

Vaiṣṇava Etiquette -

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1. Introductory Class Lecture

I'd like to welcome you all to our classes on Vaiṣṇava Etiquette. Thank you for coming. I'll begin by reading some quotes from Caitanya-caritāmṛta, the instructions of Caitanya Mahāprabhu to Sanātana Gosvāmī, on *sadācāra*-the activities of a Vaiṣṇava.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed Sanātana Gosvāmī to write *Vaiṣṇava Smṛti (Hari-bhakti-vilāsa)* in *Cc. Madhya-līlā* 24.324-344:

Folding his hands, Sanātana Gosvāmī said, "My Lord, You ordered me to write a directory about the activities of Vaiṣṇavas. I am a most lowborn person. I have no knowledge of good behavior. How is it possible for me to write authorized directions about Vaiṣṇava activities?" Sanātana Gosvāmī then requested the Lord, "Please personally tell me how I can write this difficult book about Vaiṣṇava behavior. Please manifest Yourself in my heart. If You would please manifest Yourself within my heart and personally direct me in writing this book, then, although I am lowborn, I may hope to be able to write it. You can do this because You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead Yourself and whatever You direct is perfect."

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu replied, "Whatever you want to do you will be able to do correctly by Lord Kṛṣṇa's favor. He will manifest the real purport. Because you asked Me for a synopsis, please hear these few indications. In the beginning one must take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master. In your book there should be the characteristics of the bona fide guru and the bona fide disciple. Then, before accepting a spiritual master, one can be assured of the spiritual master's position. Similarly, the spiritual master can also be assured of the disciple's position. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, should be described as the worshipable object, and you should consider the (*bija*) *mantra* for the worship of Kṛṣṇa, Rama, or any other expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

"You should discuss the qualifications necessary for receiving a *mantra*, the perfection of the *mantra*, the purification of the *mantra*, initiation, morning duties, remembrance of the Supreme Lord, cleanliness, and washing the mouth and other parts of the body. In the morning, one should regularly brush his teeth, take his bath, offer prayers to the Lord and offer obeisances to the spiritual master. One should render service to the spiritual master and paint one's body in twelve places with *ūrdhva puṇḍra* (*tilaka*). One should stamp the holy names of the Lord on his body, or one should stamp the symbols of the Lord, such as the disc and club.

"After this, you should describe how one should decorate his body with *gopīcandana*, wear neck beads, collect *tulasī* leaves from the tulasi tree, cleanse his cloth and the altar, cleanse one's own house or apartment and go to the temple and ring the bell just to draw the attention of Lord Kṛṣṇa. "Also describe the Deity worship, wherein one should offer food to Kṛṣṇa at least five times daily. One should in due time place Kṛṣṇa on a bed. You should also describe the process for offering *ārati* and the worship of the Lord according to the list of five, sixteen or fifty ingredients.

"The characteristics of the Deities should be discussed as well as the characteristics of the *śālagrāma-śilā*. One should also discuss visiting the Deities in the temple and touring holy places like Vṛndāvana, Mathurā, and Dvārakā.

"You should glorify the holy name and carefully give up offenses when chanting the holy name. One should know the symptoms of a Vaiṣṇava. One must give up or nullify all kinds of *sevā-aparādha*, offenses in Deity worship.

"The items of worship, such as water, conchshell, flowers, incense and lamp, should be described. You should also mention chanting softly, offering prayers, circumambulating, and offering obeisances. All these should be carefully studied.

"Other items to be considered are the method of performing *puraścaraṇa* (purification), taking *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*, giving up unoffered food and not blaspheming the Lord's devotees."

This is also a very important point that devotees should remember. A Vaiṣṇava is not suppose to take anything that has not been offered to Kṛṣṇa. We should be very careful about that. Because I have seen

practically all over the world we are developing a tendency to eat things that are not offered. The only consideration has become if the food is vegetarian. But we are supposed to only take Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*.

Try to avoid it as much as possible. When you are traveling or if you are on sankirtana, then it is different. But still try to offer everything to Kṛṣṇa before you take it.

One should know the symptoms of a devotee and how to associate with devotees. One should know how to satisfy the devotee by rendering services, and one should know how to give up the association of nondevotees. One should also regularly hear the recitation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

We can see how Prabhupāda actually implemented all of these instructions of Sanātana Gosvāmī in our Society.

You should describe the ritualistic duties of every day, and you should describe the fortnightly duties-especially observing Ekādaśī fast, which comes every fortnight.

Now here also it's an important thing to consider, like we generally think that just by not taking grains we are observing Ekādaśī. But actually when we talk about observing Ekādaśī, it actually means fasting. And fasting means not taking anything. Fasting does not necessarily mean just fasting from grains. In the beginning of course, devotees may just abstain from grains on Ekādaśī day. But as one makes advancement, one should try to fast completely. Also as it has been described that one may also stay awake for 24 hours. Stay up during the day and the night.

When I give class on observing Ekādaśī, devotees often raise the point that Prabhupāda never really instructed us to observe Ekādaśī in this way. But actually in *The Nectar of Devotion* Prabhupāda says that devotees may stay awake the whole night singing the glories of the Lord fasting. So Prabhupāda actually did instruct us to stay up all night as well. It's actually not a very difficult thing.

You should recommend the avoidance of mixed Ekādaśī and the performance of pure Ekādaśī.

Perhaps you've noticed that sometimes we don't fast on the Ekādaśī but we fast on the Dvādaśī. The reason we do this is that the Ekādaśī is mixed. That is, daśamī enters into Ekādaśī. When the tenth day overlaps the eleventh day it is to be mixed or penetrated. And one does not fast on that Ekādaśī but instead fasts on the next day which is Dvādaśī, the twelfth day. And it has been described that fasting on a Mahā-Dvādaśī is a thousand times more potent than fasting on an Ekādaśī.

"You should also describe the fault in not observing this. One should be very careful as far as these items are concerned. If one is not careful, one will be negligent in executing devotional service."

"Whatever you say about Vaiṣṇava behavior, the establishment of Vaiṣṇava temples and Deities and everything else should be supported by evidence from the *Purāṇas*."

"You should give general and specific descriptions of the behavior and activities of a Vaiṣṇava. You should outline things that are to be done and things that are not to be done. All this should be described as regulations and etiquette's."

Here are some other quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda on etiquette:

"All the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana are Vaiṣṇavas. They are all-auspicious because somehow or other they always chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa."

So here we also must understand one thing that all of the devotees in ISKCON are Vaiṣṇavas because somehow or other they are chanting the holy name. Prabhupāda is giving the qualification of a Vaiṣṇava. One should consider all of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana Vaiṣṇavas. Why? Because somehow or other they chant the holy name of the Lord. So what to talk of the devotees of ISKCON, we should be very respectful of all of the devotees knowing well that they are all Vaiṣṇavas.

The biggest hindrance to our spiritual progress is Vaiṣṇava *aparādha*. It's actually a very dangerous offense. We must be very careful about

committing Vaiṣṇava *aṅparādha*.

"Even though some of them do not strictly follow the rules and regulations of devotional service, on the whole they are devotees of Kṛṣṇa and chant His name directly or indirectly."

Cc Ādi-līlā 5.232, Purport

This is a very important instruction. Actually the whole Vaiṣṇava etiquette or the whole Vaiṣṇava culture is founded on this principle.

A Vaiṣṇava should be tolerant like a tree and submissive like grass... Nevertheless the author of this instruction, Caitanya Mahāprabhu, did not tolerate the misbehavior of Jagāi and Mādhāi. When they harassed Nityānanda Prabhu, He immediately became angry and wanted to kill them. One should be very meek and humble in his personal transactions, but if there is blasphemy against one's guru or another Vaiṣṇava, one should be angry as fire. One should not tolerate blasphemy against a Vaiṣṇava but should immediately take one of three actions. If someone blasphemes a Vaiṣṇava, one should stop him with higher arguments and higher reason. If one is not expert enough to do this he should give up his life on the spot, and if he cannot do this, he must go away. But we should never listen to blasphemy against a Vaiṣṇava.

Cc Ādi-līlā 7.50, Purport

Although Vaiṣṇavas are very humble and tolerant, that is not weakness. Vaiṣṇavas are not weak. Vaiṣṇavas are as hard as a thunderbolt. If it is necessary they can become as violent as a lion. Prabhupāda would often say that a Vaiṣṇava is as soft as a rose petal and as hard as a thunderbolt. A Vaiṣṇava is not only soft, but if necessary he can become hard. That shows that Vaiṣṇavas are not weaklings. Vaiṣṇavas are very, very powerful. Both physically and spiritually. Actually it is the spiritual power that endows them with the physical power.

Vaiṣṇavas should not be disrespectful to anyone. One should always be respectful to others but should not demand respect for himself. *Amāninā mānadena*.

A Vaiṣṇava is *adoṣa darśī*. A Vaiṣṇava never sees other's faults. Of

course, every human being has good qualities and faults. Therefore, it is said *sādhyana guṇa mitsanti*. A Vaiṣṇava accepts only a man's glories and not his faults. *Adoṣa darśī* means one who does not find faults in others. He simply sees the other's good qualities and he finds faults with himself. He is very strict with himself and he is always watching himself very scrutinizingly, detecting all of the defects he has in himself.

A Vaiṣṇava always follows the order of guru and Kṛṣṇa. Anyone, who attempts to write about Kṛṣṇa, must first take permission from the guru and Kṛṣṇa. One must first become a pure devotee and then he must take permission from the spiritual master and that permission must be confirmed by Kṛṣṇa from within his heart.

Sanātana Goswami followed the instructions of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and wrote a book on Vaiṣṇava Etiquette. This book is the guidebook that directs a Vaiṣṇava's activities. The *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* describes Vaiṣṇava etiquette as the behavior of a pure Vaiṣṇava. Everybody should follow that standard. Here is how the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* defines Vaiṣṇava etiquette, its philosophy, and some basic Vaiṣṇava principles.

"Since nothing can be successful without *sadācāra* or etiquette, every action should be performed with proper etiquette." We must act according to proper etiquette. The heart of a saintly person is free from contamination. The way a saintly person acts is known as proper etiquette. A way a saintly person acts is known as *sadācāra*.

"If a person reads the six branches of the *Vedas* without practicing proper etiquette, he does not get purified, just as a bird flies away from the nest as soon as it grows wings, the *Vedas* leave him at the time of his death.

"Although one may have acquired the knowledge of all of the *Vedas*, but if one is not practicing the proper etiquette or if he did not become a Vaiṣṇava, then all of this knowledge which he has acquired, will be lost at the time of death.

"Proper etiquette increases fame, opulence, longevity and destroys all inauspiciousness.

"O king, proper etiquette gives the results of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. Therefore a

wise man very carefully performs the proper etiquette described in the scriptures.

"Thus one can understand that Vaiṣṇava etiquette purifies the heart and the consciousness."

Now here are some basic principles and points that I've compiled from *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *The Nectar of Devotion* about the proper activities of one who is a Vaiṣṇava. A Vaiṣṇava-

1. Offers respect and obeisances to the guru, to the Lord and His devotees, and to other superiors. (One must offer respect and obeisances to the superiors, like the guru, the Lord and His devotees. We must also respect superior relatives, like the parents.)
2. Get up before 4 a.m. and attend *maṅgala-ārati*.
3. After waking up, first brush your teeth and afterwards take a bath.
4. Bathe after passing stool.
5. Wash with water after passing urine. Also wash hands and feet.
6. Wash hands, feet, and mouth before and after taking prasādam. (We must at least wash our hands. In the Western countries it may be difficult to wash our feet. But when in India, you should wash both your hands and your feet before and after taking *prasāda*.)
7. Wash hands after drinking water. (This done because when your hold your cup while drinking, your hands actually become contaminated.)
8. Use the right hand for eating and drinking. Even if you are a lefty, try to use your right hand.
9. Always wear clean clothes.
10. Never steal anything.
11. Never use unpleasant words.
12. Never tell a lie, even if it is pleasant. (That is don't even tell a pleasant lie.)
13. Never speak ill of others.
14. Do not become inimical to others.
15. Do not develop friendship with people who are envious, fallen, insane, inimical, extravagant, deceptive, lying or illicitly related with

- women. Do not develop friendship with unchaste women.
16. Do not travel alone.
 17. Do not sneeze or yawn without covering the mouth.
 18. Do not laugh loudly.
 19. Do not pass air loudly.
 20. Always avoid a crematorium, a garden, and unchaste women at night.
 21. Do not take shelter of a fallen person.
 22. Neither sleep too much nor stay awake too much.
 23. Do not outstretch your legs in front of your elders.
 24. Do not pass urine or stool on the road.
 25. Do not spit while eating.
 26. Do not insult women.
 27. Do not become envious of women.
 28. Never cause any harm to anyone; instead, always try to do good to others.
 29. Do not associate with unscrupulous people or read "scriptures" that are not bona fide. (Scriptures are in quotes, which means they are so-called scriptures.)
 30. Do not mock people who are foolish, insane, distressed, ugly, cunning, lame, or fallen.
 31. Do not chastise anyone except sons and disciples to educate them.
 32. Bathe after shaving, copulating, or going to a crematorium.
 33. Do not hit anyone on the head or pull anyone by the hair.
 34. Do not eat yogurt or chickpea flour at night. (Actually Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed us about yogurt but we are not so sure about the chickpeas. So you be careful about that now. Don't eat chickpeas at night. In the morning they are good, but not at night.)
 35. If someone insults you, leave the place silently.
 36. Never praise yourself.
 37. Never look at a naked woman or man.
 38. Do not place your foodstuffs on your lap to eat.
 39. Do not quarrel with your wife.
 40. Do not spit on water. (Because people sometimes drink water

from ponds or lakes or rivers, one should not spit on water.)

41. Do not sleep in the temple room.

42. *Sannyāsīs* should bathe three times a day, *gṛhasṭhas* and *brahmacārīs* at least twice a day.

43. 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. (I have noticed in many temples that after we take *prasāda*, which is usually on the floor, we just step all over. Then without even washing our feet we enter into the temple room. So one should be careful about that. The place where we take *prasādam* becomes contaminated. And if you step on that spot, then you must wash your feet. 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.

44. After touching the inside of the mouth or nose, one must wash his hands.

45. After putting on *tilaka*, one must do *ācamana* by saying, *om keśavāya namaḥ*, *om nārāyaṇāya namaḥ*, and *om mādhavāya namaḥ*.

So those are some of the basic principles by which a Vaiṣṇava acts. We'll be going over many of these points in detail later in our classes.

2. Becoming a Vaiṣṇava Devotee of Kṛṣṇa

1. We are all infinitesimal parts and parcels of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As our Kṛṣṇa consciousness evolves we will naturally develop and manifest all divine qualities.
2. The Supreme process for developing such Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the chanting of the Holy Name.
3. Becoming a pure devotee is not a cheap thing. We must guard

against imitation and strictly follow in the footsteps of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

4. The qualities of a pure devotee like Śrīla Prabhupāda are far beyond our present grasp. However, in their compassion, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas have made both the principle and the process very clear and simple.
5. Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Bg. 12.13-20 tells us quite plainly which qualities are dear to Him:

One who is not envious but is a kind friend to all living entities, who does not think himself a proprietor and is free from false ego, who is equal in both happiness and distress, who is tolerant, always satisfied, self-controlled, and engaged in devotional service with determination, his mind and intelligence fixed on Me—such a devotee of Mine is very dear to Me.

He for whom no one is put into difficulty and who is not disturbed by anyone, who is equipoised in happiness and distress, fear and anxiety, is very dear to Me.

My devotee who is not dependent on the ordinary course of activities, who is pure, expert, without cares, free from all pains, and not striving for some result, is very dear to Me.

One who neither rejoices nor grieves, who neither laments nor desires, and who renounces both auspicious and inauspicious things—such a devotee is very dear to Me.

One who is equal to friends and enemies, who is equipoised in honor and dishonor, heat and cold, happiness and distress, fame and infamy, who is always free from contaminating association, always silent and satisfied with anything, who doesn't care for any residence, who is fixed in knowledge and who is engaged in devotional service—such a person is very dear to Me.

Those who follow this imperishable path of devotional service and who completely engage themselves with faith, making Me the supreme goal, are very, very dear to Me.

6. How can we develop these qualities? Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains—
(a) be enthusiastic

- (b) endeavor with confidence
 - (c) be patient
 - (d) act according to regulative principles (such as *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam*-hearing, chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa)
 - (e) abandon the association of nondevotees
 - (f) follow in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas* (*Nectar of Instruction* Text 3(1)).
7. He also elucidates those practices which will hinder our Kṛṣṇa conscious development:
- (a) eating more than necessary or collecting more funds than required
 - (b) overendeavouring for mundane things that are very difficult to obtain
 - (c) talking unnecessary about mundane subject matters
 - (d) practicing the scriptural rules and regulations only for the sake of following them and not for the sake of spiritual advancement, or rejecting the rules and regulations of the scriptures and working independently or whimsically
 - (e) associating with worldly-minded persons who are not interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness
 - (f) being greedy for mundane achievements.
8. Śrīla Prabhupāda, being as practical as he is compassionate, has provided a very clear and simple checklist by which we can assess our progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Please read *Bhagavad-gītā* Chapter 13, Verses 8-12(2).
9. The process for developing our Kṛṣṇa consciousness is profoundly simple and straightforward. If we sincerely take shelter of the lotus feet of the Vaiṣṇavas, and intensely desire to achieve the goal, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu will undoubtedly shower His mercy upon us.
10. All the divine qualities are there in the spirit soul. Therefore as we come closer to our spiritual identity, these qualities naturally

become manifest.

3. Basic Principles of Vaiṣṇava Behavior

Vaiṣṇava etiquettes are not superficial or un-essential.

Having heard all these details, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, greatly pleased, spoke as follows:

*tathāpi bhakta-svabhāva-maryādā-rakṣaṇa
maryādā-pālana haya sādharma bhūṣaṇa*

"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 to protect the Vaiṣṇava etiquette. Maintenance of the Vaiṣṇava etiquette is the ornament of a devotee."

(Cc Antya 4.128-30)

So it is stated, "Etiquette is the ornament of a Vaiṣṇava." But what does this mean? Is etiquette something only external or optional? We could draw an analogy: Is it possible to be wealthy, but have no riches? Or what is the value of wealth if one uses no costly ornaments? Generally, one will decorate himself according to the degree of his wealth. If one is very rich, he will be adorned with only the finest of raiments and accessories. Similarly, for one who is profound in his Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the jewels of Vaiṣṇava etiquette will naturally grace all of his dealings and activities. The characteristics of a devotee are always sublimely manifest in all of his actions. The depth of a Vaiṣṇava is judged by his symptoms. The true devotee will therefore adorn himself unsparingly with the decorum of a Vaiṣṇava in all respects.

Etiquette [Dictionary Definition]:

- 1) Conventional requirements as to social behavior;
- 2) The code of ethics of a profession.

Accepting the identity of a Vaiṣṇava necessitates a certain standard of behavior or etiquette. Vaiṣṇava etiquette facilitates Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It provides the criteria-the protocol-by which a devotee can act properly in every situation. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.24 purport), quoting from verse 3 of the *Uṇpadeṣāmṛta*, Śrīla Prabhupāda roughly paraphrases one of the items favorable for development of devotional service as, "by engaging completely in activities of goodness." Practicing Vaiṣṇava etiquette means always acting in the mode of goodness, which is a stepping-stone to the transcendental plane. The mode of goodness is conducive to self-realization, whereas ignorance and passion are not. Therefore, how one applies the principles of Vaiṣṇava etiquette reflects whether a devotee is Kṛṣṇa conscious or not: i.e. Is he humble? conscientious? well-mannered? disciplined? cultured? sensitive? Someone who is actually a devotee will be known by how much he displays the good qualities.

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

A Vaiṣṇava is Better Than a Brāhmaṇa

Brahminical life means cleanliness.

Brahminical life means to be very, very clean, inside and out. Inside by chanting and hearing, and outside by bathing three times daily, if not possible at least two times, but never less than once. Bathing after passing stool. The qualifications of the *brāhmaṇas* are described in the 18th Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 42: "Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, wisdom, knowledge, and religiousness-these are the qualities by which the *brāhmaṇas* work." So see that these instructions are being followed nicely.

SP Letter to Śivarāma (December 7, 1975)

Not Associating with Materialistic Persons

Ramesvara: [In regard to brainwashing] "They claim that our lifestyle tends to take the devotee and isolate him from the world." "Yes," said Prabhupāda, "We hate to mix with you. No gentleman tries to mix with loafers. Crows will not like to live with the ducks and white swans; and white swans will not like to live with the crows. That is natural division. Birds of the same feather flock together."

Līlāmṛta Volume 6 p. 222

The Feet

The feet should not touch (or even be exposed to) anyone or anything (especially sacred items). That is offensive. Basically, the feet touch only the floor. Otherwise, they are kept covered.

One should not step over (or reach over) anyone.

- a) while they are offering obeisances (e.g., before the *vyāsāsana*).
- b) while they are sitting (as in the temple room).

Slamming Doors

The slamming of doors, although seemingly a minor fault, greatly disturbed Śrīla Prabhupāda. It symptomized carelessness and misuse, and Prabhupāda said the sound cracked his heart. One time Prabhupāda came out of his room and called out, "Who is that slamming the doors? No one knows from where this building has come. You take it for granted that it is here. But no one cares."

Līlāmṛta V 5 p. 144

Stealing

But so far as stealing is concerned, one should not steal except in the rarest

circumstances. Moral principle is recommended in all scriptures as a prerequisite for spiritual culture.

SP Letter to Pradyumna (January 22, 1968)

4. More on the Behavior of a Vaiṣṇava

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.

Cc. Antya-līlā 4.129-130.

1. The consciousness of a devotee is manifested by his actions.
2. If one has any depth of realization, the jewels of Vaiṣṇava behavior will naturally pace all of his dealings and activities.
3. We need to be aware that the vast majority of our exchanges are with devotees and the innocent public. *Aparādha* is the only real stumbling block in spiritual life. We must become fearful of committing offence. This awareness will lend sobriety and gravity to our behavior. We will naturally become humble, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu will become pleased, and we will make advancement without serious obstruction.
4. Śrīla Prabhupāda's reputation depends on our behavior. In his compassion he lifted us up from very degraded backgrounds. He was even criticized by the less intelligent in India for doing so. In order to maintain Śrīla Prabhupāda's good name, our behavior should be very exemplary.

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

"Act in such a way that they will see we are of ideal character."

When asked, "How do you recognize a Vaiṣṇava?" Srīla Prabhupāda replied, "He is a perfect gentleman."

*āpane ācare keha, nā kare pracāra
pracāra karena keha, nā karena ācāra*

Some behave very well but do not preach the cult of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, whereas others preach but do not behave properly.

*'ācāra', 'pracāra',—nāmera karaha 'dui' kārya
tumi—sarva-guru, tumi jagatera ārya*

You simultaneously perform both activities in relation to the Holy Name by your personal behavior and by your preaching. Therefore you are the most advanced devotee in the world.

Cc Antya-līlā 102-3 Sanātana Gosvāmī to Haridāsa Ṭhākura

Better than the *brāhmaṇa* who knows the purpose of the *Vedas* is he who can dissipate all doubts, and better than him is one who strictly follows brahminical principles. Better than him is one who is liberated from all material contamination, and better than him is a pure devotee, who executes devotional service without expectation of reward.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.29.32

Now I want that we shall concentrate on making our devotees Krishna conscious and ourselves becoming Krishna conscious, and not be so much concerned with expanding ourselves widely but without any spiritual content. Just like boiling the milk, it becomes thicker and sweeter. Now do like that, boil the milk.

SP Letter to Rūpānuga (May 9, 1972)

A devotee is always ideal in behavior." So we all have to cooperate amongst ourselves, otherwise what will people think if we ourselves fight with one

another? A devotee is always ideal in behavior.

SP Letter to Patita Uddhāraṇa (December 12, 1974)

(The Vaiṣṇava Symptom is Humility:) Your humble repentance is just like a Vaiṣṇava student, so I thank you very much for this humbleness. Lord Caitanya taught us to be humbler than the grass on the street and more tolerant than the tree. So these symptoms are Vaiṣṇava symptoms.

SP Letter to Gargamuni (February 5, 1969)

Krishna is so very merciful to those who are very humble in their attitude engaged in service of the Lord. Lord Caitanya advised, therefore, one should be humbler than the straw and more tolerant than the tree and thus be seriously engaged in glorifying the Lord. This world is very awful. Anyone is ready to create some disturbance, especially they are very much apt to disturb Krishna Consciousness persons because that is the way of demoniac life. So, in order to protect us from all dangerous elements, we have to chant the Hare Krishna Mantra regularly being humbler than the straw and more tolerant than the tree. Then Krishna, Who is Dindayal, will bestow His Mercy upon us.

SP Letter to Dindayal (February 2, 1970)

You are good for everything but your attitude to remain good for nothing is very nice. A Vaiṣṇava is always humble and meek, and he is never puffed-up, even he has got the highest qualities of demigods.

SP Letter to Upendra (August 18, 1970)

So we have to be very careful in understanding Krishna Consciousness. ... To understand Krishna as He has spoken in the Bhagavad Gītā or in other Vedic literatures through the right sources of disciplic succession, that is our real knowledge. The idea is everyone should try to pace himself as if he doesn't know anything. His position is secure. But as soon as he says that "I know everything, and I was previously such and such...", That is actually rascal. So I know that you are trying to know things from the real source, and you are not puffed up like other fools who think that they know everything. Your humbleness is very much appreciated by me.

SP Letter to Janārdana (January 21, 1968)

As I have already said many times that we have to maintain two lines parallel; namely the path of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the path of *Pāñcarātrikī*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the path for *paramahāṁsas*, and *Pāñcarātra* path is for the neophytes. So the Temple worship is necessary for the beginners so that by following the regulative principles such devotees become more and more purified and thus gradually come on the platform to understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. So we shall always keep these principles in view and maintain our centers on this standard.

Recently I have received one 'Kalyan' magazine in which our activities in the Western world have been very much appreciated. Especially they have appreciated my strong injunctions on the point of following the four prohibitive regulations. So after describing our activities, the editor has remarked in one place that things are going very nicely at present, but it is God only Who knows how it will continue in the future. This means that the Indians, or the rigid followers of Vedic principles, are doubtful about my American and European students about their sticking to these principles. So it is a God-sent warning for us so that we may not deviate from the above mentioned two lines of action and thus become subject to criticism by the opposing elements.

SP Letter to Advaita (May 28, 1970)

Our dealings with others must be very clear.

SP Letter to Bali Mardana (February 22, 1970)

Anyway, do things in good sense, without any disturbance. We have to make progress very soberly, and I am always at your service whenever required. [Therefore a serious devotee is always ready to take guidance from superior/other Vaiṣṇavas to understand the proper way of acting.]

SP Letter to Satsvarūpa (August 19, 1969)

But we should never steal anything like money, food, water, gasoline, etc., just to enhance our service to Kṛṣṇa. That is too much dangerous, and if we are caught then all our work is finished. Just like in India recently, this Balyogi Guru

Maharaji was detected by the customs authorities attempting to smuggle some small items into India. By this one tiny incident his entire effort for preaching-even he is rascal Number One and his preaching is nonsense, even so the example is there-his work is ruined now and he is practically finished, as the government will not grant him a passport to leave India. So we shall always be careful to avoid any kind of jeopardizing our high standing in the society by some foolish and small act of illegal stealing.

SP Letter to Saṅkarṣaṇa (December 31, 1972)

No Salaries

The teacher and the *pūjārī* should never receive a salary. They must work in pure devotion. The *kṣatriya* also.

Līlāmṛta V p. 65-6

5. Vaiṣṇava Behavior is Inspiring for Everyone

Humbleness is appreciated.

SP Letter to Janārdana (January 21, 1968)

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement through music, philosophy, spiritual culture, and personal behavior culminating in ideal character of the devotees. All these heavenly contributions combined together will certainly bring about a major change in the life of Western people.

SP Letter to Śivānanda (September 14, 1968)

You are right. We must all become ideal in character and then people will

become very impressed with such purity. A devotee is faultless-he has no flaws.

SP Letter to Batu Gopāla (February 1, 1975)

But, on the other hand, if we don't follow:

It is nice that you are doing preaching work there, but you should know that such practices like stealing are against the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I always want that my students should be very ideal in character and not discredit our society.

SP Letter to Mādhavī Latā (October 28, 1968)

It is very good you have received permission for chanting and distributing literature as well as collecting. Now you should concentrate to develop your spiritual power to attract the fallen souls to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The daily regulative duties must be performed by everyone very strictly: the beads chanted sixteen rounds, and our literatures read and discussed. In this way, everything should be done very nicely. Sankirtana should be done by you in the streets and at gatherings and in this manner display what is this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and how it is for everyone's eternal welfare and happiness. So you do all these with great enthusiasm and very carefully. Our all activities must be open so that no one may criticize our mission. So all dealings must be to the standard of Vaiṣṇavism. We cannot misrepresent ourselves for the purpose of taking monies from the public, but as everything is undertaken forthrightly in a Kṛṣṇa consciousness way, then Lord Kṛṣṇa will be pleased to provide all facilities for aiding our such sincere service.

SP Letter to Śrīdāmā (July 8, 1970)

6. Etiquette within Relationships

1. The Vaiṣṇava society is very meticulously structured, where the juniors always respect seniors and juniors always receive affection and blessings from the seniors.
2. The Vaiṣṇava society is structured according to *varṇāśrama*, *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*; and *sannyāsī*, *vanaprastha*, *gṛhastha* and *brahmacārī*.
3. There are considerations of seniority according to initiation among Godbrothers. Devotees who have received initiation earlier are considered senior.
4. The Guru's Godbrothers should be respected as the guru.
5. *Sannyāsīs* should always be respected as the guru.
6. In a Vaiṣṇava society everyone tries to become humble. The more advanced one is the more humble he becomes.
7. Sometimes senior Vaiṣṇavas may offer respect to a junior Vaiṣṇava due to his humility, but a junior Vaiṣṇava should never think that he deserves that respect from all senior Vaiṣṇavas. On the other hand when a senior Vaiṣṇava offers him respect then the junior Vaiṣṇava should feel extremely embarrassed, and repeatedly pray to Kṛṣṇa that He receives the respect.
8. One should always remember that his business is to become more humble than a blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree, and desiring no respect for himself he should offer all respect to others.
9. Transgression of Vaiṣṇava etiquette will undoubtedly destroy one's spiritual life.
10. Never take sides when there is a disagreement among senior Vaiṣṇavas. Stay neutral because the quarrel among the Vaiṣṇavas is a kind of pastime and beyond our understanding.
11. Disciple should always respect his guru as God.
12. Preachers should have compassion upon the innocent souls but avoid offenders.

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

Use of Titles

One thing you may note also as a matter of etiquette. The Spiritual Master is addressed as His Divine Grace, a Godbrother is addressed as His Grace, and any sannyasin is addressed as His Holiness.

SP letter to Rāyarāma (January 30, 1967)

Dealing with Godbrothers

Definition of "Prabhu": Śrīla Prabhupāda: "You should not just use it mechanically; you should meaningfully apply it."

Yes, to call one another "Prabhu" is all right, but not to become prabhu. To accept others as prabhu, and remain as servant is the idea. But because somebody is calling you "Prabhu", one should not become a prabhu and treat others as servants. In other words, every one should feel himself as servant, and not to think himself prabhu because he is being called "Prabhu". This will make the relationship congenial.

SP letter to Himāvatī (June 14, 1968)

A Practical definition of "Prabhu": Ralph Waldo Emerson (who is quoted on the jacket cover of all English editions of *Bhagavad-gītā*) said,

"Every man I meet is my superior in some way, in that I learn from him."

To serve the Spiritual Master means also to serve his disciples:

Regarding serving your godbrothers, this is a very good practice. The Spiritual Master is never without his followers, so to serve the Spiritual Master also means to be the servant of his disciples. When you want to serve the king, you must also serve his minister, secretary, and everyone who serves him. And to serve his servants may please him more than to serve the king personally.

SP letter to Śivānanda (January 23, 1969)

But, on the other hand:

"Why Taittiriya should have a servant? Godbrothers are not meant for being servants. Without the spiritual master's order, nobody can utilize the service of a Godbrother as one's personal servant. We address each other as "Prabhu" so how we can engage our Godbrother as servant? Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu engaged Govinda dāsa, who was His Godbrother, as His servant, but that was only on the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's spiritual master."

SP letter to Kīrtanānanda (November 23, 1974)

I understand that your Godbrothers are as your younger dependent brothers: kindly treat them as you younger dependent brothers and try to advance them in Kṛṣṇa consciousness as good as you can.

SP letter to Janārdana (January 21, 1968)

Please do your duty combinedly without any disruption of peaceful attitudes amongst yourselves. We are pushing our movement on the background of a peaceful atmosphere in the world, and if we show a little disturbance in our own camp that will not be a very good example, therefore, everyone should be forbearing, tolerant and cooperative.

SP letter to Janakī (January 18, 1969)

But one thing is you must stop this fighting between brothers. Otherwise the whole program will be spoiled. Yourself, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa, Brahmānanda, Satsvarūpa-you should do everything combinedly. That is my request. Gradually, by Kṛṣṇa's Grace, we are expanding. So if amongst us there is friction, it will be very dangerous.

SP letter to Gargamuni (September 8, 1969)

This is called Vaikuṅṭha attitude. In the Vaikuṅṭha factually there is no fault in anyone, but there is another type of competition. The competition is that one devotee thinks of other devotees how nicely they are serving the Lord. In the material world the attitude is that everyone likes to think that I am doing better than others. This is material conception. In the Spiritual Sky it is just the

opposite: Everyone thinks that my contemporary devotees are doing better than me. We are trained to address Godbrothers as Prabhu, which means Master. This means we shall try to find out always the serving side of our Godbrothers. Sometimes there are misgivings, but we should try to overlook.

SP letter to Brahmānanda (November 15, 1969)

It doesn't matter what we are, *gṛhasthas* or *sannyāsīs*; the point is to be *paramahansa*, completely surrendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

SP letter to Upendra (January 21, 1968)

Brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra, brahmacārī, gṛhastha, vanaprastha and *sannyāsa*. These are all MATERIAL DESIGNATIONS, but this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is for becoming transcendental to these material designations, and these boys, these foreigners, they are being taught in that light.

Līlāmṛta Volume 5 p. 21

Dealings Amongst Gṛhasthas

I am so glad to learn that your good wife is also helping you. That is the duty of a faithful companion of life. If the wife is helpful in the spiritual progress of life, she is the best friend and philosopher. So in Kṛṣṇa consciousness the wife is never a burden, but she is completely a counterpart. So set example to your countrymen how younger generation can live peacefully, husband and wife, being engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service. There are many examples of this type of husband and wife working in our different centers for propagating this sublime message.

SP letter to Vṛndāvana Candra (September 8, 1969)

Dealing with One's Guru

In regard to praying to Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, I have written to you in my last letter that such prayer is quite appropriate. Our only prayer should be in the matter of desiring further development of devotional service and such sincere prayer should be submitted not directly to the Lord but through the via media of His bona fide servitor or representative. [Note: media is plural in number, not just one]

SP letter to Madhudviṣa (February 14, 1969)

I chastise you, because it is my duty. Disciple is related to discipline, so it is my duty to my disciples. Otherwise, I am not upset with anyone. I simply do this to discipline you, because you are my disciples.

Līlāmṛta Volume 5 p. 43

"You may be afraid of your spiritual master, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't come and see him." "I will drag you to come and see me."

Līlāmṛta Volume 5 p. 196

Disciples should not try to instruct their spiritual master:

"Not knowing why Mādhavendra Purī was crying, Rāmacandra Purī tried to become his advisor. Thus he committed a great offense, for a disciple should never try to instruct his spiritual master."

(Cc Antya 8.21 purport)

Disciples should not initiate while the spiritual master is present.

The first thing, I warn, Achyutananda, do not try to initiate. You are not in a proper position now to initiate anyone. Besides that, the etiquette is that so long the Spiritual Master is present, all prospective disciples should be brought to him. Therefore if anyone is anxious to be initiated, he should first of all hear our

philosophy and join chanting at least for three months, and then if required, I shall send chanted beads for him if you recommend.

SP letter to Acyutānanda (August 21, 1968)

Gurus should not transgress vaiṣṇava etiquette (and initiate their Godbrothers' disciples in good standing):

I have received one letter, which is very depressing from Hrshikesh. I understand that he has been induced by Bon Maharaja to be initiated by him for giving him shelter, and this foolish boy has accepted his inducement. I have replied Hrshikesh's letter in the following words: 'My dear Hrsikesa... I am greatly surprised for Bon Maharaja's initiating you, in spite of his knowing that you are already initiated by me. So it is a deliberate transgression of Vaiṣṇava etiquettes and otherwise a deliberate insult to me. I do not know why he has done like this, but no Vaiṣṇava will approve of this offensive action. ...I do not wish to discuss on this point elaborately now, but if you are desirous to know further about it, I shall be glad to give you more enlightenment...' If Hrshikesh writes you a letter, I think you may avoid reply. I do not approve of both Hrshikesh's and Bon Maharaja's this offensive action.

SP letter to Mukunda (March 26, 1968)

Seniors, Juniors, and Equals

*guṇādhikān mudam lipsed
anukrośam guṇādhāmāt
maitrīm samānād anvicchen
na tāpaiḥ abhibhūyate*

guṇa-adhikāt-one who is more qualified; *mudam*-pleasure; *lipset*-one should feel; *anukrośam*-compassion; *guṇa-adhamāt*-one who is less qualified; *maitrīm*-friendship; *samānāt*-with an equal; *anvicchet*-one should desire; *na*-not; *tāpaiḥ*-by tribulation; *abhibhūyate*-becomes affected.

Every man should act like this: when he meets a person more qualified than himself, he should be very pleased; when he meets someone less qualified than himself, he should be compassionate toward him; and when he meets someone equal to himself, he should make friendship with him. In this way one is never affected by the threefold miseries of this material world.

SB 4.8.34 Nārada Muni to Dhruva Mahārāja

Purport: Generally when we find someone more qualified than ourselves, we become envious of him; when we find someone less qualified, we deride him; and when we find someone equal we become very proud of our activities. These are the causes of all material tribulations. The great sage Nārada therefore advised that a devotee should act perfectly. Instead of being envious of a more qualified man, one should be jolly to receive him. Instead of being oppressive to a less qualified man, one should be compassionate toward him just to raise him to the proper standard. And when one meets an equal, instead of being proud of one's own activities before him, one should treat him as a friend. One should also have compassion for the people in general, who are suffering due to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa. These important functions will make one happy within this material world.

Surpassing a Superior Personality (maryādā-vyatikrama)

To be well versed in the transcendental science necessitates awareness of the techniques of spiritual science. Uddhava, being well aware of all these technicalities of transcendental science advised Vidura to approach Maitreya Ṛṣi to receive transcendental knowledge. Vidura wanted to accept Uddhava as his spiritual master, but Uddhava did not accept the post because Vidura was as old as Uddhava's father and therefore Uddhava could not accept him as his disciple, especially when Maitreya was present nearby. The rule is that in the presence of a higher personality one should not be very eager to impart instructions, even if one is competent and well versed. So Uddhava decided to send an elderly person like Vidura to Maitreya, another elderly person.

Since both Maitreya and Vidura were directly instructed by the Lord, both had the authority to become the spiritual master of Vidura or anyone else, but Maitreya, being elderly had the first claim to becoming the spiritual master, especially for Vidura, who was much older than Uddhava. One should not be eager to become a spiritual master cheaply for the sake of profit and fame, but should become a spiritual master for the service of the Lord. The Lord never tolerates the impertinence of maryada-vyatikrama. One should never pass over the honor due to an elderly spiritual master in the interests of one's own personal gain and fame. Impertinence... is very risky for spiritual realization.

(SB 3.4.26 Purport)

Respect for Sannyāsīs

All should offer due respect to a sannyasi. His position is always superior to all other inmates of the temple. He must always maintain that superior position by action and behavior.

SP letter to Sudāmā (July 29, 1972)

One thing you may note as a matter of etiquette: The Spiritual Master is addressed as "His Divine Grace", a Godbrother as "His Grace", and any sannyasi is addressed as "His Holiness."

SP letter to Rāyarāma (January 1, 1967)

I understand that your Godbrothers are as your younger dependent brothers. Kindly treat them as your younger dependent brothers and try to advance them in Kṛṣṇa consciousness as good as you can.

SP letter to Janārdana (January 21, 1968)

Regarding your second question about greeting karmis, if a karmi is a friend, you just greet him Hare Krishna, and with folded hands touch your forehead. If the karmi is a superior relative, then chant Hare Krishna and bow down to him on the ground. That should be the etiquette in our society transactions.

SP letter to Arundhatī (June 16, 1969)

If you have any specific grievance, please let me know but don't be disturbed by any sort of disagreement with your Godbrothers and Godsisters. Each and every living entity is an individual soul and as such disagreement is quite possible in our dealings with one another. But we have to consider the central point of interest. You are both very intelligent and sober girls and I have got good estimation of you; do not take at any time an attitude of non-cooperation because you have not agreed with another's point of view.

SP letter to Yamunā Devī and Harṣarāṇī Devī (January 15, 1968)

[As superiors]

We should not accept unnecessary favors for sense gratification.

SP letter to Brahmānanda (February 20, 1968)

7. Treating Women as Mothers

In distributing love of Godhead, Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates did not consider who was a fit candidate and who was not, nor where such distribution should or should not take place. They made no conditions.

Cc. Ādi-līlā 7.23

1. In essence, duality means that we forget that we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. We want to enjoy separately from Him, we want to play the controller. This controlling tendency culminates in sex desire.
2. Man/woman concept is synonymous with material consciousness.

3. Becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious means rising above duality. We have to become fixed in the consciousness that all are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa and for His pleasure-not ours.
4. A devotee's foremost duty is to transcend sex desire.
5. This takes philosophical awareness, constant practice and perseverance. (Aversion is not the solution. Attachment/aversion are two sides of the same coin.)
6. Śrīla Prabhupāda in the compassionate mood of the Pañca-tattva has opened the treasure house of *bhakti* to all classes of men-and women.
7. This offers us intense and unlimited opportunity to transcend material attachment and aversion and develop transcendental realization in Kṛṣṇa.
8. The word "mother" generates a mood of respect and sobriety.
9. When we advise that women should be seen as mothers, we mean that our dealings with women should be reserved and respectful.
10. Such conduct will minimize offensive mentality and dealings with other living entities.
11. Women should behave as mothers.
12. In the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness segregation of the sexes is essential.

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

Regarding the disturbance made by the women devotees, they are also living entities. They also came to Krishna. So consciously I cannot deny them. If our male members, the brahmacharies and sannyasis, if they become steady in Krishna consciousness, there is no problem. It is the duty of the male members to be very steady and cautious. This can be done by regular chanting like Haridas Ṭhākur did.

SP letter to Gargamuni (September 29, 1975)

Protect the women (Don't Exploit Them)

Please guide our innocent Godsisters who have come to our shelter. Girls are more susceptible to the finer attachments of Maya. Boys are a little stronger. Mrinalini, Jadurani and all other girls who are so qualified, good-looking, intelligent, educated, and seriously engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should always be given protection from the attachments of Maya.

SP letter to Rāyarāma (October 4, 1967)

Maya's most attractive feature is women and money. We Krishna Conscious men have to deal with women and money in course of preaching work, and the only prophylactic measure to save us is not to accept them for our sense gratification. Then we shall remain strong enough. Materialistic people take everything for sense gratification and Krishna Conscious people take everything for Krishna's satisfaction. There is no fault in the thing as it is; namely women and money, but it becomes faulty by improper use. The improper use is to accept them for sense gratification.

SP letter to Gargamuni (October 18, 1969)

Who has introduced these things, that women cannot have chanting japa in the temple, they cannot perform the arotik and so many things? If they become agitated, then let the brahmacharies go to the forest. I have never introduced these things. The brahmacharies cannot remain in the presence of women in the temple, then they may go to the forest, not remaining in NYC, because in NY there are so many women, so how they can avoid seeing? BEST THING IS TO GO TO THE FOREST for not seeing any women, IF THEY BECOME SO EASILY AGITATED, but then no one will either see them and HOW OUR PREACHING WORK WILL GO ON!"

SP letter to Ekayanī (December 3, 1972)

8. Vaiṣṇava Aparādhās

"In Kṛṣṇa consciousness every man is so important because all of the activities of a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is beneficial to all living entities."

SP letter to Śivānanda (June 15, 1969)

The Greatness of A Vaiṣṇava Quotes from *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*

1. Devotees of Hari are very rare in the age of Kali. The position of the devotee is more elevated than the position of Lord Brahmā and Lord Rudra.
2. The presence of a devotee at the time of death elevates even the killer of a *brāhmaṇa* to the spiritual sky. (10.86)
3. If a dog-eater becomes a Vaiṣṇava then he becomes more elevated than a *brāhmaṇa*, and if a *sannyāsī* is devoid of devotion to Viṣṇu then he considered to be more degraded than a dog-eater. (10.87)
4. Even at the time of total annihilation the devotees of Viṣṇu do not fall down. That is why Śrī Hari is known everywhere as infallible, all pervasive, and inexhaustible; therefore there is no need to fear a devotee. A devotee never inflicts pain on anyone. (10.101-105)
5. Those who worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Hari are the best of all people and no one is better than them in the three worlds. (10.110)
6. Those sinless, magnanimous Vaiṣṇavas purify the entire creation therefore they are even better than the places of pilgrimage. (10.118)
7. Those who are My devotees are not actually My devotees, those who are

My devotees of My devotees are real devotees. (10.133)

8. My devotees who are surrendered unto Me and free from attachment and disgust, envy and pride, sing My glory all the time. They never cause any harm to anyone. They are always engaged in worshipping My devotees and eager to hear about Me, they are the ones who always carry Me in their hearts. (10.145-146)

Blasphemy of a Vaiṣṇava

You are always alert to see whether you are committing some offense. This is a very nice attitude. In rendering service to Lord Kṛṣṇa and His representative, the Spiritual Master, we should always maintain this fearful attitude which means careful attention. This attitude will advance you progressively in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

SP letter to Gopāla Kṛṣṇa (April 21, 1970)

Quotes from Hari-bhakti-vilāsa

1. When one blasphemes a Vaiṣṇava he loses his religiosity, wealth, fame and children. (10.310)
2. If one beats a Vaiṣṇava, blasphemes a Vaiṣṇava, shows disrespect to a Vaiṣṇava, gets angry upon a Vaiṣṇava or does not express joy in seeing a Vaiṣṇava, he goes to hell. (10.310)

Four Kinds of Blasphemy to a Vaiṣṇava

1. To find fault with a Vaiṣṇava for his apparent low birth.
2. To blaspheme him for his previous faults.
3. To blaspheme him for his accidental fault.
4. To blaspheme him for the faults that are almost rectified.

(from Harināma Cintāmaṇi)

What to Do If One Commits Vaiṣṇava Aparādha

If by chance one commits Vaiṣṇava aparādha then he must be forgiveness from the Vaiṣṇava very earnestly holding his feet. A Vaiṣṇava is very merciful so he will immediately embrace him and forgive him for all his offenses.

(from Harināma Cintāmaṇi)

Offering Praise to a Vaiṣṇava

This is actually a devotee's business that everyone should appreciate the value of other devotees. Nobody should criticize anyone.

SP letter to Tamāla Kṛṣṇa (August 19, 1968)

Now that you have come to my house today, I have become glorified; my life has become completely successful. To be able to see a Vaiṣṇava is as rare as the good fortune of seeing Śrī Hari. I must have acquired immense piety, huge as the Meru mountain that's why I got to see a great Vaiṣṇava like you."

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (10.337-338)

9. Dressing Like a Vaiṣṇava

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "A first class Vaiṣṇava is he whose very presence

makes others chant the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa."

Cc. Madhya-līlā 16.74

1. There should be no compromise in our Vaiṣṇava appearance. We are representatives of Śrīla Prabhupāda. We should aim to be first class representatives.
2. We need to be aware of the bonafide standard of appearance, maintain it and preach it. In the age of Kali deviations easily become the standard. We should be alert to this.
3. Proper Vaiṣṇava dress helps us maintain proper consciousness regarding our identity and responsibility in service to Śrīla Prabhupāda and the Vaiṣṇavas.
4. Vaiṣṇava appearance is attractive and will facilitate our preaching. The first impression, which is most often formed from visual stimuli, is the most longstanding.
5. Just by seeing a Vaiṣṇava the conditioned soul is purified.

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

Śrīla Prabhupāda was dressed appropriately for a resident of Vṛndāvana. He wore kanthi-mala <neck beads> and a simple cotton dhoti, and he carried japa-mala <chanting beads> and an old chadar, or shawl. His complexion was golden, his head shaven, sikha in the back, his forehead decorated with the whitish Vaisnava tilaka. He wore pointed white slippers, not uncommon for sadhus in India. But who in New York had ever seen or dreamed of anyone appearing like this Vaiṣṇava? He was possibly the first Vaiṣṇava sannyasi to arrive in New York with uncompromised appearance. Of course, New Yorkers have an expertise in not giving much attention to any kind of strange new arrival.

Līlāmṛta, Volume 2, p. 7

Episode of a Vaiṣṇava Wearing Tilaka in Muslim Factory

There was once a factory in India where all the workers were Hindus, and mostly Vaiṣṇavas. The Vaiṣṇavas had freedom, therefore, to wear their Vaiṣṇava tilaka to work, and they also displayed other Vaiṣṇava paraphernalia. But after some time, the factory went into new management, and then the proprietor was a Muslim. On taking over the business, the Muslim owner declared that he would not allow the workers to come to work any more wearing Vaiṣṇava tilaka. Most of the workers obeyed, and on the given date announced by the owner, they appeared at the factory without their tilaka. One employee, however, thought that he would take his chances and depend on Kṛṣṇa. So he went to work wearing very clear, white Vaiṣṇava tilaka. After seeing all the workers assembled, the new Muslim proprietor said, "This one devotee who has worn Vaiṣṇava tilaka is very courageous. He may be permitted to continue wearing the tilaka to work. But all others are forbidden to wear it any more."

Śrīla Prabhupāda Nectar 3.6

In this way, Prabhupāda encouraged the devotees to not unnecessarily abandon the markings of a Vaiṣṇava. Where situations forbid it, Prabhupāda said it was not absolutely necessary to wear *tilaka*, although a devotee should at least put water *tilaka* on his body with the names of Viṣṇu. But if the paraphernalia is permitted, then a devotee should not unnecessarily do away with the dress or beads of a Vaiṣṇava.

[Comment by Satsvarūpa Dāsa Gosvāmī: This story has obvious modern day application. In 1966 Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased when Rūpanuga and Satsvarūpa persisted in wearing Vaiṣṇava tilaka to their jobs with the NYC Dept of Welfare. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also desired that one day the high-court judges may wear Vaiṣṇava *tilaka*, and this would be a symbol of the successful influence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the world. Even in job situations where wearing *tilaka* is not permissible, a devotee should try in different ways to remember Kṛṣṇa while at work. The story told by Prabhupāda about the man who insisted on wearing *tilaka* to his job may remain an inspiration to all devotees who go to places of employment controlled by the *karmīs*. Somehow or other, we must remain as devotees.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *śikha* is an inch and a half across-no bigger. Bigger *śikha* means another *sampradāya*. ...And they have to be knotted.

10. Correcting Others

Devotee means he is able to tolerate all kinds of discomfort and whims of the material nature, and because he is too much absorbed in serving Kṛṣṇa he takes no time to become angry or take offense with others or find out some fault. No. Devotee means very liberal and kind to everyone, always gentleman under all kinds of conditions of life.

SP letter to Hamsadūta (December 10, 1972)

1. There is a difference between criticism and correction. A devotee realizes that criticizing a Vaiṣṇava pollutes the heart and impedes spiritual advancement.

2. To correct a devotee one must be: -

(a) non-envious

(b) desirous to practically assist the devotee in his Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

(c) in a position spiritually or managerially which justifies and/or necessitates such intervention.

OR be personally requested by the devotee to help him in his difficulty.

3. The devotee offering correction must be practicing what he preaches.

4. Methods of Correction:

(a) Correct by personal example and association.

(b) Guide the devotee to the shelter of a more advanced devotee.

(c) A junior devotee should not personally attempt to correct another devotee. He should reveal his heart to a senior devotee whom he feels

- at ease with and seek his assistance/advice to adjust the situation.
5. Harsh words and actions have no place in correcting a sincere devotee. We want to destroy the ignorance in the heart of a devotee-not the devotee himself.
 6. If there is some sincere and honest criticism offered, we should be grateful, not upset. To react negatively to well intentioned correction is to manifest false ego.
 7. An advanced Vaiṣṇava will see each and every correction offered as the mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
 8. Prevention is better than cure. If all devotees take up the responsibility to develop proper awareness in their devotional behavior the need for correction will be minimized.

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

Devotee means he is able to tolerate all kinds of discomfort and whims of the material nature, and because he is too much absorbed in serving Kṛṣṇa he takes no time to become angry or take offense with others or find out some fault. No. Devotee means very liberal and kind to everyone, always gentleman under all kinds of conditions of life.

SP letter to Hamsadūta (December 10, 1972)

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

A devotee-one who is humble-doesn't fault-find. So in your letter you are not finding fault with anyone. So you are good Vaiṣṇava. You do not find fault with anyone. This is the qualification. We should always think ourselves humble and meek. This you must know. So we all have to cooperate amongst ourselves, otherwise what will people think if we ourselves fight with one another? A devotee is always ideal in behavior."

SP letter to Patita Uddhāraṇa (December 12, 1974)

This is called Vaikuntha attitude. In the Vaikuntha factually there is no fault in anyone, but there is another type of competition. The competition is that one devotee thinks of other devotees how nicely they are serving the Lord. In the material world the attitude is that everyone likes to think that I am doing better than others. This is material conception. In the Spiritual Sky it is just the opposite: Everyone thinks that my contemporary devotees are doing better than me. We are trained to address Godbrothers as Prabhu, which means Master. This means we shall try to find out always the serving side of our Godbrothers. Sometimes there are misgivings, but we should try to overlook.

SP letter to Brahmānanda (November 15, 1969)

Otherwise

I have received one complaint from an Indian devotee at Mayapur, Prabharupa Das Brahmachary, that he is maltreated by our American devotees. Kindly inquire into this matter and do the needful. Either Indian or foreign whoever joins us they are not under any obligation, our only tie is Love of Godhead. It should be our definite policy that nobody is ill treated that he may go away. We recruit a person to join us after spending gallons of blood. Everyone comes for reformation, you cannot expect everyone to be perfect, rather it is our duty to make everyone perfect as far as possible. So we shall be very much cautious and careful in this connection.

SP letter to Tamāla Kṛṣṇa (August 23, 1973)

Devotee misbehavior

Kindly observe the regulative principles, chanting 16 rounds regularly and see that all your other assistants are doing the same. If someone is lacking, try to induce him peacefully.

SP letter to Upendra (August 18, 1970)

Regarding some misbehavior, that we have to check by training peacefully. Your

attitude of tolerance and kindness is very nice, so train them in this way.

SP letter to Bhavānanda (October 28, 1970)

Yes, a new man may commit blunders in the beginning, but that does not mean we may be too impatient with him. After all, training means the man does not know, so you should train him nicely. A Vaishnava is expected to be humbler than the blade of grass, so when you train some new man you should not get agitated with him. After all, we are preachers, and we do not expect our audience or candidates completely respondent to our call. If everyone is trained [already] then what is the use of our preaching?

SP letter to Upendra (March 11, 1969)

Mend it; Don't Break it

Try to settle up amicably and correct yourself. One man is trained up with great difficulty, especially in spiritual life. Everyone has got some weakness and deficiency. It is better to correct or mend it than to break it."

SP letter to Hamsadūta (September 29, 1974)

Let The Authority Handle It

I beg to thank you very much for your letter pointing out some of the discrepancies of many of the devotees in New York. You are correct regarding the items which you have stated, such as sleeping in front of the deities, taking of unoffered foodstuffs, drinking water from the bathroom, and non-chanting of rounds. But the thing is discipline can not be observed unless there is obedience. As you are obedient to me, you should be similarly obedient to my representative. Your statement about Brahmananda that he is a wonderful devotee is 100 percent agreed by me. He is in charge of the New York center, and therefore, if proper obedience is not given to him, it will be impossible for him to manage affairs of the temple. Under the circumstances, the discrepancies you have observed in the temple may be referred to him, and he is quite reasonable, and will handle the matter with the respective devotees.

SP letter to Nara-Nārāyaṇa (February 7, 1969)

Regarding general state of affairs at Amsterdam temple, I can understand there is some disturbance among you, but that is not to be taken very seriously. Real business is preaching work. And if there is full attention on this matter only, all other businesses will be automatically successful. Fighting amongst ourselves is not at all good, but if our preaching work is neglected, or if we fall down in following the regulative principles-such as rising before four, chanting 16 rounds, like that-if these things are not strictly observed, then Maya will enter and spoil everything. So my best advice to you is to strictly observe these things yourself and be the example so that all others may follow. We should not criticize each other as Vaiṣṇavas, because there is fault in everyone and we may be ourselves subject to criticism. Best thing is to be above suspicion ourselves, then if we see discrepancies and make suggestions, the others will automatically respect and take action to rectify the matters. That is cooperation. And we must exist on such cooperation, otherwise the whole thing is doomed if we simply go on fighting over some small thing. So try to organize things and preach together in this spirit and that will please me very very much.

SP letter to Madhu-maṅgala (November 18, 1972)

You have mentioned about some criticism made by Jayagovinda which upset you. I do not know exactly what is the point, but if there is some honest criticism, there should be no cause of becoming upset.

SP letter to Vṛndāvaneśvarī (July 8, 1969)

The Defect Lies Within You

If there is some incident and I claim that no one is cooperating with me or no one will work with me, that is MY defect, NOT THEIRS. The Vaiṣṇava devotee must think like this. We should not find fault with others and criticise and go away. That is not the Vaiṣṇava way. Better we should always be willing to offer all respect to others and consider them as our superiors always.

SP letter to Gaurasundara (August 26, 1972)

11. Etiquette in Management

ISKCON is a spiritual organization personally established by Śrīla Prabhupāda. We must take care that it doesn't become material. Anything (husband-wife relationship, Deity worship, even *prasādam*) can turn material by one's consciousness. In any Society, there must be some organization and management, otherwise there will be chaos. Even in the spiritual world, Kṛṣṇa's friends are subdivided and supervised (Lord Balarāma is group leader for his cowherd boy friends; Candravalī and Rādhārāṇī head up left-wing and right-wing gopīs, etc). ISKCON is no different. In order for people to interact in a harmonious fashion, dealings and activities must be regulated and orchestrated.

1. The material nature is the world of exploitation but the spiritual nature is the world of service.
2. ISKCON is a spiritual organization. Regardless of position everyone is first and foremost a servant of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Prabhupāda. No one should exploit his position for selfish interests.
3. Higher position means greater service. Position means an opportunity to purely represent Śrīla Prabhupāda. Hence our management must be based on humility and tolerance.
4. Treat your subordinates as younger brothers.
5. Leadership is based on spiritual qualification, not on anything material. A mature, dedicated preacher makes the best leader.
6. A leader's character must be spotless.
7. Leaders must feel for their followers, then the followers will naturally trust them.
8. It is important to lead with detachment and guide with a strong sense of duty.

9. Kṛṣṇa conscious management is autocratic and democratic.
10. Talk to devotees and be open to new ideas.
11. Don't hide anything from the Vaiṣṇava's.
12. There should be more than one signer for bank accounts, buying of properties etc.
13. It is best if all incoming funds are declared before the Deities, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and the Vaiṣṇavas.
14. All incoming funds should be deposited in the bank and then spent from the account.

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

The sweetness of Lord Kṛṣṇa is not to be tasted by those who consider themselves equal to Kṛṣṇa. It is to be tasted only through the sentiment of servitude.

Cc Ādi-līlā 6.103

...Or you may follow your other plan, but however you do it, do it jointly by combined consultation. If you do it jointly in this way, you will get strength to decide the right thing.

SP letter to Haṁsadūta (July 11, 1970)

One thing is, too much competition between centers is not good, the emphasis should be on co-operation, not competition.

SP letter to Amogha (May 9, 1972)

Please do your duty combinedly without any disruption of peaceful attitudes amongst yourselves. We are pushing our movement on the background of a peaceful atmosphere in the world, and if we show a little disturbance in our own camp that will not be a very good example, therefore, everyone should be forbearing, tolerant and cooperative.

SP letter to Janakī (January 18, 1969)

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is such an important mission, the devotees should cooperate, even if there were discrepancies [insufficient income, inadequate diet]. The material world is like an ocean, and there would always be waves." (SP Lil.V, p.9)

Lilāmṛta Volume V p. 9

Now all my disciples must work combinedly and with cooperation to spread this sankirtan movement. If you cannot work together, then my work is stopped up. Our Society is like one big family and our relationship should be based on love and trust. We must give up the fighting spirit and use our intelligence to push ahead. You should accept help from your Godbrothers.

SP letter to Upendra (August 6, 1970)

"Yes, following the rules and regulations is the real qualification of GBC. We have made things easy for being qualified for such position, but still they are violating... Your conclusion is very good and I very much appreciate that GBC or XYZ you are always servant of Kṛṣṇa. That is wanted.

SP letter to Kīrtanānanda (November 12, 1974)

When a KC person is elevated to a responsible position, he becomes humble, as a tree laden with fruits.

When a Krishna Conscious person is elevated to a responsible position, he never becomes puffed up. Just like a tree when overladen with fruits becomes humble and lower down; similarly, a great soul in Krishna Consciousness becomes humbler than the grass and bowed down like the fruitful trees because a Krishna Conscious person acts as the agent of Krishna, therefore he discharges his duty with great responsibility.

SP letter to Gajendra (January 27, 1970)

Spiritual Management

Prabhupāda said he knew "the pulse of his disciples." Thus he had recently [1972] sensed a tendency to be too absorbed in management and not enough in preaching. He had been telling his secretary that G.B.C. men should not simply sit behind their desks and try to centralize power but should become detached, take *sannyāsa*, and travel and preach. Now he had advised that they not give up their managerial burden but follow his example of preaching and managing their G.B.C. zones in a renounced spirit.

Līlāmṛta Volume V p. 91

My request to you is that you try to follow the authorities there-the temple president, the GBC, etc. Cooperate nicely with them. Our movement is based on love and trust, so if we do not cooperate, then how is that love and trust? Follow all of the rules and regulations very strictly without deviation, chant 16 rounds, attend class and mangal arati, and then everything will be all right.

SP letter to Kṛṣṇaveśa (January 16, 1975)

This surrendering process is unconditional. Surrendering does not mean that one should only surrender in favorable circumstances. That is not surrender. Surrendering means that in any condition the surrendering process must continue. [And what is an important part of that surrendering process?] ...You must work conjointly. That is my desire. And if you fight amongst yourselves for some individual interests, that is not surrender.

SP letter to Kṛṣṇa dāsa (March 5, 1969)

Kṛṣṇa consciousness means full cooperation with Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa means with all his entourage. We should always remember this. Just like when we speak of a tree, it includes the root, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the flowers-everything. Therefore to love Kṛṣṇa means to love Him along with all His Name, His fame, His qualities, His entourage, His abode, His devotees, etc.

SP letter to Yamunā (March 2, 1970)

12. Temple Room Etiquette

Temple room etiquette is described in detail by Śrīla Prabhupāda in his *Nectar of Devotion*.

Other Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

Another thing I request is that everything in the Temple should be kept nice and clean. Everyone should wash hands before touching anything of Kṛṣṇa's. We should always remember that Kṛṣṇa is the purest and similarly only the purest can associate with Him. Cleanliness is next to Godliness.

SP letter to Nandarāṇī and Kṛṣṇa Devī (October 4, 1967)

[In *arcana*] There is no matter if there is a little change here and there-the real duty is love and devotion.

SP letter to Yamunā (July 26, 1970)

Regarding the prasādam, I never approved Mr. Malkani cooking in the temple. He is not initiated. Of course, he is Hindu, but he is not initiated to cook in the temple. Any paid cook is not desirable. The independent cooking in the temple is not good." [Footnote: "The right thing is that only twice initiated brahmin disciples cook in the temple."]

SP letter to Kīrtanānanda (November 23, 1974)

Yes, a non-initiate can work under the direction of a devotee in the kitchen.

SP letter to Mahāpuruṣa (March 28, 1968)

It is customary for the priests of temples in India not even to touch outsiders nor enter the Deity room after having been touched. This is a very important item in temple worship.

Cc. Antya 4.128 purport

Seeing the Deity in a Pleasing Mood

You have described Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa at London Temple as wonderful. Yes, that is the test of standard service. If we see the Deities in very pleasing mood, that will certify our service unto the Lord. So everywhere we shall see the Deities in such pleasing mood. As soon as we see the Deities in a different mood we must immediately understand our discrepancies.

SP letter to Tamāla Kṛṣṇa (May 27, 1970)

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the devotional practices in the Jaipur temple were standard and could be introduced throughout ISKCON. [i.e. offering scented oils on cotton-tipped sticks, which the priest would later offer, along with the flower garland from the deities, to the incoming worshipers in exchange for fresh garlands]

Līlāmṛta Volume V p. 47-8

13. Serving Guests and Life Members

A Vaiṣṇava's heart is very pure and a pure hearted person is extremely magnanimous. So one's Vaiṣṇavism will be judged by the degree of his magnanimity.

General

1. Any guests who visit are Śrīla Prabhupāda's guests. As his servants it is our pleasure (and duty) to serve them.
2. The arrival of a guest is a chance to introduce a conditioned soul to Śrīla Prabhupāda or relish vaiṣṇava association. Vaiṣṇavas feel joy and gratitude to be blessed with such an opportunity.
3. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is synonymous with personalism. We need to step beyond the bodily conception and remember that everyone is a part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa and is very dear to Him. We show this practically by:
 - (a) welcoming the guest with sweet words, a seat and *prasāda*, (if no *prasāda* is available at least a glass of water should be offered.)
 - (b) being prepared to give our time and sincere concern,
 - (c) remaining Kṛṣṇa conscious in our discussions and dealings,
 - (d) thanking the guest for his visit and inviting him to please come again.
4. Essentially, our mood should be one of loving exchange.

Receiving Guests in the Temple

When we actually see people coming to our centre, chant, dance, take prasada, becoming jubilant and purchase books, we know that certainly Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is always present in such transcendental activities and He is very pleased and satisfied.

Ādi-līlā 9.50 Purport

5. Spontaneous service is encouraged in the visitor by the sensitive, pure preaching of the devotee. Every guest should at least be engaged by hearing the glories of Śrīla Prabhupāda, relishing prasada and chanting the Holy Name.
6. The natural reciprocation of the soul to such engagement is a desire to

share the happiness experienced. The expert preacher will facilitate this by offering prasād, temple invitations or literature to the guest to distribute to his friends and relatives.

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

Story of Surabhī Swami and Jayapatāka Swami

One day while Śrīla Prabhupāda was in Bombay, he simultaneously had visitors from Vṛndāvana and Māyāpur. This was during a period when temple construction was going on in both places, so Prabhupāda expected his disciples in those places to come ask him for money. And the disciples knew that Prabhupāda would be expecting and demanding results from them on these important construction projects. But when these disciples visited from distant places, Prabhupāda always first welcomed them according to Vaiṣṇava etiquette. Prabhupāda had said that his mission was like a war on Maya, and so he received his own soldiers from the field by first offering them sweet words and relief. He asked them if they had taken any prasādam, and he suggested that they might want to rest. At least for a few minutes, the immediate, pressing problems were put aside, as Prabhupāda's disciples basked in the sweetness of his *darśana* and his kind welcome.

SP Nectar 3.1

"You should always be able to offer water, hot *purīs* and eggplant *bhaji*, and sweets," Prabhupāda said. Even when guests appeared shy, Prabhupāda would insist they take a full meal.

Līlāmṛta Volume V p. 144

During the train ride to Calcutta, Śrīla Prabhupāda reiterated his displeasure with the mismanaged ISKCON pandal at Kumbha-mela. Thousands of guests were coming to the Hare Kṛṣṇa pandal without receiving *prasādam*. Determined that the bad example not be repeated, he dictated a letter, "To all ISKCON Temple Presidents."

"Please accept my blessings. Now you must arrange in each temple there must be sufficient stock of *prasādam* for distribution. You can keep first-class cooks, two or three, and they should always be engaged. Whenever any guests comes, he must get *prasād*. This arrangement must be made, that the cooks prepare 10-20 servings at a time, of *purīs* and *sabji*, and then you can add *halava* and *pakoras* and the visitors may be supplied immediately. Whenever a gentleman comes, he must be served. As the twenty servings are being distributed, immediately the cooks prepare another 20 servings and store it. At the end of the day if no one comes, our men will take, so there is no loss. You cannot say, "It is finished," "It is not cooked yet," "There is no supply for cooking," etc. This must be enforced rigidly.

The temple is managed by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lakṣmījī; so why should there be want? Our philosophy is, if anyone comes, let him take *prasād*, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and be happy. Everything is being supplied by Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is not poor, so why should we deny them? This should be done at any cost. There is no difficulty. It simply requires nice management. At the end of the day you may sell or give away. If we believe that Kṛṣṇa is providing for and maintaining everyone, then why should we be misers? This means losing faith in Kṛṣṇa and thinking that we are the doers and suppliers. We are confident that Kṛṣṇa will supply! Let the whole world come. We can feed them. So please do this nicely. Begin at once."

Līlāmṛta Volume VI p. 232, letter: January 1977

14. Serving and Honoring Prasad

I like this idea very much. Our chanting is the medicine and our *prasādam* is the diet for curing material disease.

SP letter to Dayānanda (October 17, 1968)

How to Honor Prasad

When a devotee distributes prasāda, remnants of food offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in order to maintain our spirit of devotional service we must accept this *prasāda* as the Lord's grace received through the pure devotees.

Nectar of Instruction (Text 4 Purport)

1. Remember that Kṛṣṇa *prasādam* is non-different from Kṛṣṇa. Recite the *sarira avidya-jal* prayer to remember that.
2. Use the right hand to eat and drink.
3. Meditate on how Kṛṣṇa tasted the offering. (One can also meditate on Kṛṣṇa's mercy in providing *prasādam* and the *prasādam* pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Kṛṣṇa.)
4. Do not talk while honoring *prasādam* (besides glorifying Kṛṣṇa and His *prasādam*.)
5. Do not throw *prasādam*. Never touch *prasādam* with your feet.
6. Wash hands, feet and mouth before and after eating.
7. Drink a glass of water one hour before eating. For some time after eating, don't drink; if you at all have to drink, drink something hot.
8. Śrīla Prabhupāda said: Fill 1/4 of your stomach with water, 1/2 with food and the other 1/4 with air. DO NOT OVEREAT!

How to Serve Prasadam

We should never waste Krishna prasādam. Best thing is to cook only what is required and then give each person what he wants. That is the Vedic system, that the people sit in rows behind their plates and servers pass down the rows and put a very small portion of each foodstuff on each plate, unless there is some objection by a person. Then nothing is given. Then if anyone wants more, the servers pass up and down the rows continually and give more if anyone requests. In this way nothing is wasted and everyone is satisfied.

SP letter to Kīrtirāja (November 27, 1971)

1. All to be served should be invited to sit on the floor, and *prasādam* should be served by qualified devotees.
2. Those who are served should be very clean, peaceful, and satisfied. They should eat before serving, if necessary. They should try not to speak while serving.
3. Serve just the right amount so that nothing is wasted.
4. Seniors should be served first. Householders should serve the guests. Old people and children should be served first.
5. Place salt and lemon on each plate before those to be served are seated.
6. Always serve water first.
7. *Prasādam* should be served in the following order:
 - a) First bitter preparations like sukta and bitter melon
 - b) Then spinach and other astringent items
 - c) Fried preparations and dahl
 - d) Various spicy vegetables
 - e) Sour items
 - f) Sweet preparations
 - g) Rice and capatis are staple foods and should be on the plate
8. Go around serving seconds until everyone is satisfied. Don't be stingy, don't hold anything back because you want to take it later. *Prasādam* is meant for distribution.
9. Do not touch plates with the serving spoon. Touching the plate contaminates the spoon. If a spoon becomes contaminated, you should wash it.
10. Don't let your fingers touch any of the preparations, even water. Salt should never be served by hand, use a spoon.
11. Never touch *prasādam* with your feet or step over it.
12. Serve the *prasādam* from serving buckets.

13. Don't drag buckets along the floor or make clanging noises with pot handles or utensils. Serve quietly.

14. After everyone is finished honoring *prasādam*, clean the place immediately.

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

Story of Prabhupāda's Visit

(along with some of his disciples)

At the Āśrama of Puri Maharaja in Visakhapatnam
(SP Līlāmṛta V, pg 66-67):

Prabhupāda's godbrother Ānanda was eager to cook and serve not only Śrīla Prabhupāda, but all his disciples. Ānanda was elderly, yet he took the position of always offering menial service. Although he spoke very little English, Prabhupāda's disciples could perceive the affection of Ānanda and Śrīla Prabhupāda for each other. Ananda's communication with Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples was particularly manifest through his cooking and serving of *prasādam*...

[A wonderful description is then given on how Ānanda would serve all the devotees *prasādam*.]

Each morning everyone would gather on the veranda outside Prabhupāda's quarters, the men sitting on one side, the ladies on the other. Down the center aisle, Ānanda would walk briskly, distributing *prasādam*, while Prabhupāda sat at one end in a wooden chair, fingering his *jaṇa* beads and observing the devotees take *prasādam*. Prabhupāda had supplied money to the *āśrama* and Ānanda was regularly cooking sumptuous feasts: deep-fried chunks of potatoes in powdered spices, rice, yogurt, *dal*, three different types of *sābjis*, french fries, chutney, *maḷpura*, *rajkeḷi*, *sandeṣa*, *kṣīra*-and everything cooked to a nectarean standard of excellence.

Prabhupāda would sit at the head of the two rows and encourage them to take

prasādam: "Give him more!" Prabhupāda would praise Ananda's cooking, smiling with pleasure to see his disciples accept *prasādam*. The devotees would finish, having been induced to eat as much as they possibly could, and Śrīla Prabhupāda would say aloud the *prema-dhvani*. Then all the devotees would shout in response, "Jaya!"

After one such feast, Prabhupāda called the devotees into his room and remarked, "See how he is cooking. He cooks everything, he serves it, and then he doesn't eat until everyone is fully satisfied. This is Vaiṣṇava, how he should act. He is more satisfied to serve than to enjoy himself."

Līlāmṛta V, pp. 66-67

15. Kirtana Etiquette

Regarding your question about the dancing, the dancing should be done enthusiastically by raising the hands like Panca-tattva. You can also dance enthusiastically by raising hands. All of Lord Caitanya's followers used to dance with raised hands. If someone dances with ecstasy, that is all right, but it is better to dance with raised hands.

SP letter to Kīrtanānanda (November 10, 1975)

1. *Kīrtana* means glorification of Śrī Hari by means of singing. (When only one devotee sings, it is *bhajana*.)
2. Glorify Śrī Kṛṣṇa, not yourself.
3. Sing with sincere devotion for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.
4. When singing in a group, one or two persons should lead and other devotees should follow.
5. The instruments that Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed for accompanying

kīrtana were *karatal*, *mṛdaṅga* and *jhamṇa* (whompers). He didn't approve of harmonium for *kīrtana*. For *bhajana* it is all right. The instruments, especially *jhamṇa*, should not drown out the holy name or cause pain to the ears. The instruments should follow the *kīrtana* leader.

6. Use simple melody and preferably the appropriate melody (*raga*) for the time of day.

7. Don't think that you are the best singer and therefore you should lead. Vaiṣṇavas are by nature humble. They naturally want to follow not lead. However, if they are requested to lead by the Vaiṣṇavas, then they are happy to serve.

16. Etiquette in Public

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas
tat tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇam kurute
lokas tad anuvartate*

Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.

1. Always remember that you are representing Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda never compromised the Absolute Truth. However, he was always the perfect gentleman. This is Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

2. While dealing with people we have to sacrifice our false ego. We must train ourselves not to be concerned with the subtle interaction of the three modes and material nature.

3. We need to develop single-minded determination to think, speak and act as Śrīla Prabhupāda wants us. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

4. It is imperative that we remember, by constant practice, that everyone is a part and parcel of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Our only business is to reawaken their consciousness to spiritual Reality.
5. Always remember that everyone-including Śrī Kṛṣṇa-is watching you.
6. *Saṅkīrtana* is the most effective method to awaken Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A devotee should be very concerned to distribute Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy. This should be the essence of all our dealings.
7. Never lose your temper in public. Humility and tolerance will always win over anger and frustration.
8. Don't eat in public or sit in public places for discussion or relaxation.

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

Actually, what is our aim? Our aim is to create men of ideal character. And if our men are distributing books on this account, they are doing the best service to society. What we are doing, that they must see-see their sacrifice, what is behind their life, how they are living, how they have sacrificed everything for the welfare of society.

SP letter to Śrī Govinda (June 12, 1974)

"That is the standard of living in America. You cannot say, 'No, I shall not lie down in this nice apartment. I shall lie down in the street. I am a sannyasi!' Then nobody will respect me. So we have to use it [cars], but we should not be attached to it. Our attachment should be for Kṛṣṇa, and for Kṛṣṇa's service we can accept anything."

Līlāmṛta V, pp. 66-67

Touching Feet

You do not allow anyone to touch your feet-but if they want to insist on touching your feet and there is no other way to avoid it, you can simply remember your predecessor Ācāryas and Spiritual Masters and accept them and return namaskar

with folded hands. That is the Vaiṣṇava etiquette.

SP letter to Acyutānanda (November 11, 1970)

When Śrīla Prabhupāda was questioned by journalists he didn't answer in view of what would be printed, but Prabhupāda was speaking to these reporters as spirit souls, reaching out toward Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Līlāmṛta V, p. 58

A young man demanded, "Have you realized the soul in the innermost depths of your being?"

Prabhupāda: "Yes."

The man: "When was the Bhagavad-gītā written?"

Prabhupāda: "Now you answer my question. What is the process of receiving knowledge from the Bhagavad-gītā?"

The man: "No, you tell me when was the Bhagavad-gītā written? According to some swami is it was written fifteen hundred years ago, but you said 5000 years."

Śrīla Prabhupāda raised his voice angrily: "I am not your servant. I am Kṛṣṇa's servant. You must answer my question!"

After the man left, Prabhupāda completed his lecture by stating that one must approach Kṛṣṇa or Kṛṣṇa's representative with a submissive attitude, by serving and inquiring, not simply asking challenging questions.

Līlāmṛta V, p. 16

Just as the gopīs were lusty for Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna would get angry for Kṛṣṇa. So it is not bad that a devotee becomes angry for Kṛṣṇa.

Līlāmṛta V, p. 17

17. Etiquette in Holy Places

"Coming to pilgrimage means to come where the *sādhus* are. I am here, so why is everyone going elsewhere?" "You cannot see Vṛndāvana with *viṣaya*, or material spirit. The test is how much you have conquered over eating, sleeping and mating. Don't think you can just come to Vṛndāvana and become a Goswami!"

Lilāmṛta V, p. 193

1. We come to a holy place to become purified, to develop our Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
2. It is important not only to maintain a submissive, humble attitude with other ISKCON devotees but with all the residents of the *Dhāma*. (We should be especially mindful of this in "mundane" dealings e.g. arranging transport, shopping).
3. To actually be in the *Dhāma* means to be in the association of devotees, to hear from senior Vaiṣṇavas and serve them. We cannot see a holy place with *viṣaya* (material spirit). We are reliant on the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas.
4. We must maintain Śrīla Prabhupāda's good name by being clean in all our dealings. (This includes everything from eating to changing money).
5. We must be aware that Govardhana Hill, Rādhā and Śyāma Kuṇḍa etc. are Supremely transcendental personalities. If we desire to take Their *darśana* we must do so in proper consciousness.
6. Animals are also residents of the *Dhāma*. We should neither befriend them nor make them our enemies. It is best to maintain a neutral position.
7. It is important to come to the *Dhāma* in a service mood rather than an enjoying mood. Then our visit will be successful.

Dhāma Considerations
(neophytes are not recommended to go for seeking solitude)

The association of devotees is the only solace for our existence. New York might have been a little busier than Boston, but so long as it is under the guidance of an experienced devotee, the affairs in both cases are all right. The tendency for solitude is a kind of reaction on our past material activities, but solitude is not very good for a neophyte. ...The best thing therefore is not to seek solitude in the beginning, but remain in the midst of pure devotees so that even there is attack of Maya, their association will protect us. If you are, however, always busy in the matter of preaching work, that is very nice. But to remain alone in a solitary place for a new man is not advisable.

Vṛndāvana is of course very impressive for devotional service, but that also is not advisable to remain alone. I am trying to get a nice place at Vṛndāvana and when the place is there, I shall personally be present with some devotees, and appreciate the atmosphere in Vṛndāvana. So long we are engaged in devotional service with proper guidance, certainly we are always in transcendental position, and transcendental position is unlimited. It doesn't matter whether you are in Vrindavana or USA. But still, of course, Vṛndāvana atmosphere is very sweet. But so long as we have not completely freed our material attachment, even Vṛndāvana residence becomes uncongenial. Just like in the case of Kirtananda, it was so happened. ...Our sound position is always being engaged in service of Kṛṣṇa, that is positive standing.

SP letter to Yadunandana (March 26, 1968)

Learn the Etiquettes

In the holy *dhāma*, if one of my disciples drinks from a jug and contaminates that jug, everyone will notice it. Don't be criticized for this uncleanliness or I will be criticized. It is the duty of the disciples to follow these etiquette habits very

austerely." [refer this also to "How to serve and honor *prasādam*"]

Līlāmṛta V, p. 17

All Animals are Residents of the Dhāma (Dogs, Hogs, Monkeys)

Not Disturbing The Dogs

Once in Vṛndāvana, the devotees tried to chase away a few stray dogs by throwing stones and yelling, but Prabhupāda stopped them, "Leave them alone," he said, and he began throwing prasada from his plate to the dogs.

Līlāmṛta V, p. 25

The Monkeys

Neither be their friend or their enemies, if you make friends with them, they will simply be nuisance. If you become their enemies, they will become very vindictive. Just maintain a neutral position.

Līlāmṛta V, p. 42

18. Dealing with Indian Brāhmaṇas, Māyāvādīs, and other Sampradāyas

Indian Brāhmaṇas and Māyāvādīs

1. In dealing with the *smārta brāhmaṇas* we must remember that they have no bona fide *paramparā*. Therefore they are not in a position to have received transcendental knowledge.
2. The Vaiṣṇava is more elevated than a *brāhmaṇa*.
3. Śrīla Prabhupāda's second *praṇāma mantra* indicates that we should minimize our dealings with the Māyāvādīs.
4. We may choose to offer respects to Māyāvādīs but we must never accept their food.
5. How to defeat Māyāvādīs:
 - (a) Their understanding of the Absolute is incomplete.
 - (b) They utilize relative means in their quest for the Absolute.
 - (c) They distort the quintessence of the scripture.
 - (d) Lord Śiva came as Śaṅkarācārya to bewilder the demoniac people in the age of Kali through Māyāvādī philosophy.
6. It is better not to preach to Māyāvādīs or *smārta brāhmaṇas*. However, we should preach to the innocent who have been influenced by them.

Other Sampradāyas

1. There are distinct differences between the four *sampradāyas*-Śrī, Brahmā, Rudra, Kumāra.
2. There is a distinct difference between these *sampradāyas* and ours.
3. There is a subtle difference between ISKCON and other Gauḍīya *sampradāyas*.
4. Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual position is unique. It is our special good fortune to be related to Him.
5. The caste *gōsvāmī's* conception of disciplic succession is a complete misconception.

6. No matter how elevated, a Vaiṣṇava always offers respects. The more advanced he is, the more humble he is. Therefore our dealings with other *sampradāyas* should be very respectful.
7. In our dealings we must be aware that there is a difference between submission, humility, and respect.
8. We should always be respectful towards other *sampradāyas*-at least externally-to protect Śrīla Prabhupāda's good name.
9. It is good to know about differences and defects in other spiritual communities.
10. We must always be aware of the unique position of the Vraja Bhasis and never offend them.

Quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda

"Swamiji, your disciples don't pronounce the Sanskrit very nicely. Even the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* they sometimes do not say correctly."

Prabhupāda: "Yes, that is why we have come here-to get your association so you can teach us."

(Līlāmṛta V, p.62)

"So far as your questions are concerned, in India a *sannyāsī* or a person in the renounced order of life is always honored. Even in this fallen down condition of India a *sannyāsī* is honored everywhere, and he has no problem for his living condition. So you are correct that a person in the renounced order of life is honored."

SP Letter to Alfred Ford (July 16, 1974)

Give everyone proper respect

"Regarding your questions how to offer respects to *sannyāsīs*. Every *sannyāsī*, even if you see a Māyāvādī *sannyāsī*, offer him your respects-there will be no

harm. As you have observed we shall follow Lord Caitanya's instruction that we give all due respects to others regarding their position, but there is no need of always associating with each of them. Even if one is Vaiṣṇava, but not of good character, we can give him the Vaiṣṇava respect, but we cannot associate with him."

SP Letter to Jayapatākā (April 30, 1970)

"One time when Prabhupāda was at Bhaktivedanta Manor, a Māyāvādī *sannyāsī* came to visit. Śrīla Prabhupāda received him graciously, and they had some discussion. When the man departed, he deliberately left behind a big stack of pamphlets. The pamphlets contained a little essay on the monistic doctrine that "all is one," defying the direct meaning of the Vedic scriptures and completely omitting Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The next afternoon, Prabhupāda met with the devotees as usual. His practice was to receive a very big plate of fruit and nuts, take some himself, and then ask a disciple to distribute the *mahā-prasādam* to all the devotees. On this particular day, Prabhupāda called for the pamphlets. The devotees were surprised—"Why is Prabhupāda calling for these pamphlets?" When they were brought in, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "Distribute one to each of the devotees." The devotees were bewildered, as the Māyāvādī pamphlets were distributed to one and all. Then Prabhupāda said, "Everyone take a pamphlet, open it up and put it in your hand." He took a few fruits from the plate, began eating them, and then indicated that the rest should be distributed. He said the devotees should use the pamphlets as paper plates. One of the devotees mentioned later that Prabhupāda was practicing *yukta-vairāgya* by this simple act. He had found a useful purpose for the atheistic tracts, simultaneously ridiculing their author and yet engaging him in devotional service.

Śrīla Prabhupāda Nectar 3.30

Dealing with Mayavadis

Then the other *sannyāsī* (Māyāvādī) began speaking. Suddenly Śrīla Prabhupāda looked at us and said, "Start *kīrtana* immediately." So we got up in the middle of the *sannyāsī's* speaking and started *kīrtana*. "He was preaching impersonal

philosophy and I could not tolerate it," Prabhupāda said.

(Līlāmṛta V, p.92)

Endnotes

1 (Popup - Popup)

utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt
tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt
saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ
ṣaḍbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati

SYNONYMS

utsāhāt—by enthusiasm; *niścayāt*—by confidence; *dhairyāt*—by patience; *tat-tat-karma*—various activities favorable for devotional service; *pravartanāt*—by performing; *saṅga-tyāgāt*—by giving up the association of nondevotees; *sataḥ*—of the great previous *ācāryas*; *vṛtteḥ*—by following in the footsteps; *ṣaḍbhiḥ*—by these six; *bhaktiḥ*—devotional service; *prasidhyati*—advances or becomes successful.

TRANSLATION

There are six principles favorable to the execution of pure devotional service: (1) being enthusiastic, (2) endeavoring 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 nondevotees, and (6) following in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas*. These six principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service.

PURPORT

Devotional service is not a matter of sentimental speculation or imaginative ecstasy. Its substance is practical activity. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11), has defined devotional service as follows:

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-

śīlanam bhaktir uttamā

"*Uttamā bhakti*, or unalloyed devotion unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, involves the rendering of devotional service in a way that is favorable to the Lord. This devotional service should be free from any extraneous motive and devoid of fruitive *karma*, impersonal *jñāna* and all other selfish desires."

Bhakti is a sort of cultivation. As soon as we say "cultivation," we must refer to activity. Cultivation of spirituality does not mean sitting down idly for meditation, as some pseudo-*yogīs* teach. Such idle meditation may be good for those who have no information of devotional service, and for this reason it is sometimes recommended as a way to check distracting materialistic activities. Meditation means stopping all nonsensical activities, at least for the time being. Devotional service, however, not only puts an end to all nonsensical mundane activities, but also engages one in meaningful devotional activities. Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja recommends:

*śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇam pāda-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dāsyam
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam*

The nine processes of devotional service are as follows:

1. hearing the name and glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead
 2. chanting His glories
 3. remembering the Lord
 4. serving the Lord's feet
 5. worshiping the Deity
 6. offering obeisances unto the Lord
 7. acting as the Lord's servant
 8. making friends with the Lord
 9. surrendering oneself fully to the Lord
- Śravaṇam, or hearing, is the first step in acquiring transcendental

knowledge. One should not give aural reception to unauthorized persons, but should approach the proper person, as recommended in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34):

*tad viddhi praṇiṣātena
pariprasnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

"Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth."

It is further recommended in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, *tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet*: "To understand that transcendental science, one must approach a bona fide spiritual master." Thus this method of submissively receiving transcendental confidential knowledge is not merely based on mental speculation. In this regard, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu told Rūpa Gosvāmī:

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*

"In the course of traversing the universal creation of Brahmā, some fortunate soul may receive the seed of *bhakti-latā*, the creeper of devotional service. This is all by the grace of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 19.151) The material world is a place of confinement for the living entities who are by nature *ānandamaya*, pleasure-seeking. They actually want to be free from the confinement of this world of conditional happiness, but not knowing the process of liberation, they are bound to transmigrate from one species of life to another and from one planet to another. In this way the living entities are wandering throughout the material universe. When by good fortune one comes in contact with a pure devotee and hears from him patiently, one begins to follow the path of devotional service. Such an opportunity is offered to a person who is sincere. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is giving such

a chance to humanity at large. If by fortune one takes advantage of this opportunity to engage in devotional service, the path of liberation immediately opens.

One should accept this opportunity to return home, back to Godhead, very enthusiastically. Without enthusiasm, one cannot be successful. Even in the material world one has to be very enthusiastic in his particular field of activity in order to become successful. A student, businessman, artist or anyone else who wants success in his line must be enthusiastic. Similarly, one has to be very enthusiastic in devotional service. Enthusiasm means action, but action for whom? The answer is that one should always act for Kṛṣṇa-*kṛṣṇārthākhila-ceṣṭā* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*).

In all phases of life one has to perform devotional activities under the direction of the spiritual master in order to attain perfection in *bhakti-yoga*. It is not that one has to confine or narrow one's activities. Kṛṣṇa is all-pervading. Therefore nothing is independent of Kṛṣṇa, as Kṛṣṇa Himself states in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.4):

*mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ
jagad avyakta-mūrtinā-
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni
na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ*

"By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them." Under the direction of the bona fide spiritual master, one has to make everything favorable for Kṛṣṇa's service. For example, at present we are using a dictaphone. The materialist who invented this machine intended it for businessmen or writers of mundane subject matters. He certainly never thought of using the dictaphone in God's service, but we are using this dictaphone to write Kṛṣṇa conscious literature. Of course, the manufacture of the dictaphone is wholly within the energy of Kṛṣṇa. All the parts of the instrument, including the electronic functions, are made from different combinations and interactions of the five basic types of material energy-namely, *bhūmi*, *jala*, *agni*, *vāyu* and *ākāśa*. The inventor used his brain to make this

complicated machine, and his brain, as well as the ingredients, were supplied by Kṛṣṇa. According to the statement of Kṛṣṇa, *mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni*: "Everything is depending on My energy." Thus the devotee can understand that since nothing is independent of Kṛṣṇa's energy, everything should be dovetailed in His service.

Endeavor executed with intelligence in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is called *utsāha*, or enthusiasm. The devotees find the correct means by which everything can be utilized in the service of the Lord (*nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate*). The execution of devotional service is not a matter of idle meditation but practical action in the foreground of spiritual life.

These activities must be executed with patience. One should not be impatient in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Indeed, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was started single-handedly, and in the beginning there was no response, but because we continued to execute our devotional activities with patience, people gradually began to understand the importance of this movement, and now they are eagerly participating. One should not be impatient in discharging devotional service, but should take instructions from the spiritual master and execute them with patience, depending on the mercy of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa. The successful execution of Kṛṣṇa conscious activities requires both patience and confidence. A newly married girl naturally expects offspring from her husband, but she cannot expect to have them immediately after marriage. Of course, as soon as she is married she can attempt to get a child, but she must surrender to her husband, confident that her child will develop and be born in due time. Similarly, in devotional service surrender means that one has to become confident. The devotee thinks, *avaśya rakṣibe kṛṣṇa*: "Kṛṣṇa will surely protect me and give me help for the successful execution of devotional service." This is called confidence.

As already explained, one should not be idle but should be very enthusiastic about executing the regulative principles-*tat-tat-karma-pravartana*. Neglect of the regulative principles will destroy devotional service. In this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement there are

four basic regulative principles, forbidding illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling and intoxication. A devotee must be very enthusiastic about following these principles. If he becomes slack in following any of them, his progress will certainly be checked. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī therefore recommends, *tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt*: "One must strictly follow the regulative principles of *vaidhī bhakti*." In addition to these four prohibitions (*yama*), there are positive regulative principles (*niyama*), such as the daily chanting of sixteen rounds on *japa-mālā* beads. These regulative activities must be faithfully performed with enthusiasm. This is called *tat-tat-karma-pravartana*, or varied engagement in devotional service.

Furthermore, in order to be successful in devotional service one must give up the association of undesirable people. This includes *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, *yogīs* and other nondevotees. Once Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was asked by one of His householder devotees about the general principles of Vaiṣṇavism, as well as the general routine activities of the Vaiṣṇava, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu immediately replied, *asat-saṅga-tyāga,-ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra*: "Characteristically, a Vaiṣṇava is one who gives up the association of worldly people, or nondevotees." Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has therefore recommended, *tāñdera caraṇa sevi bhakta-sane vāsa*: one has to live in the company of pure devotees and execute the regulative principles laid down by the previous *ācāryas*, the six Gosvāmīs (namely, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī and Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī). If one lives in the association of devotees, there is little chance of associating with nondevotees. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is opening many centers just to invite people to live in the company of devotees and practice the regulative principles of spiritual life.

Devotional service means transcendental activities. On the transcendental platform there is no contamination by the three modes of material nature. This is called *viśuddha-sat-tva*, the platform of pure goodness, or goodness free from contamination by the qualities of passion and ignorance. In this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we require everyone to rise early in the morning, by four A.M., and attend *maṅgala-ārati*, or

morning worship, then read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, perform *kīrtana*, and so forth. Thus we hold continuous activities in devotional service twenty-four hours daily. This is called *sato vṛtti*, or following in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas* who expertly filled every moment of time with Kṛṣṇa conscious activities.

If one strictly follows the advice given in this verse by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī-namely, being enthusiastic, being confident, being patient, giving up the association of unwanted persons, following the regulative principles and remaining in the association of devotees-one is sure to advance in devotional service. In this regard Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura remarks that the cultivation of knowledge by philosophical speculation, the collection of mundane opulence by the advancement of fruitive activities, and the desire for *yoga-siddhis*, material perfections, are all contrary to the principles of devotional service. One has to become thoroughly callous to such nonpermanent activities and turn his intention instead to the regulative principles of devotional service. According to *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.69):

*yā niśā sarva-bhūtānām
tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni
sā niśā paśyato muneh*

"What is night for all beings is the time of awakening for the self-controlled; and the time of awakening for all beings is night for the introspective sage."

Engagement in the devotional service of the Lord is the life and soul of the living entity. It is the desired goal and supreme perfection of human life. One has to become confident about this, and one also has to be confident that all activities other than devotional service-such as mental speculation, fruitive work or mystic endeavor-will never yield any enduring benefit. Complete confidence in the path of devotional service will enable one to attain his desired goal, but attempting to follow other paths will only succeed in making one restless. In the Seventh Canto of the

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is stated: "One must be calmly convinced that those who have given up devotional service to engage in severe austerities for other purposes are not purified in their minds, despite their advanced austerities, because they have no information of the transcendental loving service of the Lord."

It is further stated in the Seventh Canto: "Although mental speculators and fruitive actors may perform great austerities and penances, they still fall down because they do not have information about the lotus feet of the Lord." The devotees of the Lord, however, never fall down. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.31), the Supreme Personality of Godhead assures Arjuna, *kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*: "O son of Kuntī, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes."

Again in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.40) Kṛṣṇa says:

*nehābhikrama-nāśo 'sti
pratyavāyo na vidyate
svalpam apy asya dharmasya
trāyate mahato bhayāt*

"In this endeavor there is no loss or diminution, and a little advancement on this path can protect one from the most dangerous type of fear."

Devotional service is so pure and perfect that once having begun, one is forcibly dragged to ultimate success. Sometimes a person will give up his ordinary material engagements and out of sentiment take shelter of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord and thus begin the preliminary execution of devotional service. Even if such an immature devotee falls down, there is no loss on his part. On the other hand, what is the gain of one who executes the prescribed duties according to his *varṇa* and *āśrama* but does not take to devotional service? Although a fallen devotee may take his next birth in a low family, his devotional service will nonetheless resume from where it left off. Devotional service is *ahaituky apratihātā*; it is not the effect of any mundane cause, nor can it be terminated by any mundane cause or permanently curtailed by any material interruption. Therefore a devotee should be confident about his engagement and should not be very

interested in the activities of the *karmīs*, *jñānīs* and *yogīs*.

There are certainly many good qualities among fruitive actors, philosophical speculators and mystic *yogīs*, but all good qualities automatically develop in the character of a devotee. No extraneous endeavor is needed. As confirmed by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.18.12), all the good qualities of the demigods manifest progressively in one who has developed pure devotional service. Because a devotee is not interested in any material activity, he does not become materially contaminated. He is immediately situated on the platform of transcendental life. However, one who engages in mundane activity-be he a so-called *jñānī*, *yogī*, *karmī*, philanthropist, nationalist, or whatever-cannot attain the higher stage of *mahātmā*. He remains a *durātmā*, or cripple-minded person. According to *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.13):

*mahātmānas tu mām pārtha
daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso
jñātvā bhūtādim avyayam*

"O son of Pṛthā, those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible."

Since all the devotees of the Lord are under the protection of His supreme potency, they should not deviate from the path of devotional service and take to the path of the *karmī*, *jñānī* or *yogī*. This is called *utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt*, enthusiastically executing the regulative activities of devotional service with patience and confidence. In this way one can advance in devotional service without hindrance.

2 (Popup - Popup)

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।

आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ ८ ॥
 इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहङ्कार एव च ।
 जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ ९ ॥
 असक्तिरनभिष्प्राः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।
 नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ १० ॥
 मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
 विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ ११ ॥
 अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।
 एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ १२ ॥

amānitvam adambhitvam
ahimsā kṣāntir ārjavam
ācāryopāsanam śaucam
sthairyam ātma-vinigrahaḥ

indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam
anahaṅkāra eva ca
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-
duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam

asaktir anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ
putra-dāra-gṛhādiṣu
nityam ca sama-cittatvam
iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu

mayi cānanya-yogena
bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī
vivikta-deśa-sevitvam
aratir jana-saṁsadi

adhyātma-jñāna-nityatvaṃ
tattva-jñānārtha-darśanam
etaj jñānam iti proktam
ajñānam yad ato 'nyathā

SYNONYMS

amānitvam—humility; *adambhitvam*—pridelessness; *ahiṃsā*—nonviolence; *kṣāntiḥ*—tolerance; *ārjavam*—simplicity; *ācārya-upāsanam*—approaching a bona fide spiritual master; *śaucam*—cleanliness; *sthairyam*—steadfastness; *ātma-vinigrahaḥ*—self-control; *indriya-artheṣu*—in the matter of the senses; *vairāgyam*—renunciation; *anahaṅkāraḥ*—being without false egoism; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—also; *janma*—of birth; *mṛtyu*—death; *jarā*—old age; *vyādhi*—and disease; *duḥkha*—of the distress; *doṣa*—the fault; *anudarśanam*—observing; *asaktiḥ*—being without attachment; *anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ*—being without association; *putra*—for son; *dāra*—wife; *gṛha-ādiṣu*—home, etc.; *nityam*—constant; *ca*—also; *sama-cittatvam*—equilibrium; *iṣṭa*—the desirable; *aniṣṭa*—and undesirable; *upapattiṣu*—having obtained; *mayi*—unto Me; *ca*—also; *ananya-yogena*—by unalloyed devotional service; *bhaktiḥ*—devotion; *avyabhicāriṇī*—without any break; *vivikta*—to solitary; *deśa*—places; *sevitvam*—aspiring; *aratiḥ*—being without attachment; *jana-saṃsadi*—to people in general; *adhyātma*—pertaining to the self; *jñāna*—in knowledge; *nityatvam*—constancy; *tattva-jñāna*—of knowledge of the truth; *artha*—for the object; *darśanam*—philosophy; *etat*—all this; *jñānam*—knowledge; *iti*—thus; *proktam*—declared; *ajñānam*—ignorance; *yat*—that which; *ataḥ*—from this; *anyathā*—other.

TRANSLATION

Humility; pridelessness; nonviolence; tolerance; simplicity; approaching a bona fide spiritual master; cleanliness; steadiness; self-control; renunciation of the objects of sense gratification; absence of false ego; the perception of

the evil of birth, death, old age and disease; detachment; freedom from entanglement with children, wife, home and the rest; even-mindedness amid pleasant and unpleasant events; constant and unalloyed devotion to Me; aspiring to live in a solitary place; detachment from the general mass of people; accepting the importance of self-realization; and philosophical search for the Absolute Truth—all these I declare to be knowledge, and besides this whatever there may be is ignorance.

PURPORT

This process of knowledge is sometimes misunderstood by less intelligent men as being the interaction of the field of activity. But actually this is the real process of knowledge. If one accepts this process, then the possibility of approaching the Absolute Truth exists. This is not the interaction of the twenty-four elements, as described before. This is actually the means to get out of the entanglement of those elements. The embodied soul is entrapped by the body, which is a casing made of the twenty-four elements, and the process of knowledge as described here is the means to get out of it. Of all the descriptions of the process of knowledge, the most important point is described in the first line of the eleventh verse. *Mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī*: the process of knowledge terminates in unalloyed devotional service to the Lord. So if one does not approach, or is not able to approach, the transcendental service of the Lord, then the other nineteen items are of no particular value. But if one takes to devotional service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the other nineteen items automatically develop within him. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.18.12), *yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ*. All the good qualities of knowledge develop in one who has attained the stage of devotional service. The principle of accepting a spiritual master, as mentioned in the eighth verse, is essential. Even for one who takes to devotional service, it is most important. Transcendental life begins when one accepts a bona fide spiritual master. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, clearly states here that this process of knowledge is the actual path. Anything speculated beyond this is nonsense.

As for the knowledge outlined here, the items may be analyzed as follows. Humility means that one should not be anxious to have the satisfaction of being honored by others. The material conception of life makes us very eager to receive honor from others, but from the point of view of a man in perfect knowledge—who knows that he is not this body—anything, honor or dishonor, pertaining to this body is useless. One should not be hankering after this material deception. People are very anxious to be famous for their religion, and consequently sometimes it is found that without understanding the principles of religion one enters into some group which is not actually following religious principles and then wants to advertise himself as a religious mentor. As for actual advancement in spiritual science, one should have a test to see how far he is progressing. He can judge by these items.

Nonviolence is generally taken to mean not killing or destroying the body, but actually nonviolence means not to put others into distress. People in general are trapped by ignorance in the material concept of life, and they perpetually suffer material pains. So unless one elevates people to spiritual knowledge, one is practicing violence. One should try his best to distribute real knowledge to the people, so that they may become enlightened and leave this material entanglement. That is nonviolence.

Tolerance means that one should be practiced to bear insult and dishonor from others. If one is engaged in the advancement of spiritual knowledge, there will be so many insults and much dishonor from others. This is expected because material nature is so constituted. Even a boy like Prahlāda, who, only five years old, was engaged in the cultivation of spiritual knowledge, was endangered when his father became antagonistic to his devotion. The father tried to kill him in so many ways, but Prahlāda tolerated him. So there may be many impediments to making advancement in spiritual knowledge, but we should be tolerant and continue our progress with determination.

Simplicity means that without diplomacy one should be so straightforward that he can disclose the real truth even to an enemy. As for acceptance of the spiritual master, that is essential, because without the

instruction of a bona fide spiritual master one cannot progress in the spiritual science. One should approach the spiritual master with all humility and offer him all services so that he will be pleased to bestow his blessings upon the disciple. Because a bona fide spiritual master is a representative of Kṛṣṇa, if he bestows any blessings upon his disciple, that will make the disciple immediately advanced without the disciple's following the regulative principles. Or, the regulative principles will be easier for one who has served the spiritual master without reservation.

Cleanliness is essential for making advancement in spiritual life. There are two kinds of cleanliness: external and internal. External cleanliness means taking a bath, but for internal cleanliness one has to think of Kṛṣṇa always and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This process cleans the accumulated dust of past *karma* from the mind.

Steadiness means that one should be very determined to make progress in spiritual life. Without such determination, one cannot make tangible progress. And self-control means that one should not accept anything which is detrimental to the path of spiritual progress. One should become accustomed to this and reject anything which is against the path of spiritual progress. This is real renunciation. The senses are so strong that they are always anxious to have sense gratification. One should not cater to these demands, which are not necessary. The senses should only be gratified to keep the body fit so that one can discharge his duty in advancing in spiritual life. The most important and uncontrollable sense is the tongue. If one can control the tongue, then there is every possibility of controlling the other senses. The function of the tongue is to taste and to vibrate. Therefore, by systematic regulation, the tongue should always be engaged in tasting the remnants of foodstuffs offered to Kṛṣṇa and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. As far as the eyes are concerned, they should not be allowed to see anything but the beautiful form of Kṛṣṇa. That will control the eyes. Similarly, the ears should be engaged in hearing about Kṛṣṇa and the nose in smelling the flowers offered to Kṛṣṇa. This is the process of devotional service, and it is understood here that *Bhagavad-gītā* is simply expounding

the science of devotional service. Devotional service is the main and sole objective. Unintelligent commentators on the *Bhagavad-gītā* try to divert the mind of the reader to other subjects, but there is no other subject in *Bhagavad-gītā* than devotional service.

False ego means accepting this body as oneself. When one understands that he is not his body and is spirit soul, he comes to his real ego. Ego is there. False ego is condemned, but not real ego. In the Vedic literature (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.10) it is said, *aham brahmāsmi*: I am Brahman, I am spirit. This "I am," the sense of self, also exists in the liberated stage of self-realization. This sense of "I am" is ego, but when the sense of "I am" is applied to this false body it is false ego. When the sense of self is applied to reality, that is real ego. There are some philosophers who say we should give up our ego, but we cannot give up our ego, because ego means identity. We ought, of course, to give up the false identification with the body.

One should try to understand the distress of accepting birth, death, old age and disease. There are descriptions in various Vedic literatures of birth. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the world of the unborn, the child's stay in the womb of the mother, its suffering, etc., are all very graphically described. It should be thoroughly understood that birth is distressful. Because we forget how much distress we have suffered within the womb of the mother, we do not make any solution to the repetition of birth and death. Similarly at the time of death there are all kinds of sufferings, and they are also mentioned in the authoritative scriptures. These should be discussed. And as far as disease and old age are concerned, everyone gets practical experience. No one wants to be diseased, and no one wants to become old, but there is no avoiding these. Unless we have a pessimistic view of this material life, considering the distresses of birth, death, old age and disease, there is no impetus for our making advancement in spiritual life.

As for detachment from children, wife and home, it is not meant that one should have no feeling for these. They are natural objects of affection. But when they are not favorable to spiritual progress, then one should not be attached to them. The best process for making the home pleasant is

Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If one is in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can make his home very happy, because this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very easy. One need only chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, accept the remnants of foodstuffs offered to Kṛṣṇa, have some discussion on books like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and engage oneself in Deity worship. These four things will make one happy. One should train the members of his family in this way. The family members can sit down morning and evening and chant together Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. If one can mold his family life in this way to develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness, following these four principles, then there is no need to change from family life to renounced life. But if it is not congenial, not favorable for spiritual advancement, then family life should be abandoned. One must sacrifice everything to realize or serve Kṛṣṇa, just as Arjuna did. Arjuna did not want to kill his family members, but when he understood that these family members were impediments to his Kṛṣṇa realization, he accepted the instruction of Kṛṣṇa and fought and killed them. In all cases, one should be detached from the happiness and distress of family life, because in this world one can never be fully happy or fully miserable.

Happiness and distress are concomitant factors of material life. One should learn to tolerate, as advised in *Bhagavad-gītā*. One can never restrict the coming and going of happiness and distress, so one should be detached from the materialistic way of life and be automatically equipoised in both cases. Generally, when we get something desirable we are very happy, and when we get something undesirable we are distressed. But if we are actually in the spiritual position these things will not agitate us. To reach that stage, we have to practice unbreakable devotional service. Devotional service to Kṛṣṇa without deviation means engaging oneself in the nine processes of devotional service—chanting, hearing, worshiping, offering respect, etc.—as described in the last verse of the Ninth Chapter. That process should be followed.

Naturally, when one is adapted to the spiritual way of life, he will not

want to mix with materialistic men. That would go against his grain. One may test himself by seeing how far he is inclined to live in a solitary place, without unwanted association. Naturally a devotee has no taste for unnecessary sporting or cinema-going or enjoying some social function, because he understands that these are simply a waste of time. There are many research scholars and philosophers who study sex life or some other subject, but according to *Bhagavad-gītā* such research work and philosophical speculation have no value. That is more or less nonsensical. According to *Bhagavad-gītā*, one should make research, by philosophical discretion, into the nature of the soul. One should make research to understand the self. That is recommended here.

As far as self-realization is concerned, it is clearly stated here that *bhakti-yoga* is especially practical. As soon as there is a question of devotion, one must consider the relationship between the Supersoul and the individual soul. The individual soul and the Supersoul cannot be one, at least not in the *bhakti* conception, the devotional conception of life. This service of the individual soul to the Supreme Soul is eternal, *nityam*, as it is clearly stated. So *bhakti*, or devotional service, is eternal. One should be established in that philosophical conviction.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11) this is explained. *Vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam*. "Those who are actually knowers of the Absolute Truth know that the Self is realized in three different phases, as Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān." Bhagavān is the last word in the realization of the Absolute Truth; therefore one should reach up to that platform of understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead and thus engage in the devotional service of the Lord. That is the perfection of knowledge.

Beginning from practicing humility up to the point of realization of the Supreme Truth, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, this process is just like a staircase beginning from the ground floor and going up to the top floor. Now on this staircase there are so many people who have reached the first floor, the second or the third floor, etc., but unless one reaches the top floor, which is the understanding of Kṛṣṇa, he is at a lower stage of

knowledge. If anyone wants to compete with God and at the same time make advancement in spiritual knowledge, he will be frustrated. It is clearly stated that without humility, understanding is not truly possible. To think oneself God is most puffed up. Although the living entity is always being kicked by the stringent laws of material nature, he still thinks, "I am God" because of ignorance. The beginning of knowledge, therefore, is *amānitva*, humility. One should be humble and know that he is subordinate to the Supreme Lord. Due to rebellion against the Supreme Lord, one becomes subordinate to material nature. One must know and be convinced of this truth.