanwhile, the errors and drawbacks of this work may kindly be excused.

This work has been made possible by the special interest shown by H.H. Rādhānātha Swāmī Mahārāja. He has been instrumental in persuading and encouraging devotees to compile this data and in giving his valuable advice, born as it is from long years of experience as a devotee and a spiritual guide. We hope and pray for his constant guidance and association.

Many other devotees have spent their time and energy to give suggestion and comments and to type and edit the manuscript. Their role has been valuable in this compilation. Our heartfelt gratitude to all of them.

It is hoped that this work may in a small way help devotees to further the mission of Lord Caitanya, the Golden Avatāra for this Age, and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

*All glories to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga !*



# PART I

## 1. BRIEF INTRODUCTION ON THE IMPORTANCE

The matter of this manual has been compiled from sources like Nectar of Devotion, Nectar of Instruction and other books, letters & instructions of Śrīla Prabhupāda and also from observations/suggestions of various devotees.

Lord Caitanya instructed Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī about the behaviour of a Vaiṣṇava as follows :

*yadyapio tumi hao jagat-pāvana /  
tomā-sparṣe pavitra haya deva-muni-gaṇa//  
tathāpi bhakta-svabhāva—maryādā-rakṣaṇa /  
maryādā-pālana haya sādharma bhūṣaṇa //*

CC Antya 4.129 – 130

“My dear Sanātana, although you are the deliverer of the entire universe and although even the demigods and great saints are purified by touching you, it is the characteristic of a devotee to observe and protect the Vaiṣṇava etiquette. Maintenance of the Vaiṣṇava etiquette is the ornament of a devotee.”

*maryādā-laṅghane loka kare upahāsa /  
iha-loka, para-loka—dui haya nāśa //*

CC Antya 4.131

“If one transgresses the laws of etiquette, people make fun of him, and thus he is vanquished in both this world and the next.”

Also Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave five important instructions to the six Goswāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Based on those instructions the need was felt to write down certain rules and regulations to meet the demands of ever-increasing preaching mission of International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

These instructions are as follows:

- 1 To scrutinizingly study all the revealed scriptures and extract the essence from all and essence is bhakti.
- 2 To excavate Holy places of Kṛṣṇa's lilā in Vṛndāvana. To make Vṛndāvana Dhāma a place that people from all around will come to take shelter of and be inspired by.
- 3 To build beautiful temples and to install wonderful Deities and teach the world proper method of Deity worship.
- 4 By their personal examples to show the conduct of a Vaiṣṇava and proper etiquette among Vaiṣṇavas. Lord Caitanya considered this to be most important principle. Not only must we be philosophically strong but we must understand how to have proper etiquette amongst each other; to our superiors, to our juniors, to the Supreme Lord and to conditioned souls.
- 5 He told them to establish Vaiṣṇava etiquette through their writings as well as through their behaviour.
- 6 By their own personal conduct to show what are the duties of one in the renounced order of life.

## 2. THE ESSENCE

A devotee's lifestyle should conform to the principle “**Simple living, High Thinking.**”

There are many rules and regulations guiding a devotee's life but the purpose of them all is to help us to -

*“Always remember Kṛṣṇa*

*Never forget Kṛṣṇa”*

This is the most important rule and all others are subservient to this one.



# PART II

## 1. ETIQUETTE WITHIN THE TEMPLE

### A) BEING HUMBLE

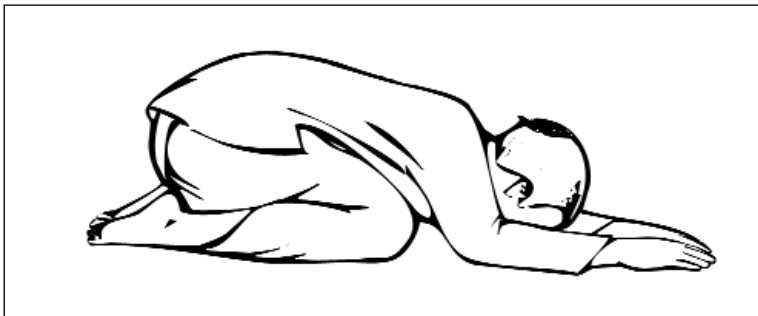
In the old days kings would travel in palanquins. One regulative principle is that one should never enter a temple in a palanquin or a car or with shoes on. The idea is that one should give up one's kingly mentality i. e. the mentality of being the Lord and master, whatever be one's qualifications, abilities and social position. Amongst the devotees particularly in temple, one's only designation is 'SERVANT OF THE SERVANT'.

### B) OFFERING OBEISANCES

Upon entering the temple, one should first offer obeisances (panchanga pranama) to the assembled Vaiṣṇavas and utter the prayer -

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sinḍhubhya eva ca  
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the



Lord. They are just like desire-trees who can fulfill the desires of everyone, and they are full of compassion for fallen conditioned souls.”

Then one should offer obeisances (full dandavats for men) to Śrīla Prabhupāda, keeping him on our left, and chant his praṇati mantra - “*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya...*”

For further details please refer **Appendix I** at the end of this section. (Pg No. 31)

One should then move towards the Deities and offer full prostrated obeisances, keeping the Deities on our left side and chant their respective **praṇāma mantras**.

For further details please refer **Appendix II** at the end of this section. (Pg No. 32)

It may be noted that one should not offer obeisances on one hand. Both hands should support the body while bowing down and both hands should be outstretched.

## C) MEDITATING UPON THE DEITY

- a) After offering obeisances to the Deities one should take ‘darśana’ with great devotion and beg for Their mercy.
- b) One should not, however, immediately look upon the Deities full in the face. The proper manner in which one should take ‘darśana’ of the Lord is described in Śrīmad Bhāgvatam 2.2.13 -  
“The process of meditation should begin from lotus feet of the Lord and progress to His smiling face. The meditation should be concentrated upon the lotus feet then the calves, then the thighs and in this way higher and higher. The more the mind becomes fixed on different parts of the limbs one after another, the more the intelligence becomes purified.”
- c) Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in the purport that such meditation will help us get detached from sense gratification.

The mood of the devotee taking ‘darśana’ is “Sir, I am your eternal servant. Please let me know how can I serve You?.” The functions of the big deities in the temple are for giving ‘darśana’ and usually are the istadevas of the sampradaya. So it is quite natural and respectful to see Them first.

There are also other considerations as :

If there are three altars Like the Krishna Balaram Mandir in Vrindavan {or Sri Sri Radha Rasbihari Mandir at Juhu}. Srila Prabhupada would pay obeisances first at GaurNitaï's Altar then go to Krishna Balaram's Altar and then to Sri Sri Radha Syamsunder .

Also the devotee may like to see his Guru first {but his Guru's Picture may not be present} then take 'darśana' in the ascending order to Krishna

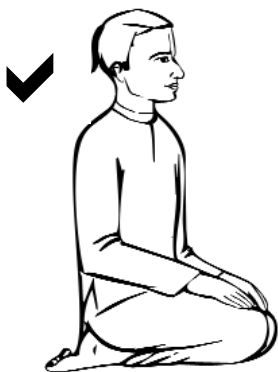
While taking 'darśana' one may stand at the sides so that 'darśana' is not obstructed from the devotees who are sitting.

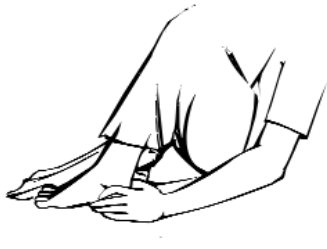
The 'darśana' should begin, as we face the Deities, from the left-hand corner and move progressively, Deity by Deity to the right-hand corner. In Rādhā-Gopīnātha mandir this would mean beginning the darśana with Guru Parampara, then Lord Nityananda and ending with Śrī Gopālji.

## D) SITTING

There are several regulations regarding one's sitting posture in the Temple-

- a) While sitting one should not expose one's feet to the Deities or point them at the spiritual master, Tulasī-devī etc. The feet should always be covered.
- b) One should as far as possible, avoid sitting with one's back to the Deities or the vyāsāsana. (However the layout of the temple may at times restrict us in following this principle).





- c) One should not spread one's legs before the Deities.
- d) One should not sit before the Deities holding one's ankles, elbows or knees. (Please see the illustrations).
- e) One should not fall asleep while sitting before the Deities.

## E) TALKING

- a) In front of the Deities one should not:
  - ☞ talk loudly
  - ☞ quarrel
  - ☞ chastise anyone
  - ☞ speak harshly to others or speak angrily
  - ☞ praise anyone else
  - ☞ speak ill names
  - ☞ criticise the demigods
  - ☞ indulge in 'prajalpa' or mundane talk
  - ☞ speak a lie
  - ☞ talk nearby devotees who are chanting the Holy Name of the Lord
- b) One may speak in front of the Deities to guests and devotees if it helps in preaching or enhancing their Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but all other talks should be conducted outside the temple.

## F) DRESS AND APPEARANCE

- a) A devotee's clothing must be simple clean and distinctive so as to remind people of KRṢṂA.

- b) When coming to the temple (particularly for the morning programme, festivals & on Sundays) devotees should dress as follows:

**Men** : dhotī and kurtā

**Women** : saree (head covered in the presence of men)

Other clothing must be avoided except in compelling circumstances or where definitely required for preaching.

- c) For both men and women, clothing should be simple and not fashionable and opulent. Yet the clothes must be neat and presentable. Unnecessary items like perfumes and various forms of cosmetics and make-up should be avoided. Simplicity in dress is very important for a Vaiṣṇava, whether in the Temple or outside.
- d) Particularly for morning programmes and for all Temple programmes in general fresh clothes must be worn. The previous days' clothes must not be worn.
- e) Lord Caitanya said that a Vaiṣṇava is one who when seen reminds one of Kṛṣṇa. Hence, all devotees must be particular in regard to the following, which mark one out as a Vaiṣṇava:

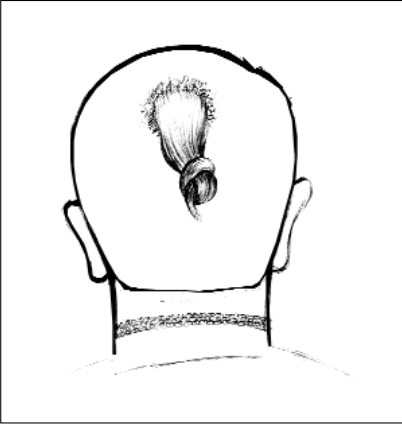
### 1. Tilaka :

One should always decorate the body with tilaka at twelve places after taking a bath. A person who is not chanting the Holy Name and not following the regulative principles must not wear tilaka particularly outside the temple.

For further details please refer **Appendix III** at the end of this section. (Pg No. 34)

### 2. Hair :

**Men**: Brahmācāris and sannyāsīs must shave their heads once a week and keep śikhā. Gṛhastas may do the same. However, according to their service, they may keep hair short and neat & if possible, a small śikhā.



Although there seems to be no s̄āstric injunctions regarding the size of the śikhā, Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas traditionally keep the śikhā about the size of a calf's hoof print, approximately 1.5 inches (5-6 cm) in diameter.

The śikhā may be any length, but it should be kept tightly knotted and only untied when you are washing, cleaning or oiling it.

Also, when going to sleep, attending funeral rites, or observing a period of mourning, you should keep the śikhā untied. Since an untied śikhā is a sign of a death in the family, it is inauspicious to go about one's daily duties with an untied śikhā. It is also said that if one keeps the śikhā untied, the body may become weak.

While tying your śikhā after bathing, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra or if initiated with Gāyatrī mantras, silently chant the Brahma-Gāyatrī (first line of Gāyatrī). The śikhā should not be braided (traditionally only women braid their hair), nor should it be kept long and dishevelled.

If the śikhā is too short to be tied, it is all right to leave it open but it should not be dishevelled.

**Women:** It is preferable for women to keep long hair tied behind.

### 3. Kaṅṭhi-Mālā (Tulasī Neck beads) :

All the devotees who are initiated must wear kaṅṭhi-mālā in at least two (2) or three (3) rounds. The mālā should be wrapped around the base of the throat and should be clearly visible.

Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned this in a conversation with some of his disciples in Hawaii,

*“Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava śikhā is an inch and a half across – no bigger. Bigger śikhā means another Sampradāya. And they have to be knotted.”*

(May 6<sup>th</sup> 1972, Hawaii, SPL V, p-93)



Devotees who are not initiated but have been following all the regulative principles for some time and who desire to take dīkṣā may also wear kañṭhi-mālā.

Tulasī beads worn around the neck indicate a devotee's surrender to the Lord, and therefore a person wearing Tulasī beads around his neck is dear to the Lord.

However, a person is an offender if he wears Tulasī neck-beads simply to imitate a Vaiṣṇava but is not seriously trying to surrender to the Lord.

It is advisable not to wear beads if one is not following four regulative principles.

Some devotees also wear other kinds of auspicious mālās – either made of Tulasī beads, lotus seeds, rope from Jagannātha's ratha, or silk pavitras – while performing pūjā, japa or other sacred functions, these should be removed when bathing or leaving the temple or house, while going to toilet.

The kañṭhi-mālā is worn permanently, for the beads protect one from bad dreams, accidents, attack by weapons and the servants of Yamarāja. Upon seeing the Tulasī-mālā, the Yamadūtas flee like leaves scattered by the wind.

Devotees who are not following the basic principles, particularly the chanting of the Holy Name and four regulative principles (viz. no meat eating, no illicit sex, no gambling, no intoxication) should not wear kañṭhi-mālā. Strictly speaking, once the kañṭhi-mālā is worn, even onion and garlic should not pass down the throat.

One should therefore advise new devotees accordingly.

#### 4. Moustache and beard :

Devotees who are initiated or preparing to be initiated should not have a moustache or a beard. (It may be noted, however that in some Vaiṣṇava 'maṭhas' men shave their face and head

once a fortnight or on full moon day; and in Caturmasya period they do not shave at all. But our standard is to shave on regular basis with the odd exception of yatras or for some other justifiable reason).

## G) CLEANLINESS AND HYGIENE

- a) As mentioned earlier, fresh clothes must be worn in the Temple.
- b) After one takes prasādam the area where the plate was kept must be cleared. One should not step over the area where prasādam was taken, because it is considered contaminated. The place where we take prasādam becomes contaminated. And if one steps on that spot, then feet must be washed. The place where the prasādam has been taken must be cleaned right after the prasādam has been taken. Because the temple must be very clean, we should be careful that we do not unnecessarily contaminate the temple.
- c) One should not enter the temple hall without having washed one's hand and feet after eating.
- d) One should enter the temple with clean hands and feet.
- e) One should take bath after passing stool and only then enter the temple hall.
- f) One should not enter the Temple after visiting a crematorium or after touching a dead body. One must first take proper bath and then enter.
- g) One should not pass air or belch within the Temple.
- h) One should avoid putting one's fingers in one's mouth, ears or nose while in the Temple. When one is compelled to do this (even outside the Temple), one's hands must be washed immediately thereafter.
- i) During their menstrual periods, mātājis may visit the Temple but they may not perform any item of Deity worship viz. Āratī, dressing, cooking, garlands or any other work that requires



their presence in the Deity Room or kitchen, or any work that is directly connected to the Deities (e.g. stitching Their Clothes etc.)

At this time, such matajis should avoid being in physical contact with anyone who is or will be involved in the service of the Deities.

They may attend Tulasī pūjā but may not offer water to Tulasī-devī.

Under all circumstances chanting on one's japa beads should continue. There can be no material impediment to the chanting of the Holy Name.

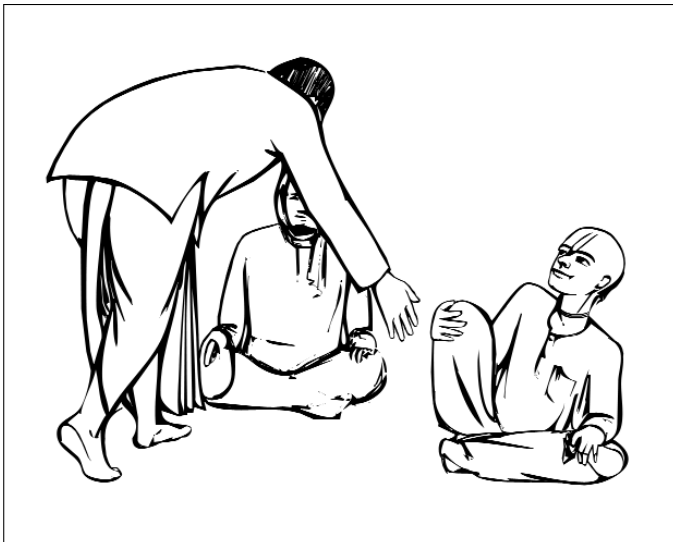
As far as one's home is concerned, mātājīs should try to maintain the above standard where possible. In some cases it may not be practical and possible to do that, as there may be no one else available to do the cooking etc. In such cases, mātājīs may do the needful to fulfil their domestic obligations and at the same time also see that their household Deities are taken care of.

Other members of the family, as far as possible, should help in this regard.

## H) GENERAL BEHAVIOUR

- a) One should always remember that one is a devotee and is representing Guru and Kṛṣṇa. Whether in Temple or at home, at work in the office or out on the street, one should conduct in a way that draws appreciation to Guru and Kṛṣṇa and should avoid all conduct that will bring Guru and Kṛṣṇa disrepute.
- b) Devotees should not wear expensive and flashy looking jewellery, wristwatches etc. Jewellery for women must be worn with careful moderation (if at all) and men should preferably avoid all jewellery like gold chains, bracelets etc.
- c) As far as possible devotees should avoid using any items made of leather, knowing them to be the result of animal slaughter. Unless unavoidable in one's service, one should refrain from wearing leather shoes (and also items like bags, wallets, watchstraps etc.).

- d) Even (and particularly) when one is criticised or offended, one should conduct oneself with dignity.
- e) While one may certainly take precautions against being cheated or take action where necessary, one should be careful to avoid picking up quarrels, indulging in useless argumentation, and so on.
- f) A devotee must be particularly careful in dealings with the opposite sex.
- g) Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī says that a devotee must not be neglectful in ordinary dealings. In other words, one should not give up basic courtesies and formalities considering them to be mundane (and oneself to be transcendental).
- h) To touch someone with one's foot is offensive. If one has to walk



past seated devotees in Temple, for example, one should extend one's hand to indicate that one wishes to go by and they will move their knees to let one pass (to see in illustration ).

If by accident one touches a devotee with one's foot, one should touch the devotee's body gently with one's right hand and (then) touch one's right hand to one's head; this nullifies the offense.

## I) ATTENDING CLASS

- a) While attending discourses one should be very attentive and silent. A talkative or sleepy devotee has a discouraging and distracting influence on the speaker and on the assembled devotees. It does not also project a good image of our mission.

- b) If one feels excessively sleepy one should move to the side of the hall and stand up.
- c) Rules regarding sitting in the Temple mentioned earlier should be followed.
- d) One should avoid moving in and out of the Temple or room where the discourse is being taking place. This causes great disturbance.
- e) Parents must control their children. If the children become noisy, they must be kept outside the Temple.
- f) Relevant and pertinent questions may be asked and in a humble spirit.

## J) ATTENDING ĀRATI

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes :

*There must be regular maṅgala-ārati in the temple during the early morning, an hour and a half before the sun rises. (Cc. Madhya 24.334, purport)*

Ārati is also called nīrāñjana or dṛṣṭi, which means waving auspicious items before a person in order to dispel inauspicious influences or elements, as a means of protection.

The various items offered, all representative of the material elements in pure form and the corresponding sense objects (i.e. sound, form, touch, etc.) are auspicious and purifying.

Śrīla Prabhupāda further emphasizes in Nectar of Devotion, the benefit of seeing the ārati performed:

In the Skanda Purāṇa there is the following description of the result of seeing ārati (worship) of the Deity: 'If someone sees the face of the Lord while ārati is going on, he can be relieved of all sinful reactions coming from many, many thousands and millions of years past. He is even excused from the killing of a brāhmaṇa or similar prohibited activities.' (The Nectar of Devotion, Ch. 9)

Thus all āraṭi ceremonies offered to the Lord are auspicious (maṅgala) but the first āraṭi of the day, in the early morning, is considered particularly auspicious for all who participate.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, who appeared in the middle of the seventeenth century, is a great spiritual master in the Kṛṣṇa conscious chain of gurus and disciples. He says, “One who, with great care and attention, loudly recites this beautiful prayer to the spiritual master during the brāhma-muhūrta obtains direct service to Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Vṛndāvana, at the time of his death.”

## K) HONOURING MAHĀ-PRASĀDAM / NIRMĀLYA

Nirmālya refers to the garlands, flowers, candana, bath water (Caraṇāmṛta), ghee lamp and Tulasī leaves that the pūjāri has offered to the Lord during the pūjā. After the pūjā is completed, the devotees should accept these items on the heads, saying, “jaya mahā-prasādam”.

### (i) Flowers, garlands :

One should not disrespect the nirmālya by stepping on it or leaving it in an unclean place.

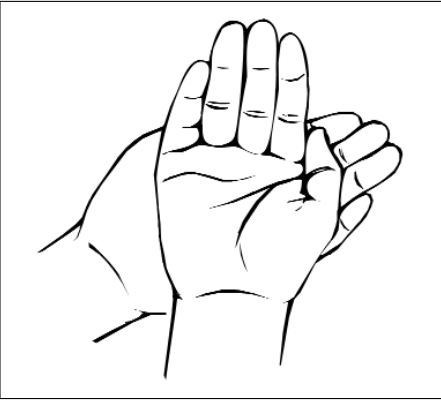
After being properly respected, nirmālya such as garlands and flowers can be collected and disposed in a river, a lake or the ocean.

Devotees accept prasāda flower garlands by touching them to the head, wearing them and smelling them.

They accept prasāda Tulasī garlands simply by touching them to the head and smelling them, but not wearing them.

### (ii) Caraṇāmṛta :

Drinking the bath water of Viṣṇu is powerful enough to destroy the effects of one million sins such as the killing of other living entities. However, the person who



lets even one drop of the sacred bath water fall on the ground must suffer eight million such sinful effects. (Hari-bhakti-vilāsa)

The pūjāri(or an assistant) should distribute Caraṇāmṛta to the devotees, who may chant the following verse while drinking and placing it on their heads:

*śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādodakam prema-bhakti-dam mudā  
bhakti-bhāveṇa vai pītvā śirasā dhārayamy aham*

“The water from the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa bestows pure loving devotion to Them. Having drunk that water with great joy and devotion, I hold that water upon my head.”

To avoid spillage, hold your left hand under your right hand when receiving mahā-prasāda, nirmālya flowers, Tulasī leaves and mañjarīs or Caraṇāmṛta.

(iii) Ghee Lamp :

In traditional temples the lamp is brought first to Garuḍa, who stands at the back of the temple.

In ISKCON temples the lamp is brought first to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON, as he is the Vaiṣṇava-śreṣṭha, the leader of the assembled Vaiṣṇavas, in order of seniority. (Women who are having their monthly cycle should not touch the lamp.)

The person offering the prasāda lamp should be sensitive to the seniority of the assembled devotees; the assembled devotees, however, should not be overly sensitive if missed when the lamp is offered.

The lamp is not meant to show respect or honour to us, but rather we are meant to offer respect to the lamp as the Lord's prasāda by touching the fire to our foreheads briefly with both hands and saying 'jaya mahā-prasadam'.

(iv) Deity's Clothing :

Another type of nirmālya used is clothing from the Deity. Deity clothing which is distributed as prasāda of the Lord should be respected.

We may respect prasāda cloth by keeping it with other worshipping paraphernalia, or even by keeping it in a glass frame and hanging it on a wall like a painting or a photograph.

One may also wear it, but strictly speaking it is best not to cut and re-sew the cloth, as is a widespread custom. If cutting and re-sewing is to be done, it should be only for devotional clothing. Bead bags and costumes for children's drama is acceptable (if the drama is for glorification of the Lord).

Avoid wearing any prasāda cloth below your waist.

(v) Mahā-prasādam :

As is commonly practised in many temples in India, after the darśana-ārati, the pūjāri may distribute small morsels of prasādam to devotees directly from the altar room or from outside. Sometimes for preaching purposes small quantity of prasādam is distributed to guests. Devotees respect these remnants immediately, moving somewhat to the side of the temple room so as not to be directly in front of the Deities while eating.

Try to distribute dry sweet prasādam, as wet prasādam may spill on the ground.

## 2. OTHER ETIQUETTE

### A) HANDLING SACRED ITEMS

- i) Books, beads, kartals etc. should not be kept on the floor or in unclean places and should be respected as worshipable paraphernalia.
- ii) One should not touch one's feet to anything sacred or use one's feet to do what could be done with one's hands.
- iii) If a sacred object falls to the ground or one's foot touches one should quickly pick it up and touch it to one's head.
- iv) One should not step over books, devotees, Prasādam, flowers that have been offered to the Lord or over any sacred articles.
- v) All sacred articles should be kept in a neat, clean place and handled with care. They should not be tossed about but carefully handed over from person to person.
- vi) Sacred items like beads, books, tilak, etc. should not be taken into the bathroom.
- vii) One should be very careful in handling pictures of Guru and Kṛṣṇa. They should be handled with great care and respect.
- viii) Special mention may be made of Hari-Naam chaddars. Since the Holy Name is printed on cloth, it is a sacred object and should not be touched to the floor.
- ix) One should be careful while offering obeisances that the bead bag in one's hand does not touch the floor. It may be kept aside before offering obeisances.
- x) One should be very careful in handling Deities' paraphernalia like Their clothes, jewellery, vessels etc. For instance clothes and towels should be nicely folded and kept, the vessels should be placed in a proper place and so on.

If one touches one's hand to the floor or anything unclean, one should wash hands before touching Deity paraphernalia again.

Kṛṣṇa is non-different than His paraphernalia and treating Kṛṣṇa's paraphernalia badly means to treat Kṛṣṇa badly. True bhakti will then not appear in our hearts. We have to be conscious at all times that all these different items are not ordinary items, but they are to be used in Kṛṣṇa's service and therefore worshipable.

## B) PERSONAL HABITS

- i) One who is serious about spiritual life should rise early in the morning, preferably before the 'brāhma-muhurta' hour i.e. one and a half (1½) hours before sunrise.

It is said in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.20.46 (Purport):

*“The time early in the morning, one and a half hours before sunrise, is called brāhma-muhurta. During this brāhma-muhurta, spiritual activities are recommended. Spiritual activities performed early in the morning have a greater effect than in any other part of the day.”*

- ii) After waking up, first brush your teeth.
- iii) One should then bathe in cold water and after wearing fresh clothes, begin the day's sādhana.
- iv) Bath should be taken after:
  - ☞ rising early in the morning
  - ☞ long naps of more than an hour.
  - ☞ passing stool.
  - ☞ excessively perspiring, or
  - ☞ being contaminated in any way (after visiting crematorium).
- v) Personal hygiene and cleanliness should be maintained. Nails should be kept clean and clipped short. Nail clippings should be thrown in the dustbin. Śrīla Rupa Goswāmi even mentions that one should carefully clean one's teeth properly and regularly.
- vi) Hands and legs should be washed after passing water and hands



should be washed properly with soap after passing stool. Brāhmaṇa initiates should wrap their sacred threads around their right ear while using the toilet.

- vii) Only the right hand should be used for eating, chanting on the beads, offering something, accepting something, etc.
- viii) Wash hands, feet and mouth before and after honouring prasādam.
- ix) Wash hands after drinking water.
- x) Do not spit while eating.
- xi) Do not spit on water.
- xii) Sannyāsīs should bathe three times a day, gr̥hasthas and brahmacārīs at least twice a day.
- xiii) Bathe after shaving, copulating or going to a crematorium.
- xiv) One should take rest for about six (6) to six and a half (6½) hours every night. Too much sleep or too little sleep is not good for our Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.
- viii) One should try to sleep on the floor or on a hard surface. Luxurious soft beds should be avoided.
- ix) It is best to sleep on one's left side, if not, then on back, but never on one's stomach.
- x) One should not waste Kṛṣṇa's energy like soap, toothpaste, electricity, water etc. One should turn off the lights and fans, whenever and wherever they are not required.
- xi) One should spend Kṛṣṇa's money discreetly and with responsibility, asking oneself if this expenditure is really necessary for enhancing Kṛṣṇa's service.

## C) KĪRTANA

- i) Leading Kīrtana at a satsanga is an honour as one is representing the whole congregation before the Deities. Therefore one should be conscious of this and lead only when one is asked to.

- ii) We should sing only those kīrtanas, which are authorised.
- iii) The prema dhvani prayers (i.e. *jaya om viṣṇu-pāda...*) at the end of the kīrtana should be recited by the senior most devotee present e.g. sannyāsīs or Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples.

For further details please refer **Appendix IV** at the end of this section. (Pg No. 37)

- iv) Only the standard **prema-dhvani** prayers should be recited except on special occasions like appearance days when the appropriate glorification may be made additionally.
- v) There are standard melodies to be sung at specific times of the day. In particular in the morning programme the *samsāra-dāvā* prayers and Hare Kṛṣṇa mahāmantra should be sung in the morning melody.
- vi) Kīrtana should be simple and led in a way that can be followed and repeated easily by the congregation.
- vii) All devotees should enthusiastically sing in chorus.
- viii) All devotees should follow the same melody that the lead singer is singing. Therefore devotees should pay careful attention at all times.
- ix) Mṛdaṅga and kartāla players should be close to lead singer and should watch him carefully, and **ADJUST THEIR SPEED ACCORDING TO HIS**. Therefore the kartāla and mṛdaṅga players should be extra attentive.
- x) The general pattern of the morning kīrtana should be *samsāra-dāvā* prayers, pañca-tattva mantra, Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra and hari harāye namaḥ kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ, (Gopal govinda ram sri madhusudhana)
- xi) Where there are two or more kartāla players, they must play in harmony. Similarly, for mṛdaṅga players.
- xii) Kīrtanas should be sweet and melodious and not simply loud.

## D) DANCING



- i) Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmi states that one should learn to dance in front of the Deities.
- ii) Dancing should be graceful and enthusiastic but not violent and wild.
- iii) Dancing in the traditional Gaudiya way as demonstrated by Śrīla Prabhupāda should be the standard.
- iv) In addition dancing can take place in various formations. For example:
  - ☛ rows of devotees rhythmically approaching each other and then receding.



- ☛ devotees forming rows one behind the other and while continuing to face the Deities, moving towards and then away from Them rhythmically.
  - ☛ devotees moving in a circle (Please see the illustration).
- v) Devotees should take care to see that the formations are maintained and that they are in line.
  - vi) While dancing in formation devotees should raise hands, hold hands etc. as may be required for that particular formation.



- vii) This dancing is not a “spectator sport” and devotees should not simply stand and watch. All should participate. However, those who are unwilling (particularly guests and newcomers or those who are sick) should not be forced.
- viii) Dancing in ways that can cause injury to devotees should be avoided e.g.
- ☞ Two devotees clasping hands and spinning, because it may be harmful to other devotees.
  - ☞ Spinning alone with arms outstretched.
  - ☞ Tossing children (and even grown-ups) in the air or lifting them.
  - ☞ Pushing excessively while moving in the circle.
- ix) Men and women should dance in separate portions of the Temple.
- x) One should watch the lead dancer always and synchronise.
- The perfect dancing is in Lord Caitanya’s style with arms raised or folded hands with enthusiasm and devotion.

## E) SPEECH

- i) The urge to speak is very strong and as soon as we get an opportunity we begin speaking. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that if we do not speak Kṛṣṇa kathā then we speak all sorts of nonsense.
- ii) Such talk is called ‘prajalpa’ and is born of our material identification. Thus devotees must refrain from it.
- iii) All mundane literatures are also practical exhibitions of the urge to speak. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in the “Nectar of Instruction” that materialistic people read heaps of newspapers, magazines and novels, solve crosswords and do many nonsensical things. In this fashion, people simply waste their valuable time and energy. In the Western countries old men retired from active life play cards, fish, watch television & debate about useless socio-political schemes. All these and other frivolous activities are included in the prajalpa category. Intelligent people interested in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness should never take part in these activities.
- iv) Śrī Rupa Goswāmi advocates the process of Kṛṣṇa kathā – talk of all subjects connected to Lord Kṛṣṇa as a means to counteract the urge to speak. Therefore, if we must talk, we should talk Kṛṣṇa kathā.
- v) Before we speak we should ponder whether
  - ☞ Is it necessary?
  - ☞ Is it kind?
  - ☞ Is it right?
- vi) Devotees should avoid speech that offends, particularly blasphemy of devotees, which is the first offence against the Holy Name. ‘Vaiṣṇava aparādha’ will surely choke our tender devotional creeper very quickly.

## F) PREACHING

- i) Our actions and behaviour are our best preaching because actions speak louder than words. As the saying goes “Your actions speak so loud that I cannot hear what you are saying.”
- ii) Preaching means to change the heart, not simply to defeat someone intellectually.
- iii) This does not mean, of course, that we should not present our philosophy properly. All devotees must endeavour to study Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books and understand them thoroughly and try to present faithfully what one has submissively read and heard.
- iv) There is no need to read other books or go to other philosophers to learn how to preach. The humble servant of the spiritual master is the best preacher.
- v) The principle of preaching is nicely described by Śrīla Rupa Goswāmi in the Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu :

*yena kena prakāreṇa manaḥ kṛṣṇa niveśayet*



**“Somehow or other, one must think of Kṛṣṇa.”**



- vi) Ultimately what will change people’s heart is not simply the philosophy that we are speaking but mainly to what extent we have imbibed the philosophy in our lives and realised that knowledge practically.
- vii) Our preaching should generally be done in a humble attitude and not in the attitude of superiority.
- viii) When preaching we should simply repeat the words of the spiritual master and deliver his message like a postman and we should never think that we know more than the previous ācāryas, how to preach. We are empowered to the degree we are submissively preaching their words.
- ix) One must show compassion and concern for the person one is preaching to. One may need to even pay attention to his petty material problems if necessary.

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- x) One must speak the truth, but according to deśa, kāla and pātra i.e place, time and people. Our goal is to make people Kṛṣṇa Conscious and we should preach keeping this in mind and do what is needful.
- xi) One should have a balanced approach while preaching. A good preacher will always understand the need for the devotees in different categories. Just as in material life there are bankers, lawyers, doctors and so on, in spiritual life too there is a need for (& there will always be willing candidates for) the renounced order and also for those in the householder or professional category. Both varieties of devotees are necessary and valuable.
- xii) While preaching to a particular person, our approach should be to advise what is best for his Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- xiii) There is a need for qualified brahmacāris, qualified grhastas, qualified vānaprasthas and qualified sannyāsīs and we should encourage a person according to where he can make best spiritual advancement and serve Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission.
- xiv) Basic etiquette must be followed when another devotee is preaching. He should not be suddenly interrupted unless there is something urgent.
- xv) Basic courtesies must be followed e.g. wishing with a smile, being helpful if someone needs help or guidance.
- xvi) New people should be made to feel at home and should be given great abundance of love and hospitality.
- xvii) Particularly on Sundays at the Temple, devotees should first associate with the guests and newcomers and then with the regular devotees.
- xviii) While we preach to new people, we must always remember that preaching to devotees is equally, if not more, important.

So while we make newcomers feel at home, regular devotees should not be neglected either.

- xix) At outside programs, newcomers and guests may be given preference for asking questions after the lecture, particularly

when time is limited. Regular devotees may ask pertinent questions to create an atmosphere in which newcomers would be encouraged to put forth their questions, or when newcomers have finished with their queries and there is still time left for more questions.

- xx) We should not advocate/preach breaking of the laws of the land in the name of doing something for Kṛṣṇa. Devotees should adhere to these laws too.
- xxi) We should not be sectarian. We should respect all bonafide religious and spiritual paths. In particular we may show special respect for other Vaiṣṇava Sampradāyas.

### 3. PRASĀDAM

- i) First and foremost, one should eat only prasādam i.e. food that has been offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa with devotion.
- ii) Ideally one should eat food that is
  - ☞ cooked by devotees
  - ☞ offered to the Lord by devotees
  - ☞ Served by the devotees.

One should try to come as close to this ideal standard as is practically possible given the limitations of city life and needs of preaching.
- iii) Unless absolutely necessary for preaching or service, food cooked by non-devotees should be avoided.
- iv) In the same spirit all commercial food items like chocolates, ice creams, chips, biscuits, cold drinks, bread etc. should be avoided at home. To guests one may offer home-made foods and natural drinks like lemon water, fruit juice etc.
- v) Commercial items may be selectively had while travelling or in otherwise compelling circumstances. Where the Prasādam one is



carrying with oneself is not sufficient or as an addition, uncooked and raw foods like fruits, nuts, milk etc. are preferable to commercially cooked items.

- vi) Sometimes while travelling or in the course of some preaching or service or professional work one may be compelled to eat in a restaurant. One should select if possible a restaurant which is purely vegetarian and even then be careful to order items which are without onion and/or garlic.
- vii) One should eat prasādam which is sattvik in nature and avoid foods that are rājasik i.e. foods which are very spicy, oily and rich.

For further details please refer **Appendix V** at the end of this section. (Pg No. 39)

viii) The bhoga must be offered in the proper way at home

ix) Prasādam should not be wasted. Excess prasādam should be put on another plate before eating.

- x) After everyone in the family has eaten, if prasādam is still left, it may be retained for some time for the next meal if possible or distributed outside somewhere.
- xi) Prasādam should be eaten only with the right hand; the left hand is for touching other parts of the body.
- xii) While serving prasādam, the serving spoon should not touch the plate or the half-eaten prasādam.
- xiii) One should eat prasādam in moderation and preferably at fixed times of the day. Overeating and eating wrong kinds of foods are not good for spiritual life and also for health. Controlling our diet will help us control our tongue and this will help us in turn to control our senses.

For further details please refer **Appendix VI** at the end of this section. (Pg No. 40)

xiv) Before honouring prasādam appropriate prayer should be chanted.

xv) Prasādam must be honoured with a consciousness that it is Kṛṣṇa's mercy and is non-different from Him. Therefore, except where necessary for preaching one should maintain silence. Hearing a lecture or a cassette at this time is also beneficial.

- xvi) When guests visit the house, the bhoga that has been offered to the home Deities becomes mahā-prasādam which should be distributed to all present in small quantities. Fresh, hot prasādam should be served out as per requirements to all the guests, including Guru and sannyāsīs.
- xvii) When senior Vaiṣṇavas are present we should patiently wait till they have begun eating and only then we should begin eating (unless we are told otherwise).
- xviii) One should get up after finishing prasādam only when all have finished eating (except with the permission of senior Vaiṣṇavas present).
- xix) Guru's mahā-prasādam should not be distributed in presence of newcomers.
- xx) After one has begun eating prasādam, one should not touch anything else with the right hand.
- xxi) We should not distribute prasādam, unless we have washed both hands.

➔ **Also refer:**

**PART II - 1. G) CLEANLINESS  
& HYGIENE point (b)**

xxii) One should not take prasādam in view of karmī public, e.g. while walking down the streets, or while in procession. As far as possible, prasādam should be honoured either in a private place or where everyone else is taking prasādam.

#### 4. KITCHEN

- i) The kitchen is an extension of the altar because whatever is cooked there will be offered to the Deities. So whatever one is doing in the kitchen should be done with care and attention for the Deities.
- ii) Where the Deities are formally installed as in the Temple, standards expected are quite high and strict. In comparison, some degree of concession may be offered in respect of household Deities where it is not possible to maintain the same

standard. For example, it is a rule that one should not eat in the kitchen or in front of the Deities. However, in many homes the altar, kitchen and dining table are all in one room so it may not be possible to follow the above rules.

- iii) Householders, however, should keep the ideal standard in mind and try to come as close to it as possible in their particular situation. One should always remember that one is cooking for Kṛṣṇa. The more careful one is in regard to these small rules, the more one can become conscious that one is not cooking for oneself, but for Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.
- iv) Only clean, uncontaminated clothes must be worn in the kitchen. Clothes that have been used outside or in the bathroom cannot be used.
- v) Fingernails should be clean and clipped. Hands must be washed upon entering the kitchen before beginning cooking. In the Temple, bath must be taken before cooking. At home it is preferable to do so.
- vi) One should not put anything in one's mouth in the kitchen. One should not rinse one's mouth in the kitchen sink. In particular, one should not 'taste' or 'smell' a preparation to 'test' it.
- vii) Where possible, there should be no eating or drinking in the kitchen area. If this is unavoidable, the curtain in front of the Deities must be drawn.
- viii) The vessels in which bhoga is cooked for the Deities in particular, and the plates and the cups in which bhoga is offered, should be kept and washed separately from the plates, cups and glasses in which the family devotees eat or drink.
- ix) If one has an infectious disease one should not work in the kitchen area as one may contaminate the bhoga and the vessels.
- x) If one touches the floor or the dustbin, or the lower part of one's body one should wash one's hands.
- xi) There should be no unnecessary talking in the kitchen.
- xii) The cooking platform stove, sink etc. should be cleaned up

before and after cooking.

- xiii) One should work carefully but efficiently and avoid cluttering.
- xiv) Anything that has fallen to the floor cannot be put on the tables.  
If a vegetable falls on the floor it may be washed and then used.
- xv) One must not enter the kitchen straight after using the toilet unless one has taken a bath.



xvi) **VERY IMPORTANT:** Devotees must be absolutely careful that no hair falls in and contaminates the offerings. Absolute caution must be exercised in this regard. Devotees must keep their hair well covered while cooking.

- xvii) Mahā-prasādam should not be eaten directly from the Deities' plate but it should be transferred to another vessel or plate before being eaten. The temple standard is that one should not begin eating until the Deities' plates have been washed.

# Appendix I

## PRAṄĀMA MANTRAS

Śrīla Prabhupāda praṇati

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale  
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine  
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe  
nirviṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

Gaurāṅga praṇāma

*namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te  
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmnē gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*

“O most munificent incarnation! You are Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You have assumed the golden colour of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and You are widely distributing pure love of Kṛṣṇa. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa praṇāma

*he kṛṣṇa karuṇā-sindho dīna-bandho jagat-pate  
gopeśa gopikā-kānta rādhā-kānta namo 'stu te*

“O my dear Kṛṣṇa, You are the friend of the distressed and the source of creation. You are the master of the gopīs and the lover of Rādhārāṇī. I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.”

Pañca – Tattva mantra

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda  
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Śrī Advaita, Gadādhara, Śrīvāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

# Appendix II

## OFFERING OBEISANCES (Praṇāma / Namaskāra)

In the early morning or whenever visiting temple one should offer obeisances to the Deities only after waking Them, because it is enjoined in śāstras that one should not disturb the Lord by offering obeisances when the Lord is resting or bathing. (Nor should one circumambulate the Lord at these times.)

Also, one should offer obeisances just outside the Deity room, never inside, since it is enjoined to offer obeisances from a respectful distance. Within the Deity room, offer praṇāmas with joined palms, by mantra and with the mind.

### Aṣṭāṅga Praṇāma :

The Hari-bhakti-vilāsa tells how to offer daṇḍavat-praṇāma:

Offer obeisances with eight aṅgas – your feet, knees, chest, hands, head, sight, mind and words. With your two feet, knees, chest, hands and head touching the ground and with your eyes downcast and half open, recite a suitable prayer while meditating that your head is under the Lord's lotus feet.

(Your hands should be extended out in front of your head, not next to your head or tucked in next to your chest.)



## Pañcāṅga Praṇāma :



To make pañcāṅga praṇāma, offer obeisances with five aṅgas – knees, arms, head, intellect and words. (The chest does not touch the ground.)

It is an offense to offer obeisances with only one hand – that is, with one hand extended in front of the head while the other holds a bead bag or other sacred item off the floor. Before offering obeisances, set down anything you are holding.

Men may perform either type of praṇāma, but women traditionally perform only pañcāṅga-praṇāma.

While offering obeisances, first recite your own spiritual master's praṇāma-mantra, then Śrīla Prabhupāda's and then the praṇāma mantras for the Deities on the altar.

## OFFERING RESPECT TO VAIṢṆAVAS



The Bṛhan-Nāradya Purāṇa forbids us to offer obeisances to a Vaiṣṇava while he is bathing, collecting wood for a sacrifice, picking flowers, carrying water, or honouring prasādam. If you are in an impure state – for example, if you are eating, bathing or wearing shoes or if your head is covered – you should neither offer nor receive obeisances physically.

Sometimes we should refrain from offering a Vaiṣṇava obeisances physically because doing so might inconvenience him. You are not, however, forbidden to offer respects in your mind; you should then take the next opportunity to offer physical obeisances.

These rules apply when offering respects to any superior person; whether a Vaiṣṇava or non-Vaiṣṇava.

A further point is that there are two times when we should offer obeisances to a superior, namely first when we see the superior person and again when he or she sees us.

# Appendix III

## APPLYING TILAKA

Śrīla Prabhupāda glorifies tilaka in the following Śrīmad Bhagavatam purport:

*In Kali-yuga one can hardly acquire gold or jewelled ornaments, but the twelve tilaka marks on the body are sufficient as auspicious decorations to purify the body.*

*(SB 4.12.28 purport)*

After putting on clean cloth, sit on a purified āsana (preferably a kuśa-grass mat) and apply ūrdhva-puṇḍra or Viṣṇu-tilaka, on twelve parts of the body. You should not apply tilaka in the bathroom.

Tilaka refers to marks placed on the body using various substances. Ūrdhva-puṇḍra refers to the two vertical marks placed on the forehead and other parts of the body to indicate surrender to Lord Viṣṇu.

The Padma Purāṇa and Yajur Veda state that ūrdhva-puṇḍra symbolizes the lotus feet of Viṣṇu. The twelve parts of the body on which

we place the ūrdhva-puṇḍra marks are not arbitrary points. They are sensitive points that easily absorb the spiritual energy generated by reciting the names of Viṣṇu and mentally placing the Lord in those positions.

If a devotee applies the marks of the Lord and chants His Name, the Lord becomes pleased and resides with him. In this way the material body becomes a sanctified temple of the Lord.

The Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa states that a devotee who applies his tilaka with great care while looking in a mirror or looking at his reflection in water goes to the Lord's supreme abode.

By applying tilaka on these places and reciting Viṣṇu's Names one sanctifies and dedicates the body to the Lord's service.

The Hari-bhakti-vilāsa mentions that the ūrdhva-puṇḍra tilaka may vary in shape, colour and material according to a devotee's Sampradāya, but other features are shared.

It should not be crooked, uneven, uncentered, dirty or bad smelling.



On the forehead, the centre position between the two lines should be open from the eyebrows to the hairline, but should be joined at the bottom. The solid portion (tulasī) may extend three quarters of the way down the nose. While applying tilaka two vertical lines which represent the lotus feet of the lord are drawn first, then the tulasī leaf is drawn.

Lord Viṣṇu is said to reside in the central portion, while Brahmā resides on the left and Śiva on the right.

Śrīla Prabhupāda advised devotees in New York to try to avoid spilling liquid gopi-candana while mixing it in the palm of the hand, “Do not waste it. It is precious.” If it is fallen on the ground, immediately clear the area.

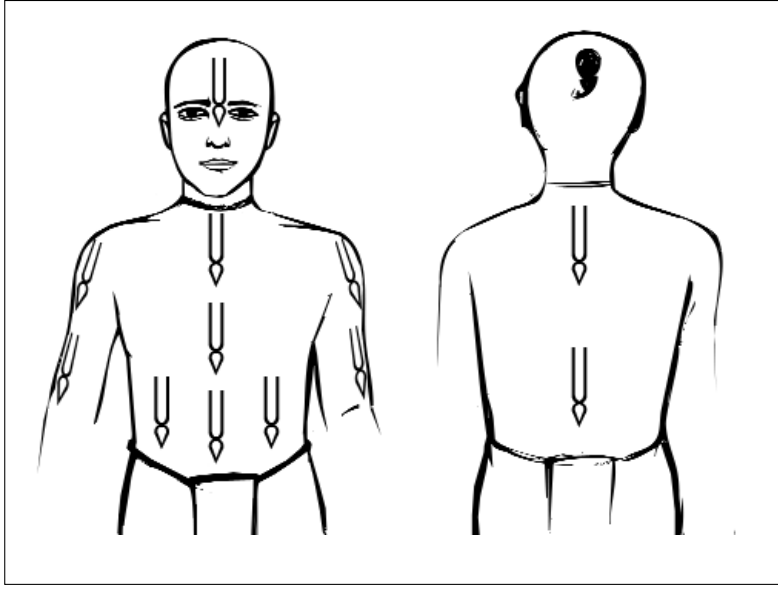
Chant the following verses (A) while rubbing gopi-candana in your left palm; then, while applying tilaka and clearing the middle space, chant the name of the appropriate form of the Lord (B).

Alternatively, chant the verses given below one line at a time while applying the tilaka to the indicated places on your body. After each line of the verse, while clearing the space in the middle (where the Lord resides), chant the name of the appropriate form of the Lord.

(Example: Chant *lalāṭe keśavaṁ dhyāyen* and apply tilaka to your forehead; then chant *om keśavāya namaḥ* and clear the space in the middle.)

(A)

<i>lalāṭe keśavaṁ dhyāyen</i>	<i>nārāyaṇam athodare</i>
<i>vakṣaḥ-sthale mādhave tu</i>	<i>govindam kaṅṭha-kūpake</i>
<i>viṣṇum ca dakṣiṇe kuṣau</i>	<i>bāhau ca madhusūdanam</i>
<i>trivikramam kandhare tu</i>	<i>vāmanam vāma-pārśvake</i>
<i>śrīdharam vāma-bāhau tu</i>	<i>hrīkeśam tu kandhare</i>
<i>prṣṭhe ca padmanābham ca</i>	<i>katyām dāmodaram nyaset</i>



(B)

- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) The forehead :                | <i>om keśavāya namaḥ</i>      |
| 2) The belly (above the navel) : | <i>om nārāyaṇāya namaḥ</i>    |
| 3) The chest :                   | <i>om mādhavāya namaḥ</i>     |
| 4) The throat :                  | <i>om govindāya namaḥ</i>     |
| 5) The right side of the belly : | <i>om viṣṇave namaḥ</i>       |
| 6) The right arm :               | <i>om madhusūdanāya namaḥ</i> |
| 7) The right shoulder :          | <i>om trivikramāya namaḥ</i>  |
| 8) The left side of the belly :  | <i>om vāmanāya namaḥ</i>      |
| 9) The left arm :                | <i>om śrīdharāya namaḥ</i>    |
| 10) The left shoulder :          | <i>om hṛṣikeśāya namaḥ</i>    |
| 11) The upper back :             | <i>om padmanābhāya namaḥ</i>  |
| 12) The lower back :             | <i>om dāmodarāya namaḥ</i>    |

The śikhā area is not marked with tilaka; rather, after washing the right hand, wipe the remaining water on your śikhā while chanting *om vāsudevāya namaḥ*.

# Appendix IV

## PREMA DHVANI PRAYERS

- *jaya om Viṣṇu-pāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja Śrīla Prabhupāda — kī jaya.*

All glories to the ācārya Om Viṣṇu-pāda 108 Tridaṇḍī Gosvāmī A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, who travels everywhere, preaching the glories of Hari, and who is situated on the highest platform of sannyāsa.

- *ISKCON - BBT Founder-Ācārya Śrīla Prabhupāda — kī jaya.*

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

- *jaya om Viṣṇu-pāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja Śrīla Prabhupāda — kī jaya.*

All glories to the ācārya Om Viṣṇu-pāda 108 Tridaṇḍī Gosvāmī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, who travels across the earth, preaching the glories of Hari, and who is situated on the highest platform of sannyāsa.

- *ananta koṭi vaiṣṇava-vṛnda — kī jaya.*

All glories to the unlimited millions of Vaiṣṇavas.

- *nāmācārya śrīla haridāsa ṭhākura — kī jaya.*

All glories to the Nāmācārya Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

- *prem-se kaho śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī advaita, gadādhara, śrīvāsādi gaura-bhakta-vṛnda — kī jaya.*

Call out with love the names Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Śrī Advaita, Śrī Gadādhara, Śrīvāsa and all the devotees of Lord Caitanya.

- *śrī śrī rādhā-kṛṣṇa, gopa-gopīnatha, śyāma-kuṇḍa, rādhā-kuṇḍa giri-govardhana — kī jaya.*

All glories to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd boys and girls, the cows, Śyāma-kunḍa, Rādhā-kunḍa and Govardhana Hill.

(One may glorify the Deities of the temple at this time.)

- *śrī māyāpur dhāma — kī jaya.*

All glories to Śrī Māyāpur-dhāma.

- *śrī vṛndāvana dhāma — kī jaya.*

All glories to Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.

- *śrī jagannātha puri — kī jaya.*

All glories to Śrī jagannatha puri dhāma

- *gaṅgā-mayī — kī jaya.*

All glories to Gaṅgā-devī.

- *yamunā-mayī — kī jaya.*

All glories to Yamunā-devī.

- *tulasī-devī — kī jaya.*

All glories to Tulasī-devī.

- *bhakti-devī — kī jaya.*

All glories to Bhakti-devī.

- *śrī hari-nāma saṅkīrtana — kī jaya.*

All glories to the congregational chanting of the holy name of Hari.

- *samaveta bhakta-vṛnda — kī jaya.*

All glories to the assembled devotees.

- *gaura-premānande — hari-haribol.*

- *All glories to the assembled devotees. [three times]*

- *All glories to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga.*

# Appendix V

## PRAYERS FOR OFFERING BHOGA

After all the items of the bhoga have been placed properly in the Deities' plates and cups, they should be placed on the altar.

The following mantras should be chanted three times each while ringing a bell with the left hand :

i) Śrīla Prabhupāda praṇati mantra.

ii) *namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te  
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*

“O most munificent incarnation! You are Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You have assumed the golden colour of Srīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and You are widely distributing the pure love of Kṛṣṇa. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You.”

iii) *namo brahmaṇya-devāya go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca  
jagad-dhitāya kṛṣṇāya govindāya namo namaḥ*

“My Lord, You are the well wisher of the cows and the brāhmaṇas, and You are the well wisher of the entire human society and world.”

The offering should be left on the altar for few minutes and then removed after offering obeisances.

# Appendix VI

## PRASĀDAM PRAYERS

(These prayers should be sung before honouring the Lord's prasādam)

### 1) The Glorification of the Lord's Prasāda

*mahā-prasāde govinde  
nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave  
sv-alpa-puṇya-vatām rājan  
viśvāso naiva jāyate*

“O King! For those who have amassed very few pious activities, their faith in mahā – prasādam, Śrī Govinda, in the Holy Name and in the Vaiṣṇava is never born.” -Mahābhārata

### 2) Prasāda-sevāya

*śarīra avidyā-jāl, jadendriya tāhe kāl  
jīve phele viśaya-sāgare  
tā'ra madhye jihvā ati-, lobhamay sudurmati,  
tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre  
kṛṣṇa baḍa dayāmay, karibāre jihvā jay,  
sva-prasādānna dila bhāi  
sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,  
preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi*

“O Lord, this material body is a lump of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths to death. Somehow, we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is most voracious and uncontrollable; it is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Kṛṣṇa, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam, just to

control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda.”

3)

*bhāi re!  
ek-dina śāntipure, prabhu adwaitera ghare,  
dui prabhu bhojane bosilo  
śāk kori’ āswādana, prabhu bole bhakta-gaṇa,  
ei śāk kṛṣṇa āswādilo  
heno śāk-āswādane, kṛṣṇa-prema āise mane,  
sei preme koro āswādana  
jaḍa-buddhi pari hari’, prasāda bhojana kori’,  
‘hari hari’ bolo sarva-jan*

O brothers! One day at Śāntipur, in Śrī Advaita’s house, Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda were seated for lunch. When Lord Caitanya tasted the green leafy vegetables, He said, “O My devotees, this śāk is so delicious! Lord Kṛṣṇa has definitely tasted it.

“At the taste of such śāk as this, love of Kṛṣṇa arises in the heart. In such love of God you should taste this prasāda. Giving up all materialistic conceptions, and taking the Lord’s prasāda, all of you just chant ‘Hari! Hari!’ ”





# PART III

## 1. HONOURING AND SERVING PRASĀDAM

How the prasādam is served and how it is honored are important concerns in the Vaiṣṇava culture. Kṛṣṇa and spiritual master are very pleased not only when food is properly cooked and offered but also when the resulting prasādam is graciously served and respectfully honored.

### A) SERVING PRASĀDAM

Ideally, prasādam should be served by initiated Vaiṣṇavas. One should be pure in mind, body, habits and dress and perform your duties quickly, quietly and efficiently. As much as possible, loud talking and disruptive noises should be avoided.

One must ensure that preparations meant to be served hot are actually hot (but not reheated after having become cold) and that all preparations to be served are either present or will arrive for serving at the proper time.

Neither the server nor the serving utensils should ever touch the plates or hands of those who are eating, for this will contaminate the server and serving utensil. If this happens, one should wash one's hands and the contaminated utensil before continuing to serve the prasāda.

The prasādam may be gently dropped on a free area of the plate (not on the salt, for example), taking care to not mix salty preparations with sweet preparations.

Prasādam should not be served directly into the hand of the person eating, unless one is serving not a meal but

only morsels of mahā-prasādam.

Except when serving dry sweets or dry items, one should serve prasādam with a spoon, even for salt.

Only one's right hand must be used to serve prasādam and one should not touch anything impure (one's mouth, feet, hair or lower body) nor should one yawn, sneeze or spit. The serving vessels should not touch anyone's feet.

**The proper order of serving the various preparations is:**

- ❖ Water should be served first.
- ❖ When Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas serve prasādam, they begin the main meal with bitter foods, such as śukta and spinach.
- ❖ This is followed by dāl and savouries (such as pakaurās and fried potatoes).
- ❖ Then come other vegetable preparations (sabhjīs), progressing from lighter sabhjīs to richer sabhjīs and from wet to dry.
- ❖ Then richer wet sabhjīs are served again,
- ❖ Followed by rāitās and chutneys.
- ❖ Finally sweets progressing from less to more sweet.
- ❖ Rice and capātis should be offered from the very beginning and replenished as required, until those honouring the prasādam have finished all sabhjīs. (If possible, capātis should be served hot.)

Servings may be small, but when the devotees finish an item one should be alert to replenish the preparation. One should be generous in giving the devotees as much of an item as they desire. One should not be miserly and hold anything back because one wants to take it later. Prasādam is meant for

distribution. The devotees should never be left with an empty plate except at the end of the meal.

The server or the host may describe the wonderful qualities of an item as it is offered. Except where necessary for preaching one should maintain silence. Hearing a lecture or a cassette at this time is also beneficial. Some devotees can read Kṛṣṇa book or Śrīla Prabhupāda Lilāmṛta.

Everyone in a group should be offered the same items. When a group of persons take prasādam together, no one should be offered anything that is not offered to everyone else. The devotee who is serving prasādam should not make any distinction while serving. If possible those with special diets should eat separately.

The prasādam may be served from serving buckets.

The buckets should not be dragged along the floor nor should clanging noises be made with pot handles or utensils.

After everyone has finished honouring prasādam, the place must be cleaned immediately. Also devotees can collect the remnants fallen around the plate and put in the dustbin.

## B) HONOURING PRASĀDAM

One should be clean during meals, having washed one's hands, feet and mouth. Also, one's śikhā should be bound, the head uncovered (for men) and feet bare.

One should eat in a clean, spacious, peaceful place. If possible one may avoid eating in a vehicle. (During yātrās this is unavoidable)

One should not eat at the sandhyās (sunrise, noon or sunset), before bathing, or before performing Gāyatrī japa or your morning Deity worship.

Also, it is not proper to eat until the food from the previous meal has been digested.

One may eat with legs crossed, but not spread. Keeping the

plate in one's lap is not proper. Āyurveda recommends sitting on the floor (with an āsana) to take prasādam, with the legs crossed to ease digestion. Anyone over fifty, (when body does not support) however, may eat while seated at a table.

Before beginning a meal, one should glance over the prasādam and pay one's respects to it, remembering that it is the mercy of the Lord.

For further details please refer **Appendix VI** . (Pg No. 40)

One should glorify the Lord's prasādam by chanting the prayers.

### C) RULES FOR EATING AND FOR DRINKING WATER

While eating or drinking, do not make disturbing noises or find fault with the taste of the prasādam.

Use only the five fingers of the right hand to touch and place food in the mouth. Eating with the fingers is recommended because the digestive process begins with the sensation of food touching the fingers.

The left hand should be used only for lifting a water cup, and then only if one can pour the water into the mouth without touching the cup to the lips.

Tear large items such as capātis and purīs with the fingers of the right hand and then place the small pieces in the mouth. Do not use your left hand to tear capātis and purīs. One should not consume a large item by taking it in one's mouth and tearing it with one's teeth.

When the right hand is clean (before a meal), one may use it to hold the cup and pour the water into the mouth so that the cup does not touch the lips. During a meal one's right hand touches one's mouth, so one should take the cup in one's left hand and pour the water into one's mouth without touching one's lips. If the cup cannot pour properly, one may hold it in one's right hand and drink using one's lips.

## D) FOOD QUANTITY

Overeating causes disease and decreases one's life span. It also stops one's spiritual advancement, generates sin and makes one an object of criticism.

Ideally one should eat so that half one's stomach is filled with food, one quarter with water and the remainder with air.

## E) AFTER THE MEAL

It is appropriate to chant the prema-dhvani at the end of a meal, before rising to leave.

After finishing a meal and while waiting for others to finish, one may chant aloud various śloka and prayers glorifying the Lord.

Out of respect for others who are still eating, all persons in a row should wait for others in the same row to finish before rising.

After rising from the meal, one should wash one's hands, without delay and then rinse one's mouth at least three times and finally one may wash one's feet.

Do not take rest or perform any strenuous labour directly after a meal.

One should maintain a tranquil frame of mind, as one did during the meal, by remembering the Lord, chanting His Name and discussing His pastimes.

After the meal, the eating area should be thoroughly cleaned with water.



# PART IV

## 1. DEALINGS WITH DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF DEVOTEES

### A) THREE CATEGORIES OF DEVOTEES

Śrīla Rupa Goswāmi says in the Nectar of Instruction that one should mentally honour the devotee who chants the Holy Name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, one should offer humble obeisances to the devotee who has undergone spiritual initiation, and associate and faithfully serve a pure devotee who is advanced in undeviated devotional service and whose heart is completely devoid of propensity to criticise others.

### B) DEALINGS WITH THE SPIRITUAL MASTER

- a) One should humble oneself submissively and render service to the spiritual master.
- b) One should take the orders of the Guru as one's life and soul.
- c) In the presence of Guru, one should not instruct others without receiving his permission.
- d) In the presence of the Guru, one should not take one's own disciples.
- e) One should simply obey the instructions of the Guru and should not question. We should not disobey the instruction thinking that we know his "real inner" feelings.
- f) One should never instruct one's own Guru. Even if one wants to present something to one's Guru thinking that this

information may be helpful, one should always present it in a very humble spirit.

- g) One should never argue with one's spiritual master.
- h) One should never present one's qualification to the Guru and should always remain in a very humble position.
- i) One should never sit on the same level as the spiritual master unless one receives his permission.

Just like Lord Kṛṣṇa is non-different than His Name or picture, similarly there is no difference between the spiritual master and his name and picture hence one should keep pictures of Guru and Kṛṣṇa at proper place.

One should not read books apart from those written by the Guru and the paramparā unless one has permission and blessings.

## C) DEALINGS WITH SENIORS

- a) Within a Vaiṣṇava tradition, it is an important expression of our humility to respect those who are in the senior position than ourselves.
- b) In the chain of seniority the seniormost Vaiṣṇava is the Guru who is to be respected as a representative of God so he must be given the same respect as Kṛṣṇa Himself.
- c) Next are the sannyāsīs. Among the sannyāsīs themselves, seniority is considered on the basis of who had taken sannyāsa initiation earlier.

All sannyāsīs should be offered respectful obeisances, particularly when one first sees them in the day.

Even Māyāvādi sannyāsīs should be given proper respect, although one should not associate with them.

- d) Next are the Guru's Godbrothers. They should be respected as one respects the spiritual master.



- e) Devotees who have undergone Brāhmaṇa dīkṣā should be respected. Again seniority is determined on the basis of who has been initiated earlier.
- f) Devotees who have accepted dīkṣā before us should be given due respect.
- g) Special respect must be offered to the devotees who are senior in age.
- h) One should not instruct another person in the presence of a senior Vaiṣṇava without first receiving his permission.
- i) When ghee lamp is being offered to devotees after āratī, seniority must be taken into account.

## D) DEALINGS WITH GODBROTHERS

- a) Godbrothers should call one another “Prabhu”. One should, however, not try to become Prabhu because we are being so addressed. One should simply remain a servant and accept others as Prabhu.
- b) We are the servants of our Godbrothers and according to a particular level of Godbrother we must serve him accordingly.

From our senior Godbrothers, we should inquire submissively, carry out their instructions and aspire to be their obedient servant.

To those who are equal, we should serve them by befriending them, assisting them and encouraging them.

To those who are junior to us, we should serve them by guiding them, directing them, encouraging them and enlightening them.

- c) When we meet another Godbrother we should bow down and offer the prayer

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca  
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

- d) We should never accept a Godbrother as servant unless we have the permission or order of the spiritual master.

- e) We must never allow the saying “Familiarity breeds contempt” to enter into the relations between the devotees. Dealings between devotees should be respectful and without offence and duplicitousness.
- f) Devotees must not address one another by their karmī names.
- g) One should not praise oneself or boast one’s achievements or qualifications to the other devotees. One should know that actually one has no qualifications. Whatever we are able to do is simply due to the mercy of Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas
- h) If a Godbrother or a Godsister is undergoing some difficulties on account of sickness or bereavement in the family and/or is in emotional turmoil due to some reason, one must help in word and deed. As the saying goes, “A friend in need is a friend indeed.” The bonds between devotees will be tested at the time of difficulty. We cannot ignore such developments as being ‘material’.
- i) If a devotee has strayed away from the devotional service and has not been in the association of devotees for a considerable period, he or she must not be chastised for being in ‘māyā’ or reprimanded in a way that will push him or her further away from the lotus feet of spiritual master. One must offer love, encouragement and friendship and make him or her feel once again at home in the company of devotees.

## E) DEALINGS WITH LADIES

- a) A woman should be given all respect, particularly if she is a Vaiṣṇavi, and addressed as such.
- b) A Brahmācāri should see every woman as his mother and a gṛhastha should see every woman except his wife as his mother.
- c) Brahmācāris should associate with Mātājis only so far as required to execute devotional service and no more.

For further details  
please refer **Appendix VII** at  
the end of this section.  
(Pg No. 56)

## F) DEALINGS WITH GUESTS

When guests come to our Temple and homes, it is the Vaiṣṇava etiquette to treat them with great respect and love. They should be welcomed with sweet words, a seat, water and prasādam according to our means.

## G) ADDRESSING VAIṢṆAVAS

- a) Śrīla Prabhupāda has to be addressed as “His Divine Grace”, the Guru and a sannyāsī as “His Holiness” and a God Brother as “His Grace”.
- b) A Godbrother’s name may be prefixed as “Śrīmān”.
- c) A Brahmācārī’s name is suffixed by the term “Brahmācārī” e.g. Kṛṣṇa dāsa Brahmācārī; a gṛhastha by the term “Adhikārī” and a Sannyāsī by the term “Mahārājā”, “Swāmi” or “Goswāmi”.

## H) DEALINGS WITH OTHER VAIṢṆAVAS

We may offer respect to, but one should not associate with the following categories:

- ☞ Vaiṣṇavas of bad or doubtful character
- ☞ Sahajiyas
- ☞ Vaiṣṇavas of Sampradāyas of doubtful bona fides.
- ☞ Māyāvādi sannyāsīs.

## I) VAIṢṆAVAS NOT TO BE SEEN FROM MATERIAL VIEW POINT

- a) Śrīla Rupa Goswāmi says in the ‘Nectar of Instruction’ in regard to the Vaiṣṇava:

*“... Such a devotee should not be seen from materialistic point of view. Indeed, one should overlook a devotee’s having a body born in a low family, a body with a bad complexion, a deformed body, or a diseased or infirm body.”*

- b) In other words one should overlook all bodily defects of bad appearance, low birth, low education etc. Any Vaiṣṇava serving the Lord should be considered Holy.
- c) It is stated in the s̄astras that it is a hellish mentality to consider a Vaiṣṇava to be born of a certain caste or creed or to consider the same to be an ordinary person.

#### J) BODY OF A VAIṢṄAVA IS A TEMPLE

- a) The body of a Vaiṣṇava is to be seen as a Temple of Vishnu. Therefore while offering obeisances to a Vaiṣṇava we should remember that we are also offering obeisances to Lord Vishnu within the heart.
- b) Therefore we should never walk over the body of a Vaiṣṇava.

#### K) MERCY OF VAIṢṄAVAS IS NECESSARY

- a) One should not begin any significant venture in one's life without first receiving the blessings of Vaiṣṇavas.
- b) One must always feel oneself dependent on the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas.

#### L) LOVING EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE VAIṢṄAVAS

- a) Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī explains in the Nectar of Instruction that there are six loving exchanges between Vaiṣṇavas :
  - ❖ offering gifts in charity,
  - ❖ receiving gifts in charity,
  - ❖ revealing one's mind in confidence,
  - ❖ inquiring confidentially,
  - ❖ accepting prasādam,
  - ❖ offering prasādam.
- b) When one comes to the Temple one should accept prasādam from Vaiṣṇavas

- c) For gr̥hasthas, it is their duty to invite the Vaiṣṇavas to their homes to offer prasādam.
- d) The most precious gift we can give or receive is the gift of Kṛṣṇa-kathā, the transcendental knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- e) Gr̥hasthas staying outside the Temple should try to call devotees of renounced order for preaching at their homes.

## 2. DEALINGS WITH NON-DEVOTEES

- i) One should not allow non-devotees to touch our feet. But if they insist on doing it and there is no other way to avoid it, one can simply remember the predecessor ācāryas and spiritual master, and accept them and return the namaskāra with folded hands.

- ii) **Two categories of non-devotees**

To the innocent we should be the well-wisher. With respect we should try to enlighten them and give them the association of our spiritual master. But we should not take their association by engaging in activities that give them pleasure in life i.e. in materialistic activities.

As regards the atheist, we should avoid them. It is an offense against the Holy Name to preach to such people. We may however preach if they are willing to submissively hear from us.

- iii) **Greeting non-devotees**

- a) If the non-devotee is a friend, we can say Hare Kṛṣṇa and with folded hands touch our forehead.
  - b) If the non-devotee is a superior relative then we should chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and bow down to him or her.
- iv) If one encounters a person who is criticising Guru, Vaiṣṇavas or śāstra, then one must either soundly defeat him in argument or leave the place immediately. Hearing such offenses is one of the greatest obstacles to one's spiritual development.

# Appendix VII

## RECEPTION OF GUESTS – ATITHI-SEVĀ (in the temple or at home)

The Sanskrit word ‘*atithi*’ means ‘not scheduled’. An ‘unscheduled’ or unexpected guest is considered a representative of the Supreme Lord, since his arriving unannounced is just what the Lord might do to test His devotee and see how ready he is to serve Him in any situation. With this understanding, one should serve the guests.

The Lord’s temple, whether open to the public or in one’s home, should be a place where visitors can take part in temple activities as far as possible.

In the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, the proper reception of guests is very important, since the society is a preaching mission.

Proper reception of a guest can make the difference between a person coming once to the temple and never returning, or becoming a regular visitor and ultimately becoming a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

Regular visitors, invited guests, life members, visiting Vaiṣṇavas, relatives of Vaiṣṇavas – all should be treated in such a way that they will feel comfortable and want to come again.

Every devotee should learn how to take care of guests, but temple devotees who regularly worship the Deity should especially be expert in this matter, for they directly represent the Proprietor of the temple. Even the most first-class, opulent Deity worship will fail to attract a guest if the temple residents neglect him.

Proper reception of guests is the special duty of the gr̥hastha. If the gr̥hastha does not receive an unexpected guest warmly, no

As followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON, we should consider any guest in the temple to be his guest.

matter who he is, he commits a great sin. Not only gr̥hasthas, however, but everyone in every āśrama and varṇa should properly receive guests.

The main elements in receiving guests are the offering of proper respect and conveniences, including food and water, a place to sit, kind words, any services for the comfort of the guest (such as bathing facilities), and a place to rest.

When the guest first arrives, you should go out to meet him and when the visitor departs, you should accompany him, at least out of the premises or the yard.

According to the *Pañcarātrika-vidhi* one shows respect by :

- ❖ Rising from one's seat when a superior approaches.
- ❖ Identifying oneself by name and offering greetings.
- ❖ Offering prostrated obeisances with five or eight limbs.

Offering simple or elaborate worship. (For practical purposes, you may worship the guests with two articles – sandalwood paste and flowers or garlands or a seat and water for washing the feet.)

Giving gifts such as cloth, gold, money or grains.

One should respect elders, parents and teachers by rising from a sitting position, identifying oneself and

offering obeisances. Worship and gifts are reserved for the spiritual master.

## PROPER BEHAVIOUR AS A GUEST

A Vaiṣṇava guest should behave ideally, whether his host is another Vaiṣṇava or a well-wisher of Vaiṣṇavas. What follows are a few commonly accepted points of etiquette for Vaiṣṇava guests :

- 1) If you are an invited guest, you should not overstay your invitation. For example, if invited for a meal, you may rest a short time after the meal to aid your digestion, but do not burden your

host by staying and conversing for several hours, unless encouraged to do so.

- 2) Do not bring your own guests on the strength of your invitation. If you wish to invite other guests, ask your host's permission.
- 3) If you are permitted to use a telephone, fax machine or other such facilities, offer to pay accrued expenses.
- 4) When planning to visit a friend or acquaintance uninvited, try to let your prospective host know when you will arrive and how long you intend to stay.
- 5) Unless you have been invited or have informed your host, try to avoid arriving at a temple or your host's house at noon time or early afternoon, when both the Deity and persons in general rest after lunch.
- 6) If you stay for some days at your host's house, it is appropriate to give token gifts to the household residents as a gesture of gratitude.

## **PROCEDURE FOR RECEPTION OF VAIṢṆAVAS**

You should give great attention to receiving senior Vaiṣṇavas, sannyāsīs and especially your spiritual master. Before the Vaiṣṇava guest arrives, his living quarters should be arranged, cleaned and provided with necessities (such as pañca-pātra, mirror, tilaka, towels, drinking water and fresh bedding). If possible, provide a set of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. You may also provide some incense, an incense holder and matches. The guest's quarters may also be decorated with flower vases, devotional pictures and so on.

When a Vaiṣṇava guest arrives, you should go out to greet him, preferably with a kīrtana, garlands and sandalwood paste (unless it is cold outside). You should offer obeisances and kind words and should direct the guest to a seat. If you are receiving your spiritual master, you should worship him at this time (with his



permission) by offering him āratī, offering flowers at his feet and paying obeisances. You should be prepared to offer the guest prasādam immediately, but you should first inquire whether the guest wishes to first bathe or rest before accepting prasādam. When appropriate, you should introduce the guest to other residents of the temple, or household and should inquire if there is some service you may render.

You may also ask the guest how long he intends to stay taking care not to give the impression that you are looking forward to his departure. Rather, you should encourage your guest to stay longer than he had planned.



# PART V

## SĀDHANĀ

In the practice of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness one has to accept and follow sincerely several regulative principles, both negative and positive. Śrīla Rupa Goswāmi has listed 64 such regulative principles, five of which are considered most important.

- ❖ **Worshipping the Deity,**
- ❖ **Hearing Śrīmad Bhāgavatam,**
- ❖ **Association with devotees of the Lord,**
- ❖ **Chanting the Holy Name and**
- ❖ **Residing in a Holy Dhāma (or worshipping Tulasī-devī)**

### A) JAPA

- a) Chanting the Holy Name of the Lord is the single most important activity in the life of a devotee. Chanting Japa is an essential process given by all the great ācaryas for the purification of the heart. It is the first vow the devotee takes before the spiritual master at the time of dikṣā. Therefore chanting at least prescribed sixteen (16) rounds of Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahā- Mantra daily, without fail, is an absolute must for every serious devotee.
- b) Śrīla Prabhupāda says that 99% of our spiritual advancement comes from chanting the Holy Name. Thus a devotee who sincerely and regularly chants at least sixteen rounds everyday, avoiding offences, will make quick progress in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

c) **Japa - An exclusive activity**

When we attach importance to some activity, we keep aside some time exclusively for that activity. Similarly, every devotee must spend the time required for chanting his or her prescribed rounds exclusively for japa and for no other activity, even if it is some form of devotional service.

For e.g., while chanting one's sixteen rounds one should not be reading newspapers or talking to others or while even hearing to kīrtans for that matter. Japa is an activity that demands our complete, undivided attention.

During japa, telephone calls should not be entertained. The caller may be politely asked to leave a message or call up later. Even visitors who come in person should be requested to wait.

When we chant the Holy Name, we are in direct communion with the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because Kṛṣṇa is non-different from His Name. In the form of His Name, Kṛṣṇa, the most important Personality in all creation, is giving us an audience. Therefore, nothing should be allowed to interrupt this Holy "Meeting". (Remember: Where there is a will, there is a way).

d) **Intense Desire**

The foundation of our spiritual life is intense desire. Our strong desire and eagerness to chant the Holy Name is the most pleasing to Kṛṣṇa and is the fundamental requirement of good japa.

Strong desire must manifest in firm determination to chant one's prescribed quota of rounds everyday even in the midst of adverse and trying circumstances and also in the firm endeavour to improve one's quality of japa. One must, therefore, be determined to do every act necessary to come to the standard of good japa qualitatively and quantitatively, and avoid every act that can spoil one's japa.

And how does one increase the intensity of one's desire

and determination? By the process of “*nityam bhāgavata sevayā*” - regularly serving the devotees and submissively hearing Kṛṣṇa -kathā.

e) **Attentive Hearing**

Our japa is as good as the quality of our hearing, therefore attentive hearing is the most important aspect of japa. Śrīla Prabhupāda says, “...Concentrate fully on the sound vibration of the mantra, pronouncing each name distinctly...do not worry so much about chanting fast, more important is hearing”. Again, “As you chant, try to hear each word very carefully...”

Without attentive hearing our japa will become mechanical and tasteless.

f) **Firm faith in the Holy Name**

*“What one should do is to chant the Holy Name of the Lord with faith, enthusiasm and firm conviction on the statement of Lord Caitanya that simply by chanting the Mahā-mantra, one can be gradually elevated to the highest platform.”*

- Śrīla Prabhupāda

g) **Understanding the meaning of the Maha-mantra**

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains:

*“Our prayer of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahā-mantra means addressing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa for being engaged in Their service.” “Hare Kṛṣṇa” means, “O Hare! O Rādhārāṇī! O Kṛṣṇa! Please engage me in Your service so that I can get relieved from the service of māyā.”*

Since the Mahā-mantra is the transcendental sound vibration, it will act whether one knows the meaning of the mantra or not. Yet we must know what exactly we are praying when we chant the Mahā-mantra.

h) **Prayerful Mood**

Since the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahā-mantra is a prayer, we must, with full understanding of the meaning of the mantra, chant in a

prayerful mood. Our chanting must be like the desperate cry of a lost child crying out for its mother. The mood must be one of helplessness and utter dependence on Kṛṣṇa.

**i) No Material Motivation**

Śrīla Prabhupāda says that we should pray to Kṛṣṇa as follows, “My dear Kṛṣṇa, please do not put me into forgetfulness... even if you send me to hell it doesn’t matter, so long as I can always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.”

In our bhakti-mārga, we are trained to proceed towards the goal of unmotivated, uninterrupted, pure devotional service to the Lord. Therefore we should not seek material benefits or facilities for sense enjoyment through our chanting. The only bona fide favour to ask from the Lord is His service and the ability and opportunity to chant His Holy Name always.

**j) Humility**

Lord Caitanya says in his ‘Śikṣāṣṭakam’ prayers that unless one is humbler than blade of grass (*tṛṇād api sunīcena*) one cannot chant the Holy Name always. While humility comes naturally and automatically in the course of one’s progress in bhakti, one should also consciously attempt to be humble in all dealings and ways, particularly with devotees. One must guard against false pride and take action to subdue it the moment it raises its ugly head. Pride and the Holy Name can never go together.

**k) Suitable Environment**

One should select an environment that is conducive to good japa. As far as is possible in a city like Mumbai, it should be an isolated, quiet place where there are no distractions. Sitting in one’s veranda and doing japa while watching life pass by on the street, for example, is not a good way of doing japa.

Again, many devotees have to travel a long way by public transport to their place of work. By all means, devotees may chant while commuting, but such chanting should be considered bonus



chanting and not a part of prescribed quota of sixteen (16) rounds as the quality of chanting will not be good.

### l) Posture - sitting, standing and walking

If one is alert in the mind the sitting posture makes for very good quality japa. It is recommended that one sit cross legged, with back erect. Leaning one's back against the wall or slouching one's back or even resting one's elbows on one's knees or thighs should be avoided as they induce sleep very quickly. Worse still, being sprawled out in the chair or lying in bed-these are sure shot ways to fall asleep.

If one is feeling very sleepy or if the mind is exceptionally restless, it is then better to stand or walk for japa. After all, what good is it if the body is still but the mind is moving fast here and there? Or not moving at all?

Again while standing one should avoid the temptation to lean against a support lest one falls asleep. The conditioned mind is always looking for ways to cheat us from relishing Kṛṣṇa's names.

Many devotees prefer to do japa while walking. While this is certainly authorised by the ācaryas, one should be careful to avoid looking here and there or to get distracted by objects or people along the way. One helpful suggestion is to walk with one's head slightly inclined downwards.

### m) Vigilance

One must be vigilant to maintain mental alertness at all times during japa. If one feels sleepy while sitting down, one should immediately stand up or walk. As and when the mind wanders, one should immediately drag it back to focus on hearing the Holy Name.



**n) Japa is Not a Race**

Sometimes it may be tempting to try to beat the clock, to rush through one's japa to finish sixteen (16) rounds in even lesser time than yesterday. This must be avoided. Clear, attentive chanting should always be the emphasis and one may adjust to a speed that one is naturally comfortable with. The words of the Mahā-mantra must not be 'swallowed'. At no cost should the quality of japa be compromised. For many devotees sixteen (16) rounds take a little under two hours

**o) Always Discuss**

Japa is so important that devotees should regularly discuss this subject and emphasise its importance and share realisations.

**p) Japa-Best in Association of Devotees**

While japa is an individual spiritual discipline, it is advisable to do in association of devotees. While chanting alone, we may become a little lax, neglectful or sleepy. In association of devotees we are always under scrutiny and there is always someone to check that we are not "spacing out". When devotees chant japa together, it sets up strong vibrations and it is wonderful to chant in such an environment.

Thus, wherever possible devotees should attend the morning japa at the Temple. Alternatively, devotees staying at home locality can meet at common place on as many days as possible and chant together. This is highly recommended.

**q) Japa Early Morning**

Japa should be done early in the morning, ideally during the 'Brāhma-Muhurta' time. If that time is not possible, it should be done at the earliest thereafter. Rising early is mandatory for all devotees and there should be no compromise in this regard. It is desirable to have a fixed time for one's morning japa. Discipline



about timings is an important element of sādhanā bhakti. One should try to finish at least 10 to 12 rounds definitely before leaving home for work. The more the better.

r) **Loudness**

Japa may be done softly to oneself or aloud. Good japa does not necessarily mean loud japa. What is important is not how loudly we are chanting, but how attentively we are hearing. When chanting amongst other devotees we should be sensitive to not disturb their concentration.

s) **Holy Name or Pastimes?**

One question that is sometimes asked by devotees is whether they can think of pastimes of Kṛṣṇa while doing japa.

Let's see what Śrīla Prabhupāda says about this -

*“...So you can not make any distinction between listening to the sound and thinking of the pastimes. But the process is to hear, and then Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, form, qualities etc. will automatically come to mind...”*

At another place Śrīla Prabhupāda says:

*“...Generally, it is the process to simply chant and hear, but if Kṛṣṇa's lila comes into remembrance that is very good. It should come automatically... Not that you are remembering artificially.”*

t) **Offences against the Holy Name**

One should avoid the ten offences against the Holy Name. Śrīla Prabhupāda says that the 'quality' chanting means avoiding the above offences.

u) One should not forget to chant the Guru Praṇāma mantra and the Pañca-tattva-mantra before beginning to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahā-mantra.

Significance of Pañca-tattva mantra is given in **Appendix VIII** at the end of this section. (Pg No. 76)

These offences are listed in **Appendix IX** at the end of this section. (Pg No. 77)

## B) FOUR REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES

- a) One must strictly follow the four regulative principles
  - ☞ No meat eating including fish and eggs. (and items like onions, garlic and mushrooms).
  - ☞ No intoxication including liquor, tea, coffee, tobacco in any form, betel nut (paan), paan masala etc.
  - ☞ No illicit sex (no sex outside of marriage and ideally no sex within marriage that is not for procreation)
  - ☞ No gambling including speculation on the stock market or in business deals, lotteries and “lotto” games etc.
- b) Devotees should avoid:
  - ☞ watching commercial films,
  - ☞ television and non-devotional videos,
  - ☞ reading novels and other non-devotional works,
  - ☞ reading magazines that deal with films, sports, politics, sex, social affairs etc.
  - ☞ Such activities will simply contaminate our consciousness and encourage us to violate the four regulative principles in deed.

## C) ASSOCIATING WITH DEVOTEES

- a) One must associate with devotees REGULARLY. ‘Regularly’ means as often as one possibly can in one’s given situation.
- b) The more one associates with sincere devotees, the faster the progress one will make in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.
- c) ‘Satsanga’ does not mean that the devotees simply gather together physically. What is done in that association is important. The basis for satsanga is Sankīrtana, Kṛṣṇa-kathā and sevā. Prajalpā, (mundane talk) should be avoided.
- d) One should humble oneself in satsanga to submissively hear and one should not be eager to simply speak.

- e) Association of devotees is our most prized possession, without which our life becomes dry and meaningless. One is sure to drift from Kṛṣṇa Consciousness if one does not regularly associate.
- f) Association may be in person (VAPU i.e. the physical presence of the Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas) or in words (VĀNĪ i.e. the instruction of the Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas). Both are important.
- g) Satsanga will be meaningful when one tries sincerely to practice in one's life what one has carefully heard.

One should accept a counsellor who can be a friend and a guide.

## D) AVOIDING NON-DEVOTEES


- a) In as much as satsanga is required for maintaining a vibrant spiritual life, avoiding asatsanga (i.e. association of non-devotees) is equally important.
- b) One should minimise association with non-devotees as such association contaminates our consciousness.
- c) One should associate with non-devotees only to the barest minimum extent for:

The Bhāgavatam says that by such association one loses all good qualities such as truthfulness, cleanliness, mercy, gravity, intelligence, etc. and all opulence that are automatically obtained by a devotee. A man is never so degraded as when he comes into such unholy association.

fulfilling professional or business duties

fulfilling basic social obligations for e.g. immediate relatives, neighbours, colleagues, etc.

- d) Lord Caitanya taught Sanātana Goswāmī that the sum and substance of a devotee's behaviour is that he stays aloof from unholy association.
- e) There are two kinds of unholy association

 Lord Caitanya says, quoting scripture, that one should rather be locked in a cage filled with fire than associate with non-devotees.

1. Association with one who is too much attached to women (i.e. the opposite sex) and material opulence.
2. Association with one who is not a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

## E) READING

- a) Devotees should daily read the books of the Śrīla Prabhupāda for e.g. Bhagavad-Gītā, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, etc. One may begin with the smaller books like Nectar of Instruction, Perfect Questions Perfect Answers, Kṛṣṇa Consciousness: Matchless Gift.
- b) Other books should be avoided.
- c) Reading must be done in a serious, attentive and systematic way and not casually like one would read a novel. It is advisable to take notes as one reads and to memorise important ślokaś.
- d) Reading is necessary to improve our philosophical understanding. It strengthens our conviction, faith and determination.
- e) Reading is important for a preacher.
- f) 'Reading' is also 'hearing'.

One should also avail of the good collection of lectures that are on tape in the Temple library.

## F) DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

- a) One should try to engage in some specific sevā for the mission of the spiritual master. One may consult one's counsellor in this regard.
- b) There are also different kinds of sevā that may be performed in the Temple and in the Temple programmes.

## G) DEITY WORSHIP

- a) It is very necessary for all the gṛhastās to perform worship of the Deities in their homes. The Deities may be pictures, or made of wood, clay, marble, metal etc. The altar may be designed and arranged according to one's means.
- b) One may take assistance of other devotees in regard to details of setting up the altar, procedures and standard of worship, paraphernalia required etc.

- c) Worship of Gaur-Nitāi as the presiding Deities has great benefit for homes although worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa may also be done.
- d) Standard altar is Guru, Param Guru, Gaur-Nitāi or Pañca-tattva and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.
- e) It is not expected that standard of Deity worship at homes will be like that for installed Deities in the Temple. Yet efforts must be made to ensure regularity of worship according to one's schedules and circumstances.
- f) Coming to the Temple is always the priority. We may put our home Deities to rest for this purpose.
- g) Certain minimum requirements are, for e.g.  
Everything cooked in the house should be offered to the Deities.  
It is suggested that āraṭi be performed at least twice a day (in the morning and evening, accompanied by kīrtana)  
All āraṭis must be preceded by an offering.  
While performing āraṭi one must not talk, gesture, look back etc..

The procedure for performing āraṭi is given in **Appendix X**. pg No. 78.

- h) While the family is out-of station the Deities may be put to rest.
- i) Children may also be engaged in the worship of the Deities.
- j) Taking care of the Deities, preparing offerings for them, stitching clothes and making jewellery for them is very nice purifying engagement and all members of the family may be involved
- k) Tulasīdevī:  
Where possible the Tulasī plant may be kept in the house. Proper exposure to sunlight and watering are required.  
Her leaves may be put into each offering for Kṛṣṇa and also at His Lotus Feet.  
It is to be noted that Tulasī leaves should not be placed at

the lotus feet of Guru or even Sṛīmatī Rādhārāṇī or in the offerings to the Guru. Tulasī leaves may, however, be placed in Rādhārāṇī's Hands.

Tulasīdevī is Kṛṣṇa's favourite plant. It is said that Kṛṣṇa does not accept the offerings unless Tulasī is present (when available). If possible worship of Tulasīdevī may be performed.

- l) Special care should be taken while stitching Deity outfits and making garlands:

For threading the needles, saliva should not be used.

Flowers, clothes etc. should not be placed on the floor but on a special cloth for this purpose.

Only fragrant and uncontaminated flowers should be offered.

## H) AUSTERITY

- a) A devotee's sādhanā must include some basic austerities like rising early in the morning, bathing in cool water, regulation of food and drink, regulation of one's association, minimising bodily comforts and possessions and so on. These have been covered earlier.
- b) An important austerity for devotees is to fast on certain specified days like Ekādaśī, on important festivals and appearance/disappearance days of ācaryas.
- c) **EKĀDAŚĪ**

Ekādaśī is the eleventh day of both the waxing and waning moon & thus it comes twice in each month. It is a day of austerity regularly observed by Vaiṣṇavas.

The basic principle is not just to fast, but to increase one's faith and love for KṚṢṆA. Hence all devotees must observe Ekādaśī fast.

The real reason for observing fasting on Ekādaśī is to minimise demands of the body and to engage our time in devotional service.

The fasting is to be broken the next day that is Dvādaśī during the parāṇa-timings as given in the Vaiṣṇava calendar.

It is advised that one may chant more and also try to remember the pastimes of the Lord.

On Ekādaśī, one should strictly avoid eating grains and beans.

If one can follow complete fasting (i.e. abstaining from both food and drink) and still perform one's duties and responsibilities, then one may do so.

However, ours is a preaching mission and if complete fasting impedes our service or preaching, it should not be followed. One

may then consume the minimum food and drink essential to maintain one's service.

One must try to observe complete fast on Nirjala (Bhīma) Ekādaśī.

For further details please refer **Appendix XI** at the end of this section. (Pg No. 82)

#### d) CĀTUR-MĀSYA

Traditionally this four-month period of the monsoon season is the time when sādhus would reside at one place and not travel.

The prescribed austerity in these four months is as given in the table below.

#### **Month & Items to be avoided**

1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Āṣāḍha</i>	Green Leafy vegetables
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Bhādrapada</i>	Yoghurt
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Āṣwina</i>	Milk
4 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Kārtika</i>	Urad Dal

## I) FAVOURABLE PRINCIPLES AND UNFAVOURABLE PRINCIPLES

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N  
F  
A  
V  
O  
U  
R  
A  
B  
L  
E

a) Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī says in Nectar of Instruction (verses 2 & 3):  
“One’s devotional service is spoiled when he becomes too entangled in the following six activities:

1. eating more than necessary or collecting more funds than required,
2. over endeavouring for mundane things that are very difficult to obtain,
3. talking unnecessarily about mundane subject matters,
4. practising the spiritual rules and regulations only for the sake of following them and not following regulations of the scriptures and working independently or whimsically,
5. associating with worldly minded persons who are not interested in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness,
6. being greedy for mundane achievements.”

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b) “There are six principles favourable to execution of devotional service:

1. being enthusiastic,
2. endeavouring with confidence,
3. being patient,
4. acting according to regulative principles (such as śravaṇam, kīrtanam, viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam-hearing, chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa),
5. abandoning the association of non-devotees, and
6. following in the footsteps of the previous ācaryas”.

These six principles undoubtedly assure complete success of pure devotional service.



## J) BRĀHMAṆAS

- a) Devotees who have second (Brāhmaṇa) dikṣā should strictly chant the Gāyatrī mantra.
- b) Every endeavour must be made to learn the principles and practice of Deity worship.

## K) IMPORTANCE OF TIME

Please remember :

- ☞ Every moment of human life is very precious. So we should not waste a single moment.
- ☞ We should make every endeavour to see that we are engaged as much as possible in the devotional service of the Lord.
- ☞ The great benediction we have received should not be wasted.

# Appendix VIII

## Significance of PAÑCA-TATTVA MANTRA

*(jaya) śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda  
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is always accompanied by His plenary expansion Śrī Nityananda Prabhu, His incarnation Śrī Advaita Prabhu, His internal potency Śrī Gadādhara Prabhu, and His marginal potency, Śrīvāsa Prabhu. He is in the midst of them as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should know that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is always accompanied by these other tattvas. Therefore our obeisances to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are complete when we say, *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda* As preachers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we first offer our obeisances to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by chanting the Pañca tattva mantra and then we say,

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare  
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare*

There are ten offenses to the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa **mahā-mantra**, but these are not considered in the chanting of the Pañca-tattva mantra, namely, *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda śrī-advaita, gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda* - Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is known as mahā-vadānyāya avatār, the most magnanimous incarnation, for He does not consider the offenses of the fallen souls. Thus to derive the full benefit of the chanting of the **mahā-mantra** *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare Hare, Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare* we must first take shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, learn the Pañca-tattva mantra, and then chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa **mahā-mantra**. That will be very effective.

# Appendix IX

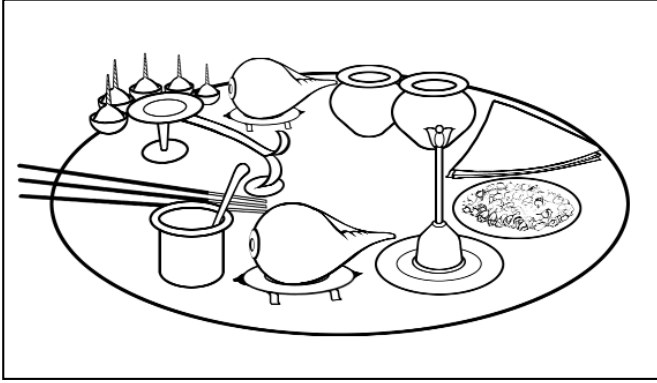
## TEN OFFENSES AGAINST THE HOLY NAME

1. To blaspheme the devotees who have dedicated their lives for propagating the holy name of the Lord.
2. To consider the names of demigods like Lord Śiva or Lord Brahmā to be equal to or independent of the name of Lord Viṣṇu.
3. To disobey the orders of the spiritual master.
4. To blaspheme the Vedic literature or literature in pursuance of the Vedic version.
5. To consider the glories of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa to be an imagination.
6. To give some interpretation on the holy name of the Lord.
7. To commit sinful activities on the strength of the holy name of the Lord.
8. To consider the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa as one of the auspicious ritualistic activities which are offered in the Vedās as fruitive activities (Karma - kāṇḍa).
9. To instruct a faithless person about the glories of the holy name.
10. To not have complete faith in the chanting of the holy name and to maintain material attachments, even after understanding so many instructions on this matter. It is also an offense to be inattentive while chanting.

Every devotee who claims to be Vaiṣṇava must guard against these offenses in order to quickly achieve the desired success – KṚṢṆA PREMA.

# Appendix X

## OFFERING ARATI

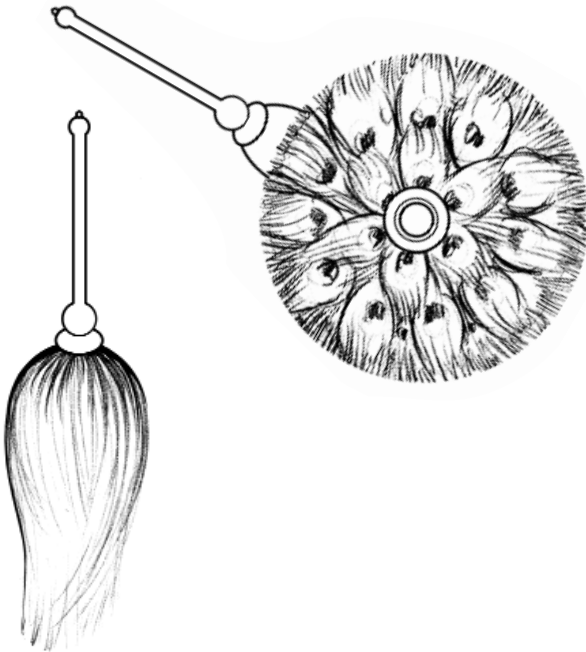


1. The following items should be set up in a plate & kept at the left side of the altar

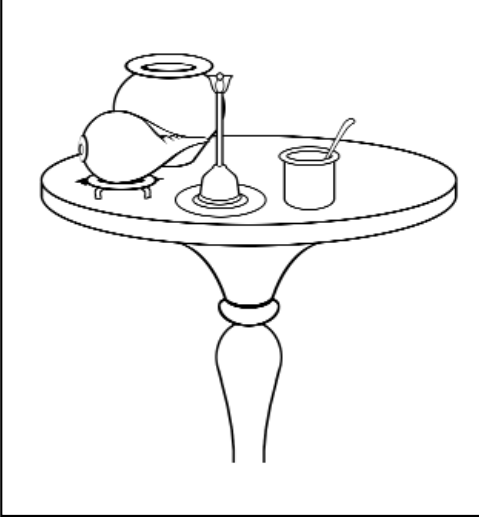
- ❖ Three sticks of incense (agarbatti)
- ❖ Ghee lamp (with single wick. If possible, with 5 wicks)
- ❖ Conchshell for bathing the Deities

- ❖ Small vessel containing water for bathing
- ❖ A fine cloth or napkin
- ❖ Fragrant flowers on a small plate

2. The other items that should already be there near the altar are:



- i) cāmara fan
- ii) peacock feather fan
- iii) bell
- iv) pañcapātra (for performing ācamana)
- v) blowing conchshell
- vi) āsana (i.e mat) to stand / sit on while offering arati



### 3. Ācamana

- i) Ācamana is performed to purify oneself before commencing worship. The water for ācamana is placed in the small vessel (Pañcapātra) meant for this purpose.
- ii) One should place three spoonfuls (special spoons for this purpose called kusi) of water from pañcapātra in the palm of the right hand and after saying “om keśavāya namaḥ”, one should sip a little and after placing one more drop, throw the water to the side.
- iii) This process should be repeated twice as before, first substituting the mantra “om nārāyaṇāya namaḥ”, and then the mantra “om mādhavāya namaḥ.”
- iv) Finally, one should place three drops in the palm as earlier and throw the water away to the side, chanting the mantra “om govindāya namaḥ.”

One should then offer obeisances & request Gurudeva for permission to begin worship.

### 4. The sequence of ārati is as follows:

- i) The conchshell is blown three times to signify the commencement of the ārati. The conchshell is then rinsed off with water from the pañcapātra.
- ii) Before offering each article, purify both your right hand and the article by sprinkling them with water from the pañcapātra. You can purify the article by taking the spoon in your right hand and sprinkling water on the article directly from the spoon. The article is then offered with the right hand while one rings the bell with left hand by holding above waist level.

- iii) All items should be offered 3 times to Guru, once to Param Guru for taking permission to offer to the Deities in the ascending order; then from Lord Kṛṣṇa to Guru in the descending order for blessings. Tulasīdevī, wherever be present must also be offered these items in 3 circles. Finally, the items must be offered in three circles to the assembled Vaiṣṇavas.
- iv) The incense should be offered to each Deity seven times to all the limbs of the body (by making a circle around the body of the Deity).
- v) The ghee lamp is offered to each Deity four times to the Lotus Feet, twice to the Waist, three times to the Lotus Face and seven times around the Body.
- vi) The water meant for bathing is poured into the bathing conchshell. The conchshell is then offered three times above the Deity's head and then seven times around the body of the Deity.
- vii) The cloth (for wiping of the Deity's body after bath) should be offered seven times around the body of the Deity.
- viii) The flowers are offered seven times around the body of the Deity.
- ix) The cāmara is then offered by carefully swinging it.
- x) The peacock fan is similarly offered, except in the winter months (i.e. usually from Kārtika to Śivarātrī it is not offered).
- xi) One must remember to ring the bell with the left hand while each item is being offered.
- xii) The pujārī performing aratī, while offering various items to spiritual master and assembled Vaiṣṇavas should not offer them below their waist level or to their feet. The various items offered as mahā-prasādam should be waved three times around the face.

xiii) The conchshell should be blown three times to signify the end of āraṭi and the conchshell is then rinsed off with water from the pañcapātra.

For Prema dhvani prayers Please See Appendix IV. (Pg No. 37)

xiv) Prema dhvani prayers must be recited.

xv) The altar and floor should be cleansed by separate cloths.

5. If the full āraṭi is not possible, a condensed āraṭi may be performed, wherein only the following three items could be offered:
  - i) Incense
  - ii) Flowers
  - iii) Cāmara fan
6. There are many other detailed rules and regulations for Deity worship. Devotees who wish to know more may contact the Head Pujari at the Temple.
7. One must remember however, that most important element of Deity worship is that all the items must be offered with sincere feeling and devotion.

# Appendix XI

## OBSERVING EKĀDAŚĪ-VRATA

Ekādaśī is a day of fasting observed by all devotees. Śrīla Prabhupāda usually observed Ekādaśī fast in the simplest manner prescribed in scripture – by refraining from eating grains, beans, peas and dahl.

Some devotees eat only fruit on Ekādaśī, some take only water and some fully fast (this is called Nirjala-*vrata*).

All devotees must avoid the following foods on Ekādaśī – all grains (wheat, rice, etc.), dahl, peas, bean type vegetables, mustard seeds and their derivatives (wheat flour, mustard oil, etc.) and food items containing these products.

Be careful in using powdered spices. If mixed with flour, they cannot be used on Ekādaśī. Also one should avoid powdered asafoetida (*hing*) since it contains grains.

Sesame seeds are also to be avoided, except on *Ṣaṭ-tilā* Ekādaśī, when they may be offered and eaten.

One who is very strictly observing Ekādaśī should avoid all spices except pepper, rock salt and cumin.

Do not use any cooking ingredients that might be mixed with grains, such as ghee that has been used to fry *purīs*, or spices touched by hands dusted with *capāti* flour. Try to use fresh ghee on Ekādaśī.

Ekādaśī fast is broken the next day (*Dvādaśī*), by taking *prasādam* prepared with grains. The fast must be broken within a specific time. For the dates of Ekādaśīs and the times for breaking fast, consult the *Vaiṣṇava* calendar (available from any ISKCON centre).

The real purpose of Ekādaśī observance is however, not simply to fast, but to increase our time for hearing and chanting about Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda recommended that devotees can chant twenty-five or more rounds of *japa* on Ekādaśī.

Shaving and cutting nails is also forbidden on Ekādaśī.



# PART VI

## 1. VISITING HOLY PLACES

- i) Travelling together in pilgrimage to the various Holy places is an important and eagerly awaited element of Vaiṣṇava lifestyle.
- ii) One should plan well and tie up loose ends in one's domestic and official responsibilities so that one can minimise worrisome thoughts during the yātrā. The idea is that one should prepare oneself for completely immersing the mind in the Holy Name and Kṛṣṇa-kathā.
- iii) Such yātrās are meant for spiritual purification and thus there should be no 'prajalpā' and frivolous behaviour. There should be only Kṛṣṇa-kathā and the Holy Name.
- iv) Devotees should freely and lovingly associate with one another avoiding tendency to form groups according to prior acquaintance.
- v) Devotees should willingly comply with any rules and discipline that may laid down for the yātrā. This will help in not only making the organising effort easier but also will create a better atmosphere.

Particularly, devotees should follow rules regarding timings for re-assembling after a break and staying together i.e. not dispersing here and there. Devotees should never lag behind but should be all together at all times.

- vi) One must be willing to bear austerity and inconveniences without complaining. Suggestions if any regarding the

arrangement travel plans etc. may be submitted humbly to the proper persons. Criticism and complaints simply spoil the atmosphere of the yātrā.

- vii) One should not try to join the yātrā at the last minute. Announcements are made well in advance and one should submit one's name {and the money (Lakṣmi)} to the organisers by the stipulated date.
- viii) One should not recommend names of people who are very new or not so sincere or who are not following the basic regulative principles.
- ix) One should stay with the devotees for the whole yātrā. No independent plans should be made to travel to other places or do other jobs during the yātrā.
- x) Every single devotee should contribute to maintain a high spiritual tempo. Even one unenthusiastic or lazy devotee has a disturbing influence on the mood of the yātrā.
- xi) One should be eager to lend a helping hand in serving the devotees and simply be content with receiving a chance to render service.
- xii) Devotees should not buy "special" foodstuffs from outside for themselves. The spirit of the yātrā should be to eat and live together as one family.
- xiii) One should be careful not to commit offences against the Holy Dhāma.
- xiv) If during the yātrā, the devotees together visit ISKCON or Gaudiya Maṭha Temples, we must very carefully respect the principles and the policies of the Temple. For instance, in ISKCON Temples we should not chant any Guru's name except Śrīla Prabhupāda's. We should avoid any form of argumentation.

## **2. THE TEN OFFENCES AGAINST THE HOLY DHĀMA**

1. Contempt and disrespect towards the Guru who is the revealer of the dhāma to his disciple.
2. To think that the holy dhāma is temporary.
3. To commit violence towards any of the residents of the holy dhāma or to any of the pilgrims who come there, or to think that they are ordinary mundane people.
4. Performing mundane activities while living in the holy place.
5. Earning money by making a business of Deity worship and the chanting of the holy name.
6. To think that the holy dhāma belongs to some mundane country or to province such as Bengal, or think that the dhāma of the Lord is equal to a holy place connected with some demigod, or to attempt to measure the area of the dhāma.
7. To commit sinful acts while residing in the dhāma.
8. To consider Vṛndāvana and Navadvīpa to be different.
9. To blaspheme the śāstras which glorify the dhāma.
10. To be faithless and think that the glories of the dhāma are imaginary.



Let us remember Lord Caitanya's instructions to Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī in the Caitanya Caritāmṛita:

"Do not talk like people in general or hear what they say. You should not eat palatable food, nor should you dress very nicely."

"Do not expect honour, but offer all respect to others. Always chant the Holy Name of Lord Kṛṣṇa and within your mind render service to Radha and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana."

**Supreme indeed is the path of devotional Service!**

All Glories To Śri Guru And Gaurāṅga!