

THE Kṛ̣ṣṇa | A CONSCIOUSNESS HANDBOOK

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MISSION

Kṛ̣ṣṇa consciousness is the eternal occupational duty of the soul. It is the spirit soul, the living entity within the body, which is the life and consciousness of the body. That eternal soul has an eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord, Kṛ̣ṣṇa, as His eternal servant.

Kṛ̣ṣṇa consciousness was delivered to the Western world in 1966 by the Lord's most perfect servitor, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. He has taught us all aspects of devotional life, how to chant, hear, remember, worship, pray, and serve the Lord with love and devotion. The philosophy of Kṛ̣ṣṇa consciousness can nicely be found in the books of Kṛ̣ṣṇa Prabhupāda, but the practical instructions on how to live are known only by those who are trained by him. In order to help others gain this knowledge, I thought it best to write it down as concisely as possible in a small handbook, so that devotees and prospective devotees living in far off corners of the earth can benefit from these instructions. In this handbook we will speak about the spiritual master and the *paramparā*, Kṛ̣ṣṇa Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of this movement, Vaiṣṇava and Vaiṣṇava etiquette, the lifestyle of the devotees, the schedule of the day, chanting *japa*, *kīrtana*, and worshipping the Lord, cleanliness, the kitchen, the calendar, and even how to take rest.

It is essential, however, that one understand the overall mission of Kṛ̣ṣṇa Prabhupāda. It can be described in the following manner.

To:

- 1) print all of his books in all the languages of the world.
- 2) distribute those books widely without being miserly.

- 3) create Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees of the Lord who will similarly engage in the *saṅkīrtana* movement.
- 4) open Kṛṣṇa conscious centers of learning and worship and invite all to come and participate in our morning and evening programs and take *prasādam*.
- 5) make *kīrtana* and distribute *prasādam* on a mass scale.
- 6) preach at every opportunity, person to person, door to door, on the media, and through one's personal example.
- 7) establish Kṛṣṇa conscious farm communities which form the economic basis of life.
- 8) reestablish the sublime *varṣā rama* institution.
- 9) defeat rascals such as scientists, or bogus philosophers with strong preaching arguments and programs.

One should make it his life's mission to fulfill one or many of these goals for the pleasure of his spiritual master. If one pleases the spiritual master by accomplishing this mission, then he will surely be recognized by Kṛṣṇa, and, without a doubt, go right back to Godhead at the end of this life.

SPIRITUAL MASTER AND DISCIPLES

The most important aspect of spiritual life is the relationship between the disciple and the spiritual master. It is sacred and sacrosanct, and should never be tampered with by any intelligent person. The spiritual master is like the eternal father who is guiding one through the dangers of the material existence and bringing one gradually into the spiritual world.

The relationship between disciple and spiritual master begins when one receives the mercy of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. It is said that only the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa can bless one with the seed of devotional service, otherwise, without their grace, one cannot make any advancement.

When a fortunate living entity finally comes in contact with a spiritual master, and actually accepts him in his heart as his spiritual guide, then the process of initiation has already begun. Real initiation takes place in the heart of the devotee. One may take initiation formally by receiving a spiritual name and beads chanted on by the spiritual master, but may not be actually a disciple in heart. It is also possible that one has not yet been formally accepted for initiation, but has already accepted the spiritual master as his heart and soul. This acceptance is what counts.

Formal initiation is still to be considered as a necessity, however, and one who is serious about his spiritual life should not neglect to accept it.

At the time of initiation one becomes spiritualized, and thus he is given a new spiritual name as his former material identity is finished. The new names always end with *dāsa*, or *dās*, meaning the servant of the Lord. Thus we are all of the same family, the servants of the Lord.

One may only receive first and second initiations from the spiritual master personally or through letter. Unauthorized initiations are meaningless. Śrī Jānaka Prabhupāda spoke many times that initiation is to be considered as a formality, like the acceptance letter of a University, it is not so important compared to what is learned in the University.

Therefore the disciple should not be troubled over this issue. If one is regularly chanting the Maha Mantra, cooking and offering nice Kṛṣṇa Prasadam, following the four rules and doing one's best to associate with the devotees and worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa as one's means allow, then one's path is most assured.

The disciple should follow the spiritual master with his heart and soul, considering himself the eternal servant of his spiritual master. He should make the mission of his spiritual master as his mission and work hard to make it successful. He should give up all personal considerations in this

regard and act only out of love and respect to his *guru*. One should never become casual or informal with his spiritual master, a danger when one has much intimate association with him (familiarity breeds contempt), but should consider him the representative of Kṛṣṇa, worthy of all respect. In fact, the disciple can never be the friend of the spiritual master, although the *guru* is definitely one's best friend. One should worship his spiritual master with awe and reverence, not casually.

Whenever entering or leaving the temple, upon waking in the morning, at rest time in the evening, and especially, whenever seeing the spiritual master personally, one should bow down to him. If the spiritual master enters the room, one must immediately bow down, and similarly when he leaves.

There is no other person, besides Kṛṣṇa Himself, whom we worship as much as our spiritual master. However, there is an injunction that devotees should bow down to each other when there is a meeting after a long time, or if there has been some harsh words and forgiveness is desired. Furthermore, upon seeing a *sannyāsī*, a member of the renounced order of life who no longer has any attachment to family life, and thus is honored by the title *svāmī* or *gosvāmī* (controller of the senses), he should bow down once upon seeing him for the first time that day, otherwise he should fast that day. But besides this special instance, or when we are seeking forgiveness for some offenses, we do not bow down before anyone other than our spiritual master.

Neither should one bow down to a Godbrother who is not returning the obeisances. To accept obeisances also means to accept the sinful reactions of the person offering them, and this position is reserved solely for the spiritual master. Furthermore, accepting service from one's Godbrothers is also a way to fall down from his position. One should want to be the servant, never the served. Although the spiritual master is served by his disciples, that is different since he is accepting that service on behalf of Kṛṣṇa. No one else can do that.

If one commits offenses at the lotus feet of his spiritual master, Kṛṣṇa does not forgive that person. He must offer his head at the lotus feet of his spiritual master and pray for forgiveness of his foolishness, and if it is received, then Kṛṣṇa will relieve him of the results of this offense.

Guruaparādhā, offense to the spiritual master, is worse than death, it will cause one to suffer for many lifetimes unless it is immediately rectified.

It is certainly to be noted that bowing down to other Vaiṣṇavas is a very exalted activity. The most advanced devotees humbly offer their respects to all. But sometimes unauthorized persons take advantage of a Vaiṣṇava's humility and induce others to bow down to him, although he is not at all worthy of such respect. This is a symptom of material desire, seeking fame, profit, and distinction, the three subtle forms of sex desire. Therefore we have explained the principle of paying obeisances in the above manner.

The most perfect Vaiṣṇava, and spiritual master is Śrīla Prabhupāda. His example and his teachings form the most perfect body of instructions for all Vaiṣṇavas for generations to come. Therefore, next we will briefly describe his glories for the sake of all.

HIS DIVINE GRACE A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, is the Founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

The term founder-*ācārya*, refers to one who has started a new branch of the Caitanya tree, which represents the eternal *sāṅkṛtana* movement of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He appeared almost 500 years ago in Bengal, India, to revive this process of developing love of Godhead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda will eternally be the one and only Founder-*ācārya* of this movement. He revived the mission of Lord Caitanya when it had become almost lost due to the influence of Kali-yuga, and he established the mission of the Lord in the Western world. After having brought hundreds of

Western boys and girls under the banner of Lord Caitanya, he then brought it back to the Eastern world for the benefit of all.

Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared on this planet the day after Janmāṣṭamī in the year 1896. We celebrate this same day every year with a *vyāsa-pūjā* ceremony, (wherein we present Śrīla Prabhupāda with a *vyāsa-pūjā* book filled with statements glorifying him). Śrīla Prabhupāda was ordered by his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatībhāṅura, to spread this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to the English speaking world. Śrīla Prabhupāda very carefully prepared himself to accomplish this mission by producing three wonderful books, the First Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in English. His producing of these books alone and at such an advanced age was something of a miracle.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had no economic supporters in his early days of preaching. He was alone without any helpers. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are English translations and commentaries of ancient Sanskrit and Bengali texts. It is truly remarkable how he was able to translate from one foreign language to another. He had to type out the manuscripts, find a typesetter, proofread the typesetting (hand set lead type), find and buy paper, as well as all the other materials for producing a book, find a printer who would print even though the payments were not coming very regularly, manage the whole affair from beginning to end while simultaneously writing more books, writing and producing a newspaper, and selling that newspaper person to person in order to make enough income to pay for the book production. All of this alone in the harsh Delhi climate, when he was over 65 years of age.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was so dedicated to the mission of his spiritual master that at that old age, when no one begins a totally new chapter of his life, he fearlessly embarked on the most difficult of all engagements: the bringing of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the Western world. But such a miracle did happen in 1965 when Śrīla Prabhupāda boarded a freighter bound for New York (given free passage by the owner of the line) with no money, no connections, simply a box of books. But again, out of sheer determination and dedication to please Kṛṣṇa and his spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda enthusiastically proceeded to purely preach the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in such a nice fashion, full of love and warmth, that even the fallen and sinful Westerners, formerly deeply attached to sinful life, took up the process of chanting the holy name of God and following the four regulative principles.

Sometimes Śrīla Prabhupāda would comment that this was his "mystic power." He captured the hearts of thousands of young people and won them over to the side of Kṛṣṇa again. While performing this mystic feat of attracting so many people to surrender to the lotus feet of the Lord, he simultaneously went on producing his books. In ten short years, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, *The Nectar of Devotion*, *The Kṛṣṇa* book (3 vols.), *Śrīmad-Ītānīya*, *The Nectar of Instruction*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in 33 vols. and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in 17 vols. as well as hundreds of smaller books, magazine articles, thousands of letters, and delivered thousands of lectures while traveling non-stop around the world, circling the globe over 12 times. Such endeavors are not even possible for the healthiest young man, what to speak of one who was well into his late 70's.

Who can understand what a great soul Śrīla Prabhupāda is? Only by the causeless mercy of the Lord is it possible for one to actually understand the glories of the Lord's most perfect representative, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda also inspired the creation of many temples all over the world which became places of refuge for persons suffering due to being artificially separated from Kṛṣṇa. He further started elaborate Deity worship on a very high standard, a *gurukula* system for training up first class men, Kṛṣṇa conscious farm communities for creating the economic basis of life, the Bhaktivedanta Institute, for revealing to the world that "science was already dead, it is a question of time before the people realize it," Ratha-yātrā festivals according to the ancient tradition, *prasādam* distribution and Sunday feasts where enormous quantities of free food are given for the purification of the tongue and heart, diorama museums to bring the instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā* directly before one's eyes in visual form, large and beautiful temples made with great struggle and determination in the most special places in India, and established the preaching mission all around the world in a tight belt of Kṛṣṇa consciousness starting from Śrīdhāma Mayāpur, the home of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness

movement and birthplace of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The crowning achievement of ®r..Ja Prabhupāda, according to his own admission, is the creation of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, which publish his books by the millions in over 40 different languages of the world. This institution is without a doubt the most significant feature of this movement since it brings the words of ®r..Ja Prabhupāda directly into everyone's home.

Although ®r..Ja Prabhupāda has left us physically, he is still with us in a very real way in his writings. In the absolute sense, one can associate with someone through his words which are nondifferent from himself. The books of ®r..Ja Prabhupāda are a vast storehouse of spiritual nectar, and all can associate with him directly through his books. ®r..Ja Prabhupāda called his purports his emotional ecstasies, and we may get a taste of the ecstasy of pure devotion by carefully studying them. ®r..Ja Prabhupāda will ever remain the most important teacher for all devotees to come, since his books establish the philosophical basis of Kṛṣṇa consciousness on this planet.

®r..Ja Prabhupāda left this planet on November 14th, 1977 in his home, Vṇḍāvana, the abode of the Supreme Lord manifested here in this material world. That day was a day of devastation for his loving devotees who were fearing existence in the material world without the shade of his lotus feet. Somehow they have managed to continue his mission by working under the direction of the Governing Body Commission of ISKCON which was created personally by ®r..Ja Prabhupāda. He said just before he left this world, "your love for me will be tested by how much you cooperate with each other."

®r..Ja Prabhupāda's legacy was vast, his mission glorious, and his books the basis of spiritual life for all. We can only thank Kṛṣṇa again and again that He has so kindly sent ®r..Ja Prabhupāda to save us from the darkest pits of illusion and ignorance. May ®r..Ja Prabhupāda be forever glorified in this world so long as there is a single devotee left to walk this planet.

BRAHMĀ-MADHVA-GAUṢṬYA SAMPRADĀYA

We are members of the Brahmā-Madhva-GauṣṬya Sampradāya. A *sampradāya* is a school of spiritually philosophical knowledge which is handed down in a disciplic succession. A disciplic succession is the perfect handing over of transcendental knowledge, without change, down through time, from a spiritual master to his disciple. The name of our *sampradāya* implies that the disciplic succession is traced down from Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original spiritual master of all disciplic successions, to Lord Brahmā, then down through time to Madhvācārya (although we GauṣṬya Vaiṣṇavas would rather claim the "Madhva" to refer to Madhavendra Purāṇa) and ultimately to Lord Caitanya Himself. Factually, we are the followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He is God Himself, and where He appears the disciplic succession is renewed. But the Lord chose to appear in and call Himself a follower of this line, so we continue in this way following in His lotus footsteps.

We strive to be Vaiṣṇavas. This means that we are dedicated servants of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. It is not possible to be Kṛṣṇa's devotee directly. Kṛṣṇa states in the *Padma Purāṇa* to Arjuna, "My dear Arjuna, one who says that he is My devotee is not My devotee. But he who says that he is the devotee of My devotee, he is My devotee." Therefore we eagerly accept to serve a bona fide spiritual master who comes in the line of the Vaiṣṇava disciplic succession.

A disciplic succession is an unbroken line of spiritual masters who act as the guardians of the spiritual potency. They have each heard in turn from their own spiritual masters and have become so perfected in that knowledge that they have become spiritual masters themselves. They are generally recognized and appointed to these posts by their spiritual masters, and because of such an authorization, they have the potency to carry the "mace," or the symbol of the succession. One cannot become the representative of the succession by mere public opinion polls or democratic processes, it is something which is given by the Lord Himself through the eternal chain of masters to disciples.

There are four Vaiṣṇava disciplic successions called the Brahmā Sampradāya (coming from Lord Brahmā), the Rudra Sampradāya (from Lord iva), the R... Sampradāya (from Lakṣmījī), and the Kumāra Sampradāya (from the four Kumāras). These exalted personalities are the original spiritual masters of their line, although Kṛṣṇa Himself is the *ādi-guru*, or the original spiritual master of all.

Our disciplic succession is descending according to the line which is listed at the beginning of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and it is still descending today in the form of the spiritual masters appointed by 1. Prabhupāda prior to his departure from this world in November of 1977.

Without receiving knowledge and *mantras* from a bona fide disciplic succession, that *mantra* will have no value.

CHANTING OF THE HARE KṛṣṇA MANTRA

Chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and other spiritual *mantras*, is the perfection of spiritual processes. The holy name of the Lord is the touchstone which fulfills all spiritual desires. Therefore 1. Prabhupāda instituted within this ISKCON movement a minimum of chanting sixteen rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* each day without fail. He mentioned that his spiritual master, 1. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī ṭhākura, would consider a person *patita*, or “fallen,” if he did not chant sixty-four rounds a day. But although we might all be considered *patita*, or fallen, by that estimation, we at least have been saved by the mercy of 1. Prabhupāda who set the standard for all devotees all over the world at sixteen rounds a day which is attainable by all without difficulty.

One should chant on his *japa* beads. The beads should have 108 beads and be strung together on a strong string. A knot should be tied between each bead. Further instructions on making the beads will appear in the appendix.

There should be a head bead, the 109th, which is larger than the rest and which connects the two ends of the beads. One should chant one *mantra* on one bead and move onto the next bead. He will hold the beads between his middle finger and his thumb while holding his forefinger out through the hole in his bead bag. One should never cross over this head bead, but rather should go back in the direction he just came from to continue his chanting. It is important to use a bead bag otherwise the chanting might become inauspicious, besides, it keeps the beads clean.

One must chant on his beads sixteen rounds a day in order to become qualified for initiation. We generally require that one live in the temple for at least one year, following all the regulative principles and chanting sixteen rounds visibly, before he is recommended for initiation. That may vary from spiritual master to spiritual master. Furthermore, once initiated one must chant sixteen rounds a day for the rest of his life. If one always chants his sixteen rounds a day and follows the four regulative principles, then it is almost certain that he will be able to return home back to Godhead at the end of this life. One who is always engaged in hearing and chanting the holy name of the Lord will certainly remember the Lord at the time of death and transfer himself back to the spiritual kingdom.

One should chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* clearly and distinctly, by moving the mouth and tongue. In other words one should not mumble the *mantra* within his mouth, or say it silently in his head. It is a sound vibration and must be vibrated to have the proper effect. One should be careful to properly pronounce the *mantra* and not change it or slur the words. Sometimes devotees carelessly chant and skip words in the *mantra*, or else they add words or syllables. One has to carefully hear what he is chanting to insure that he will not chant incorrectly.

Chanting of rounds is best done “swiftly.” This is the word that 1. Prabhupāda used to describe the chanting speed. Swiftly means not slow and spaced out, and not super fast and indistinguishable. In time, a perfect round could be chanted by an expert chanter in five minutes. Some people have a hard time chanting a round in seven, but do not worry, that is normal. It depends on the person, but

more than seven and a half minutes per round is an indication that there is some daydreaming going on, and that the chanting is not concentrated. This means that the sixteen rounds should take anywhere from one hour and twenty minutes to two hours. If one is taking longer than that then it would strongly suggest that he is in *māyā* and should be more careful.

Still there are exceptions to that, so if one has trouble chanting swiftly, then it is best to chant before some "expert" for a while and see if improvements can be made.

Never go to sleep at night unless the rounds are fully chanted. Factually the best time to chant is in the early morning hours of the day. The *brāhma-muhūrta* time is the best of all (see section on taking rest), and in any case one should finish all his rounds before 10 A.M. The later one waits the harder it is to chant. The morning hours are the times of the mode of goodness, the afternoon and early evening, the mode of passion, and the night the mode of ignorance. One should chant all his rounds during the time of goodness and avoid chanting later on in the day. Otherwise it will be too hard to concentrate and it will go slowly. If one is sick, or injured, and cannot finish his rounds that day, he should make them up the next day. When one is healthy however, he should never sleep unless he finishes his rounds. If one makes that vow, then there can be no slacking of his spiritual principles and advancement. If one is forced by the nature of his service to perform some activity during the time for chanting, then he can chant in the temple room with great concentration at another time of the day. In any case it should be done as soon as possible.

The beads are to be taken care of very carefully. One should not put them on the floor, neither should he keep them out of his beadbag, except in emergency situations.

One should not sleep on them or chant with dirty hands. Especially one should not bring them into a toilet unless there is a possibility that he will lose them if he does not do so, for instance in a public place. The initiation beads chanted on by the spiritual master are worshipable and one should never lose them. Therefore one should always keep them very carefully. If they are lost however, then one can chant on other beads until the time they can be replaced, if it is at all possible.

The following is a purport on the Hare K Ṣa *mahā-mantra* by ®r. Ja Prabhupāda (taken from the *Vai Śava Song Book*).

The transcendental vibration established by the chanting of Hare K Ṣa, Hare K Ṣa, K Ṣa K Ṣa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the sublime method of reviving our K Ṣa consciousness. As living spiritual souls we are all originally K Ṣa conscious entities, but due to our association with matter from time immemorial, our consciousness is now polluted by the material atmosphere. The material atmosphere, in which we are now living, is called māyā, or illusion. Māyā means "that which is not." And what is this illusion? The illusion is that we are all trying to be lords of material nature, while actually we are under the grip of her stringent laws.

When a servant artificially tries to imitate the all-powerful master, this is called illusion. In this polluted concept of life, we are all trying to exploit the resources of material nature, but actually we are becoming more and more entangled in her complexities. Therefore, although we are engaged in a hard struggle to conquer nature, we are ever more dependent on her. This illusory struggle against material nature can be stopped at once by revival of our K Ṣa consciousness.

K Ṣa consciousness is not an artificial imposition on the mind; this consciousness is the original energy of the living entity. When we hear the transcendental vibration, this consciousness is revived. And this process is recommended for this age by authorities. By practical experience also, one can perceive that by chanting this mahā-mantra, or the Great Chanting for Deliverance, one can at once feel a transcendental ecstasy coming through from the spiritual stratum. And when one is factually on the plane of spiritual understanding — surpassing the stages of senses, mind, and intelligence — one is situated on the transcendental plane. This chanting of Hare K Ṣa, Hare K Ṣa, K Ṣa K Ṣa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is directly enacted from the spiritual platform, and thus this sound vibration surpasses all lower strata of consciousness — namely sensual, mental, and intellectual. There is no need, therefore, to understand the language of the

mantra nor is there any need for mental speculation or any intellectual adjustment for chanting this mahā-mantra. It springs automatically from the spiritual platform, and as such, anyone can take part in the chanting without any previous qualification, and dance in ecstasy. The word Harā is the form of addressing the energy of the Lord, and the words Kṣa and Rāma are forms of addressing the Lord Himself. Both Kṣa and Rāma mean "the supreme pleasure," and Harā is the supreme pleasure energy of the Lord, changed to Hare in the vocative. The supreme pleasure energy of the Lord helps us to reach the Lord.

The material energy, called māyā is also one of the multi-energies of the Lord. And we, the living entities, are also the energy — marginal energy — of the Lord. The living entities are described as superior to material energy. When the superior energy is in contact with the inferior energy, an incompatible situation arises; but when the superior marginal energy is in contact with the superior energy, called Harā, the living entity is established in his happy, normal condition. These three words, namely Hare, Kṣa and Rāma, are the transcendental seeds of the mahā-mantra. The chanting is a spiritual call for the Lord and His internal energy, Harā, to give protection to the conditioned soul. This chanting is exactly like the genuine cry of a child for its mother. Mother Harā helps the devotee achieve the grace of the supreme father, Hari, or Kṣa, and the Lord reveals Himself to the devotee who chants this mantra sincerely.

No other means of spiritual realization, therefore, is as effective in this age as chanting the mahā-mantra: Hare Kṣa, Hare Kṣa, Kṣa Kṣa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Gāyatrī...mantra is chanted by those who have received the Gāyatrī...mantra and brāhmaṣa thread from the spiritual master. Only the spiritual master can give the second initiation and brāhmaṣa thread, and only he can give the spiritual names as well. The Gāyatrī...mantra is not as important as the Hare Kṣa mantra, and is only of great importance in the performance of Deity worship. The mantra itself is useful for purifying the mind. One can just as well go back to Godhead without it, but sometimes it is given when there is opportunity.

KĪRTANA

Kīrtana is one of the most important items in the development of any person's Kṣa consciousness. *Kīrtana* means glorifying the Supreme Lord by chanting His holy names. Although chanting *japa*, the chanting of the holy names privately on one's beads, is also *kīrtana*, the word *kīrtana* specifically indicates a group of persons coming together and chanting the glories of the Lord in some kind of melodious fashion. *Kīrtana* can be done at any time when one wants, but it is also specifically done during the times of the morning and evening programs and midday *āratis*.

During the programs one should chant the *mantras* already specifically mentioned in the section called "programs." These *mantras* were given specifically by Śrīla Prabhupāda for those times and he strictly made sure that there were no speculations in the *kīrtanas*.

In 1974, in Vṇḍāvana, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained to me what he wanted and expected during *kīrtana* and what he didn't want. He listed the *mantras* to be sung, and did not want any others sung. He was not at all pleased when his disciples chanted other *mantras* like "*jaya rādhe, nitāi-gaurāṅga, jaya gurudeva*," or the phrase "*jagad-guru*" which is used by every Māyāvādī...*sannyāsī* in India and thus has become meaningless. This also included the many other *mantras* which are not specifically mentioned as appropriate for the programs.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that this movement followed the example of Lord Caitanya and that these other *mantras* were not instituted by Him. The most important *mantra* is the Hare Kṣa *mahā-mantra* although Prabhupāda liked to have some other songs sung as well, such as "*Hari haraye namaḥ kṣa*," "*Govinda jaya jaya*," the *kṣa kṣa kṣa kṣa kṣa mantra* which is the invocation in the *Kṣa* book, as well as "*Ya omāt...nandana*" and other songs of the Vaiṣa *ācāryas*.

Although singing *bhajan*s is nice for special occasions, the *kṛtana*s should follow the prescribed forms. Prabhupāda wanted the *kṛtana*s to be performed simply with *mṛdaṅga* and *karatālas*, although for *bhajana* performances he would appreciate other instruments such as the harmonium, if played expertly, and the tambura.

The *r...k Śa-caitanya mantra* is to be chanted before each *kṛtana* of Hare K Śa. One should sing it about three times, and then proceed with the chanting of Hare K Śa. Once in V ndāvana, one devotee was chanting this *mantra* over and over again, but Prabhupāda personally stopped him and told him to chant Hare K Śa. I personally received instructions from Śrīla Prabhupāda as early as 1971 on the chanting of the " *r...k Śa-caitanya*" *mantra*. Śrīla Prabhupāda was sitting on his *āsana* in his room, and was speaking to me about the efficacy of this most potent *mantra*. He explained that actually this *mantra* was much more powerful than even the Hare K Śa *mantra*, but because Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave us the Hare K Śa *mantra* to chant, we chant it following in His footsteps. Therefore we limit the chanting of this *mantra* in *kṛtana*.

PROGRAMS AND A REGULATED SCHEDULE

One of the most important items in the devotees' life are the morning and evening programs. These programs are the life and soul of the Vai Śavas since they give us the direct ability to remember the Lord each and every day. Śrīla Prabhupāda insisted that all devotees attend both the morning and evening programs as this was the basic purifying principle which would give great strength and determination. The programs are basically *kṛtana* programs, specifically designed for the various parts of the day. An outline of these programs is as follows.

4 A.M. — rise and shower

4:30 A.M. — have a *māṅgala-ārati* means the auspicious greeting of the Lord in the early morning hours. This consists of offering a basic *ārati* (see Deity worship section of handbook) and chanting the following *mantras*: *Ṛ...Ṛ... Gurva āka* (by Śrīla Vi vanātha Cakravart...ṁhākura), *Ṛ...k Śa-caitanya mantra* and the Hare K Śa *mahā-mantra*. Generally it takes about twenty-five minutes. At the end, one chants the *premadhvani* prayers and then the prayers to Lord N si^ hadeva. When this is finished, one then chants the prayers to Tulas...dev... while offering her *ārati*. After this, all the devotees request the other Vai Śavas to forgive them for all the offenses they committed to each other during the previous day by bowing to each other saying the *mantra*:

vāñcha-kalpatarubhya ca k pā-sindhubhya eva ca patitānā ^ pāvanebhyo vai Śavebhyo namo nama^

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vai Śava devotees of the Lord. They can fulfill the desires of everyone, just like desire trees, and they are full of compassion for the fallen souls."

about 5:15 A.M. — one begins his chanting of *japa*

7:00 — *guru-pṁjā* for the present spiritual master. One chants the prayers *r...guru-caraŚa-padma*, *r...k Śa-caitanya*, Hare K Śa.

7:15 — Greeting of the Deities (if one has Deities, they are always greeted by the *Govinda* recording) and taking of *caraŚam ta*.

7:20 — Founder-ācārya pṁjā (the *guru-pṁjā* of Śrīla Prabhupāda) chanting the same prayers as at the 7:00 *guru-pṁjā*, ending with the *prema-dhvani*.

7:35 — the person speaking on *Ṛ...mad-Bhāgavatam* that day will sit down and chant the "*jaya-rādhā-mādhava*" song, and say the *premadhvani* at the end. The format for the class is as follows:

a) the leader of the class chants *o ^ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya* three times repetitively.

- b) he then chants each word of the day's verse one at a time and all respond.
- c) he then chants each line of the verse twice with repetition after each line.
- d) he then chants each line once with repetition.
- e) others lead the chanting one at a time and the rest respond (the best method to do this is to write the verse on a blackboard with chalk or on a piece of paper big enough so that all can see).
- f) after the verse has been repeated about 5 times by others, the leader then chants the word by word synonyms with the audience repeating.
- g) he reads the verse and purport, and at the end of the purport he chants the Sanskrit and translation of the verse again.
- h) he then proceeds to give his own realization on the verse according to the version he has heard from his spiritual master or has read in the books of Śrīla Prabhupāda.
- i) at the end of the class he may ask for questions and attempt to answer them if he can.
- j) if there is no one who is qualified to give a class, then all can sit together and read the books out loud until one develops the ability to speak. One who has heard can speak. Speculation is worse than death, for speculators end up in the lowest regions of the universe.

The class generally runs for thirty minutes or so, longer if the speaker is expert and the audience enthusiastic to hear. At the end of the class, if the temple has a cleaning program, which it should, then all engage in cleaning their respective areas. Cleansing the temple is like cleansing the heart, and all can take part in this glorious activity. If every devotee in the temple, whether big or small, takes up this cleaning activity, then the whole temple will become spotless within 20 minutes. This allows all the devotees more time during the day to serve Kṛṣṇa since it frees some from having to clean all day. It also makes the temple atmosphere like Vaikuṇṭha since cleanliness is next to Godliness.

Then breakfast is taken, and after breakfast all take up their respective daily occupational duties and services. Lunch can be taken at whatever time all desire.

All work generally stops at 6:00-6.30 P.M. and all devotees shower and prepare for the evening program. An evening program goes as follows:

- a) make *ārati* for Deities, and *kṛtana* should be the *gaura-ārati* prayer, " *r...kṛt Śa-caitanya*" mantra and Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- b) at the end chant the *prema-dhvani* then the Nitya prayers.
- c) then all sit down to hear *Bhagavad-gītā* class. The procedure is exactly the same as the morning *Bhāgavatam* class, the only difference being the book used.

At the end of class, all generally assemble in the *prasādam* room and take hot milk together while hearing the Kṛṣṇa book. Thus one takes rest in full spiritual consciousness in preparation for another day in the blissful life of the devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

THE KṛṣṇA CONSCIOUS LIFESTYLE AND REAL RENUNCIATION

People often misunderstand the lifestyle of the Kṛṣṇa conscious person. They think that a religious man, a saintly person, should simply stay in the forest somewhere praying, and should have no

contact with the materialistic world. Little do they know, but the forest world of trees, plants, flowers, bugs, beasts, and birds, is also completely materialistic. Anything which is not connected directly to Kṛṣṇa is material. Matter is covered spirit, and therefore one can respiritualize something by connecting it to Kṛṣṇa's service.

We find in this statement the key to understand what is actual renunciation. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person can appreciate that life in the beautiful countryside is certainly thousands of times more wonderful than that in the grimy, dirty city. They know that the city is simply a place full of passion and ignorance. However, they also know that the city is where most of the conditioned souls live nowadays, and therefore they prefer to live in the city amidst the hellish conditions so that they may preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Devotees also work on farms, for without farms there is no possibility of even eating in times of crisis. But so long as there are cities to preach in, devotees will continue to reside there for the sake of saving people from their present hellish life and from having to descend into lower forms, the destination of those who take shelter of the mode of ignorance which is so all-pervasive in the city.

To preach in the city, one requires so many forms of paraphernalia, otherwise the slick, sophisticated city (cubicle) dwellers, who are covered by *māyā*, may not be interested. Therefore we might use all kinds of modern paraphernalia in our preaching work. Vehicles, phones, radio, records, computers, or whatever is available, are used in the service of the Lord to attract the conditioned souls. It is not that one must have these things in order to preach. After all, we will simply utilize whatever is easily available in the society. Whatever the materialists have invented for their sense gratification can be dovetailed in Kṛṣṇa's service by a serious devotee. Ultimately, we require nothing but our sincere desire to serve the Lord, but if facilities are available we take them and utilize them as best we can for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa.

We are also practical. To print books, such as this one, we had to have fully automated computerized typesetting systems, elaborate arrangements for photography, layout, and ultimately printing. These arrangements are not *māyā*, however, they are fully Kṛṣṇa conscious since they are meant for glorifying the Lord through transcendental literature. Therefore we use technology, we do not let it use us by grabbing us by the senses. We use it for Kṛṣṇa, and thus it is perfected.

The ultimate principle is as follows, as stated by [®]Ja R[™]pa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasām ta-sindhu*, one should not renounce material things simply because they are material. Such renunciation is full of ignorance, for one does not understand Who the real owner of everything is.

Nothing is factually ours, and therefore we have factually nothing to renounce. Dry renunciation of a thing simply because it is material is called *phalgu-vairāgya*, or false renunciation. On the other hand, one who accepts everything in the service of the Lord and uses it for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure without being personally attached to it, is factually renounced and his renunciation will bring great spiritual advancement.

Sometimes devotees think that they should fast or starve themselves, or perform other forms of bodily austerities. This may be nice sometimes, like on festival days when it is appropriate, but generally it is a disturbance and is not required. If one is performing great austerity but is not serving Kṛṣṇa then what is the use of this austerity? And if one is engaged fully in Kṛṣṇa's service, then what further austerity need he perform for spiritual advancement? The conclusion is obvious, there is no greater austerity than serving Kṛṣṇa full time, twenty-four hours a day.

For those who are interested to hear about the real forms of austerity, there is a verse in the [®]*mad-Bhāgavatam* which describes this factual austerity (as opposed to simply parching the body without any purpose). The first austerity, and the foremost one, is celibacy, *brahmacarya*. If one is celibate, then he will have an easy time to advance in spiritual life. The next principles come automatically, such as control of the mind and senses by using them only in Kṛṣṇa's service and not for sense

gratification, not eating too much or too little, not sleeping too much or too little, truthfulness, cleanliness, following all the prescribed rules and regulations of devotional service and avoiding the things which should not be done. These are the real principles of austerity.

Austerity of the mind means to always think of Kṛṣṇa, His name, form, pastimes, instructions, paraphernalia, associates, etc. Austerity of the tongue is to always eat Kṛṣṇa *prasādam* and always vibrate the holy name of the Lord and His words, avoiding all nonsense talk. Austerity of the body is to always engage it in the service of the Lord. If one follows these principles, he will quickly attain spiritual peace.

THE FOUR REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES

All devotees in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are bound to follow principles commonly known as the four regulative principles. These principles are meant to free one from the clutches of *māyā* who is constantly pushing one to try and enjoy in this material world. *Māyā* is demanding that we satisfy our material senses and these four principles guarantee that we will not do that in a sinful way outside of Kṛṣṇa's service.

These principles are as follows:

- 1) no eating of meat, fish, eggs, onions, or garlic.
- 2) no intoxication of any kind including spirits, drugs (non-medicinal), tobacco, coffee, tea, or even cacao.
- 3) no illicit sex life outside of marriage (this means simply to produce Kṛṣṇa conscious children and nothing more).
- 4) no gambling or speculation with money.

These principles are essential in order to come to the human platform. Actually one cannot even be counted amongst the human beings unless he follows these principles.

Meat eating, gambling, illicit sex, and intoxication destroy all the good qualities of man. When the good qualities are destroyed, a person can no longer see his spiritual identity. A quote from a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* purport by Śrīla Prabhupāda expands this idea further. "By pride, either artificial or real, the resultant action of austerity is spoiled; by too much affection for female association, cleanliness is spoiled; by too much addiction to intoxication, mercy is spoiled; and by too much lying propaganda, truthfulness is spoiled. The revival of *bhāgavata-dharma* can save human civilization from falling prey to evils of all description."

Kṛṣṇa! A CONSCIOUS ETIQUETTE

There are certain codes of etiquette that are to be generally followed between devotees of different sex and status such as the relationship between men and women, or according to one's social and spiritual status, between husband and wife, mother and father and children (when the parents are devotees and when they are not), between initiated and non-initiated devotees, between second initiated and first, and the devotee and the outside world. We will briefly discuss each.

Generally, men and women do not freely mix in a Kṛṣṇa conscious society. If we consider the *varṣārama* system, we can understand a little more clearly the proper norms of behavior. In the *varṣārama* system, the *āramas* are *brahmacarya*, unmarried celibate students, *gṛhastha*, married householders, *vānaprastha*, unattached householders engaged in purely spiritual activities together, and *sannyāsa*, totally renounced elevated personalities, detached from all family and social

connections. There is no place for unrestricted association with the opposite sex in the *varṣā rama* system, for each *ā rama* has its own standard rules for action which are to be followed by those interested in spiritual advancement.

The *brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs* do not associate with women at all. They do not speak with women or do things with women. However, for the sake of Kṛṣṇa's service, they may speak with a woman within the temple. They might speak like this, "Excuse me Mātāj... (*mātāj*... means mother, one should call all women except his wife, mother, and see them that way, then the desire for sex will decrease), but I need some flowers for the Deity, can you provide them?" This statement reflects the fact that a devotee cannot avoid women completely, especially since they are more than half of the population, and they are also devotees who are engaged in the service of the Lord. As such, they might also be serving in cooperation with the *brahmacārīs*. The rule is therefore, to never associate with, or talk to a woman when it is not directly connected to Kṛṣṇa's service.

A great sage once said that one should not associate with any woman in a solitary place, even the mother or daughter, otherwise there is the possibility of sex life when no one is looking. One might think that this is only possible for a low class man, after all, who would have sex life with his mother or daughter. But no, the *āśtra* says, *vidvāṁ sam api kar ati*, even a greatly learned man can become contaminated by lust. A householder is certainly permitted to associate with his wife. They will normally perform many activities together during the day. However, one who is greatly determined to serve the Lord will never associate with one's own wife with the idea of simply engaging in sense gratification. They will work together for the pleasure of the Lord.

Husband and wife should avoid, at all costs, falling down into illicit sex life. Illicit sex means any sex which is outside of marriage or which is not intended to produce a Kṛṣṇa conscious child. If the husband and wife have this determination, then they can become the most powerful team for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world. People are more attracted to the example of Kṛṣṇa conscious householders than the example of the *sannyāsīs*, since the *sannyāsī* life is so strange and foreign to them. A husband and wife are best meant to preach out of their home, or to make their home a preaching center as a base for the assault on *māyā*.

Sometimes, those whose viewpoint is decidedly materialistic make a big issue out of how Kṛṣṇa consciousness breaks up families. This assertion is completely opposite the truth, as are most negative assertions.

A devotee is not at all inimical to his family, in fact, almost without exception, a devotee is eager to bring his family closer and closer to Kṛṣṇa. A devotee is kind and merciful, certainly he will not put away those qualities when dealing with his dearest parents. But sometimes materialists are envious, and they cannot stand to see a parent also becoming interested in the spiritual processes of the children, and therefore they try to poison that relationship however they can. They write or call the parents before they have a proper chance to get to know the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Society, and they poison their heads with all kinds of false and biased materialistic propaganda. Of course, the gullible and uninformed parents believe what they hear, especially since it is the human nature in the Kali-yuga to believe the worst. This sets the scene for a family disaster.

This theme is also dealt with quite comprehensively in Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's book "*Jaiva Dharma*", where the head of a household retires from materialistic life, much to the chagrin of his wife and children, who attempt unsuccessfully to "rescue" him. So, even in the 19th century, this attitude happened, so it is not unique to our times.

The devotee then finds that his parents are totally against what he is doing, even before he has had a chance to explain it. He also finds that there is no way to argue with them or to try and convince them of any facts since they have already been told that their son or daughter is brainwashed and therefore one cannot accept or believe anything they say. Thus the materialists set a perfect trap and destroy the family. Had there been a natural communication between son and daughter and parents, then there would be every chance of the parents understanding the depth of the decision of their child and a mutual respect and appreciation could develop. But due to this external, and highly alien

influence in the family affairs, the children are placed in the dilemma of having to give up their spiritual path, which they have finally found after so many lifetimes of wasting time, or give up the parents, who have become intolerant and even crazy, due to the influence of the materialists. It is very hard for parents to see this dastardly act, for the materialists always cloak their devious treachery as being designed to "help" the parents "free" their children from the "clutches" of a "sect." While in reality the parents have fallen into a web of false propaganda and deception spun by the materialists. This is most unfortunate.

If one's parents have already been poisoned by the materialists, there is very little one can do. Simply he must be firm and sincere, convinced that this is the best thing for one to do, and gradually the parents will stop objecting when they see one is sincere. But because of the external materialistic influence the relationship may never be the same.

If the parents have not been poisoned by the materialists, which generally means that they have some piety and intelligence, then the devotee should try and help them become Kṛṣṇa conscious. While the devotee is staying in the temple he should every month write a letter to his parents explaining how he is and telling of his activities. This was a personal instruction of Śrī Jānaka Prabhupāda to all his disciples. Sometimes parents would write to Prabhupāda complaining that he would not allow his disciples to write home. This would greatly disturb Śrī Jānaka Prabhupāda who never said any such thing, and in fact, had encouraged a monthly letter home. Therefore this should be done without fail. Even if the parents are inimical, a simple gesture like that, or even the remembrance of a special birthday with a card or gift, will change even one who is poisoned by the materialists.

When one's parents are devotees, the situation is completely different. The devotee parents know that the children should be raised to become completely dependent on Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master.

The children of devotees should always be very respectful to their parents, calling them "mother and father" and not any common name, or even their devotee name. They should bow down to the parents each day, and humbly serve them as they can. However, they should not be too much attached to living at home, rather they should always be thinking of rendering service to their spiritual master in fulfillment of his mission to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

All devotees should be most careful in their dealings with the authorities in the places where they live. The government can make one a lot of trouble if he does not follow the laws. Neither is it the business of the Kṛṣṇa conscious man to break the laws of the land, unless it is the law to kill animals, have illicit sex, take intoxication and gamble, or to not chant Hare Kṛṣṇa or worship the Lord. But outside of that, one can easily follow the laws, and engage in his social responsibilities. If one has to have a job by law, then he should get one, otherwise his development in Kṛṣṇa consciousness will be further hampered by having to sit in jail which is certainly a great waste of time! In any case, we do not stop our Kṛṣṇa conscious activities of hearing, chanting and worshiping the Lord, and neither does it seem that any government prohibits this in one's private life.

The etiquette regarding the relationship between devotees is quite complex according to time, place, and circumstances, but we will present herein a summary study of the basic standards of behavior. One must find out the more subtle details in due course through experience and watching others who are expert in their dealings.

All devotees should be respectful to all other devotees. Sometimes a devotee is placed in a position as a teacher to others, and sometimes as an authority. In these cases the respectfulness might manifest a little differently, but still the respect for all devotees is there. No one should speak roughly to another unless it is for the purpose of education. The spiritual master will, for example, chastise the disciple to break him free from his ignorance. The disciple will accept that chastisement because he has great faith in his spiritual master, and actually, an expert spiritual master will not chastise a disciple who is too neophyte to accept it positively. But if one who is not the spiritual master, chooses to chastise another in a harsh and unloving manner, then certainly it will be taken

in the wrong way and the opposite result is attained. Therefore care should be taken to make sure that the dealings between devotees are pleasant.

There are three classes of devotees known as: *kani 'ha-adhikār...s*, *madhyama-adhikār...s* and *uttama-adhikār...s*. Furthermore there are subtle distinctions within each group. The *kani 'ha-adhikār...* is the lowest class. They are devotees who are mainly attached to material sense enjoyment, especially wife, family, home, prestige, and all the attributes of the false ego. They are also attached to serving the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa, but they have no understanding of how to associate with the other devotees, not even those who are more elevated than they.

A middle class (*madhyama*) devotee is known by four qualities. He sees the Supreme Lord as His most worshipable Deity, he makes friends with the other devotees similarly engaged, he avoids the materialistic, envious persons, and he has mercy upon the innocent. Such a person also has scriptural knowledge and lives by it.

A first class devotee is known as the *uttama-adhikār...*, or one who is beyond the darkness of this material world. He is a fully self-realized soul who sees Kṛṣṇa as the soul of all souls and the essence of all that is. Such a *mahātmā* is very rare.

A middle class devotee should respect the lower class devotee within the mind, offer respectful obeisances to other middle class devotees, and serve and worship the spiritual master, the topmost class of devotee surrendering everything to him.

A devotee is naturally respectful to all, as well as kind and merciful. He will act towards others with the idea of helping them advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, he never speaks harshly or angrily to another devotee. If he does, by accident or through the force of the modes of passion and ignorance, he will always go to that other devotee and ask for forgiveness and offer his obeisances to him.

Sometimes devotees who are initiated, especially the second initiated, think themselves superior simply because they have been in the movement longer or were initiated earlier. It would be wise for such puffed up persons, intoxicated with false prestige to consider that many "older" devotees have bloomed and left. Simply age, or the amount of time one has been a devotee, does not make one inferior or superior.

Consider the case of Śrī J. Vaṇḍana Gosvāmī who was a boy during the pastimes of Lord Caitanya, but who later was realized to be an eternally liberated associate of the Lord and therefore more highly advanced than many other of the "older" persons. A Vaiṣṇava does not like to look at anyone on the basis of his bodily designations.

But, we still must follow some etiquette, otherwise there will be havoc in the social order. Therefore, newer devotees will display respectful dealings with older devotees out of natural appreciation for their devotion and learning. But if a newer person sees, by dint of his previous advancement in devotional service (perhaps in past lifetimes) that an "older" devotee is not acting properly, he may still externally offer respect to that person, so as not to agitate his mind, but internally should neither hear nor follow his example.

One who is demanding respect will never be satisfied with any amount of it. If an older devotee is demanding respect from the younger, and we have even seen some rascals demanding service from the younger devotees as if they were lords, then he is certainly captured by the false ego and is firmly in the grips of *māyā*. One has to give up the desire to be served by others, this gives one great spiritual strength and makes one happy. Rather, the older devotees should try to serve the younger, as older brothers and sisters, so that the newer devotees can grow up to be solid servants of the Lord as quickly as possible. Actually, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is like a big team. We are all accepting different positions within the team, but we are all considered the winners when people come and surrender to the Lord. Just like any team, when they are victorious on the playing arena, they are all cheered, and given the payment equally for the victory.

However, sometimes one or two may excel in their performance and they may be especially recognized for their service. But they should know it perfectly well that without the team behind them they would not have had the possibility to succeed in their endeavors. It is with such team spirit and humility on the part of all the members of this movement, that Kṛṣṇa consciousness will become stronger and stronger. Everyone should take up a position, no matter how humble or glorious, according to his strengths and abilities, and serve the *saṅkṛtana* mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

STANDARD WORSHIP IN A PREACHING CENTER OR HOME

This section on worship will simply deal with the daily functions of a preaching center and not with the process of *arcanā*, or Deity worship. The full science of Deity worship has already been elucidated in another handbook, *Arcana-paddhati*, which is also available. Here we shall simply speak about the worship of the simplest type of altar, the Guru- Gaurāṅga altar, and the standard *guru-pūjā*, or way to worship the spiritual master. Mainly we will discuss the set-up of the altar, and the way to perform simple *ārati*.

The altar in a normal preaching center, is normally a Guru-Gaurāṅga altar. It is called so because the worshipable Deities are the spiritual masters and Lord Caitanya in His form as the Pañca-tattva. The altar would look as depicted in the diagram.

The main picture on the altar is of the Pañca-tattva, the five features of the Lord, namely, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, Who is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa combined in one personality, to His right is Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, His first expansion and incarnation of Lord Balarāma, and to His right is Advaitācārya, the incarnation of Sadāśiva and Mahā-Viṣṇu, Who acts as the incarnation of the Lord in these pastimes. To the left of Lord Caitanya stands Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Who is the incarnation of the devotional energy of the Lord, Śrīmat Rādhārāṣ, and to His left stands Śrī vasaṁhākura, the incarnation of the pure devotee, the representative of pure devotional service to the Lord, the incarnation of Nārada Muni. Together these five are the five features of the Absolute Truth known as Pañca-tattva. They are the Masters of the devotees, and they are the worshipful Deities of every preaching center.

This picture should be as beautifully framed as possible, and shall be situated in the central position on the altar or hanging on the wall slightly above the altar, but still in the central position. Just to the left of the Pañca-tattva, as you face the altar, should sit the picture of the present spiritual master, your Guru Mahārāja, the present representative of the long chain of disciplic succession coming in our Brahmā-Madhva- Gauḍīya Sampradāya. On the other side of the altar, to your right, you should place the picture of Śrī Jānaka Prabhupāda and his spiritual master, Śrī Jānaka Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī ṁhākura. This arrangement is known as the Guru-Gaurāṅga altar and is the most merciful appearance of the Lord.

This altar arrangement is the best because these Deities do not demand any high level of service. In a normal full time temple, there are Deities made of brass, or marble. These Deities are installed in large and elaborate ceremonies and the Supreme Lord Himself agrees to come and reside in the temple as the Deity. Therefore the standard of the service to the Lord has to be very high and there can be no mistakes. If there are mistakes in the worship of the Lord when He is so elaborately installed in such a magnificent form, then the whole temple suffers due to the offenses. Therefore, we do not recommend that high level of worship until one has proven himself capable of doing it for many years and has full facility to perform that worship without offenses. However, the Guru-Gaurāṅga Deity, as we have explained above, is very merciful. They do not demand a strict standard, and in fact enjoy whatever offerings are made to Them whenever they are made. In other words, there is no need to make offerings at a particular time, or in any particular way. Neither is there any particular form of worship required during the morning. In full scale temples, the whole temple is

engaged in making preparations for taking care of the Lord during the early morning hours and then throughout the whole day. This is certainly very difficult for those of us in far off corners of the earth.

Although there is no particular methodology of worship required, there are certain guidelines to follow which increase the standard of worship and make it more pure. For instance, it is important to have a particular schedule which one follows each day so that the service of the Deity is regulated. One should, if possible, make offerings of food to the Deity at regulated times. Whatever one is eating should be offered for the pleasure of the Lord first. One should consider that he is preparing the meal for the Lord, and that we will simply take the remnants of what is offered to Him. If we offer the Lord food at regulated times and also take *prasādam* at regulated times, this is the most beneficial for our spiritual life. Whimsical action is not the best for advancement. Not only is regulation important, but constant cleanliness is essential.

One must keep the altar spotlessly clean, and if possible, decorated with fresh flowers and incense. It is to be done as nicely as you can according to your means. If there is nothing obtainable due to circumstances beyond one's control, then at least one can offer a glass of clean, pure water to the Lord and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Ultimately, that is also a fine way to worship the Lord.

As we have previously mentioned, there are certain programs that are to be followed in the normal morning and evening schedule. This entails the performance of *ārati*. This *ārati* ceremony may be performed after the offering of food if one wishes to do it, although one can also offer food without the ceremony. However, it is always best to offer food while there is some chanting of the Lord's holy name, if it is at all possible. In emergency situations, these principles may be applied more or less according to time, place, and circumstances. The *ārati* ceremony is standard, but it is divided into two types of *ārati*, the full *ārati* and the *dhṛm-pa-ārati*. The full *ārati* would be as follows.

First, before one offers *ārati*, he should himself be properly bathed and with clean clothes. He should then take water from a small cup, with a small spoon, and taking the spoon in his right hand, pour three drops of water in the left, throw this water aside, take up the spoon in the left hand, pour three drops of water into the right, say *oṃ nārāyaṇāya namaḥ* and sip that water, then take again three drops and throw it aside. From now on, whenever there is usage of the water for purification, the spoon is taken up in the right hand and the article sprinkled with water with three drops.

The first article taken up by the *pṛajā*..., the one who offers *pṛajā*, or worship, is the bell. While performing *ārati*, a bell will be held in the left hand and constantly rung. The *pṛajā*... will stand up during the *ārati*, always with the altar to his right. The people attending should also remain standing till the end. While the *pṛajā*... is standing to the side of the altar, so as not to block the view of the attending devotees, he rings the bell throughout the ceremony.

To begin the ceremony, one will blow the conchshell three times. He will start this by dripping three drops of water over the shell, pick it up to his mouth and blow a hearty tone. The conchshell is blown similar to how a bugle or horn is blown. He will put down the conchshell, drip three drops of water over it for purification, and then pour three drops of water on his right hand while holding the spoon in the right hand. This sounds harder than it is. One just has to bend the hand over and the water in the spoon falls naturally on the hand.

Incense is the first item to actually be offered to the Lord. One pours three drops of water on the wooden stick ends of the incense, puts down the spoon, and then picks up the incense, which is then lit on a nearby candle or ghee lamp. After blowing out the flame on the end of the sticks with a wave of the hand (never with the breath!), one should offer the incense in circular motions (from left to right) to the Pañcatattva picture, then to the previous *ācāryas*, then to the present *ācārya*.

After one has offered the incense (by rotating the sticks before the personalities for some time, say seven times or more in a slow fashion), he then bows slightly, then turns to the audience and offers the incense to them, then at the end bows slightly and places the incense in some holder somewhere to burn undisturbed. It is easiest to let the incense sticks burn while stuck in a small bowl of salt, or clean sand, or something suitable like that.

This general procedure is followed for all the other articles. To repeat, one first purifies his right hand with three drops of water, then purifies the article about to be offered with three drops of water, then picks it up (always in the right hand) and offers it to the Lord for some time, offering first to the Pañca-tattva, then the previous spiritual masters, then the present spiritual master, bowing slightly, turning to the audience and offering to them, bowing slightly, and then placing the article back on the *ārati* plate and proceeding to the next item by repeating the procedure.

The *ārati* plate is an essential element in this worshiping process, and it is to be prepared in advance of the *ārati* by the *p^mjār...* The plate itself can be made of any material like silver, brass, stainless steel or even clay if there is nothing else. It should be pure and never used before. It should only be used for this purpose and none other. The function of this plate is to hold all the *ārati* materials so that they can be prepared beforehand and put on a small table near the altar so the *p^mjār...* can offer everything easily.

The articles on the plate are:

- 1) a cup of water for *ācamana* (the process of dripping water on the hand), with a small spoon
- 2) a bell
- 3) three sticks of incense
- 4) a lamp with one ghee wick and camphor (this lamp is generally a small brass bowl with a handle, in which is placed a cotton wick soaked in some ghee and surrounded by camphor grains)
- 5) a lamp with five ghee wicks (no camphor)
- 6) a small bowl of water for pouring into a small conchshell used for offering water, as well as another small bowl to pour the water in after it is offered
- 7) a silken or very nice handkerchief, folded decoratively
- 8) a fresh flower, without stem
- 9) a *cāmara* (the tail of a yak!)
- 10) a peacock fan (!)
- 11) a conchshell
- 12) a candle or small ghee wick lamp for lighting incense and lamps.

These twelve items are required for a full *ārati*. A *dh^mpa-ārati* consists of the following items only:

- 1) *ācamana* cup and spoon
- 2) three sticks of incense
- 3) a small lamp for lighting the incense
- 4) a flower
- 5) a *cāmara* fan.

The incense, as before stated, is offered in larger circular motions, at least seven to each personality. The small ghee lamp is offered in smaller circular motions while moving the lamp around the personality in one large circle. After the small lamp is offered to all personalities, and to the audience, it is then passed around to all participants who place their hands briefly over the flame and touch their heads. The fivewick lamp is offered in slow, large circular motions and also carried around by one devotee to all the participants who similarly partake of the flame as above. The water in the small conchshell is offered in small, pouring like motions, and after each personality is offered, a little water is poured in the extra small bowl. At the end of the offerings, all the water is poured in the small bowl and sprinkled on the heads of the audience.

The handkerchief is offered in sweeping motions, back and forth, and at the end the handkerchief is simply laid back on the *ārati* plate. The flower is offered in small circles on the perimeter of a larger circle. If there is more than one flower, then before the *p^mjār...* turns to offer the flowers to the audience, he takes one, or more, flowers, and places them on the altar. Then after offering to the audience, he hands (not throws) the remaining flowers to the audience. I saw ®r.Ja Prabhupāda in Bombay chastise a devotee for throwing flowers just offered to the Lord.

The *cāmara* fan and the peacock fan are offered in grand, sweeping, and graceful up and down motions. At the end of the ceremony, the *p^mjār...* blows the conchshell three times. He then takes away the Lord's plates, if he did not do it before the *ārati*, and the *p^mjā* plate, and makes sure that both are immediately washed carefully, dried and put away. In a *dh^mpa-ārati*, performed when there is neither time nor facility to perform a full one, one offers the items in the same way, but, according to the above list, only incense, flower and fan. Actually in the larger temples, this *dh^mpa-ārati* is part of the daily routine of offerings.

The full schedule of offerings for a larger temple is given here by way of information for the future.

4:30 *Māṅgala-ārati*, full
 7:00 Deity Greeting, *dh^mpa*
 8:00 Offering of breakfast *prasāda*, full
 12:00 Offering of lunch *prasāda*, full
 4:00 Waking of the Deities after their lunch rest, *dh^mpa*
 7:00 Evening *ārati*, full
 8:30 Taking rest *ārati*, *dh^mpa*

More information on full Deity worship is found in the Deity worship handbook.

It is important to note here that there are also some rules for the devotees who are participating in these temple services. For instance, the devotee will pay obeisances each time he enters or leaves the temple room. When paying obeisances before the altar, the left shoulder should be facing the Deity, but when paying to one's spiritual master who is still on the planet, then the right shoulder should be facing him. If the *guru* is gone, like in the case of ®r.Ĵa Prabhupāda, then one should offer him obeisances with the left shoulder facing him. One should, however, never offer obeisances by putting his feet towards the altar or spiritual master, therefore the temple room should be organized in such a way that this will never happen during the course of the day's programs.

There are two ways to pay obeisances. The first is called *daṢ̣̄ avat*, wherein a devotee will prostrate himself flat on the floor, face down, with arms outstretched and palms on the floor, while he says out-loud the *mantra* to his spiritual master. The other method of bowing down is simpler, one simply bows his head and shoulders while kneeling on the floor, till his head touches the ground and he recites the *mantra* prayers for his spiritual master. When offering obeisances to ®r.Ĵa Prabhupāda in *guru-p^mjā* for the founder-*ācārya*, one should first offer the *mantra* to his spiritual master and then to ®r.Ĵa Prabhupāda, for no one can jump over his spiritual master and directly worship his *guru's guru*. That is offensive. One can only worship his *guru's guru* through his *guru*, and no other way.

When one is offering *guru-p^mjā* to one's spiritual master, and has finished offering an article, one should not then turn to the *param-guru* and offer the same article, rather, one should simply then turn and offer it to the Vai Śavas present.

One should never wear shoes or slippers in the temple room, and one should be properly clad when appearing before the Deity or the spiritual master. One should not be unclean, and the feet should be washed before entering the temple.

These rules may or may not be applied to guests, it depends on the situation. In less pious countries, it is simply a wonder that they come to the temple at all, and therefore one would not want to overburden them with various rules and regulations. But no one can smoke or consume alcohol or anything else in the temple room, or anywhere on temple grounds, neither may shoes be worn within the temple building. (But if some gross *karm...* workers have to enter the building and refuse to take off their shoes, then one would have to relent, otherwise the work will not get done.)

One should avoid sitting or standing with his back to the altar or to the spiritual master, and if the spiritual master is there no one should bump into him or block his way. Generally in temples with

Deities, there should be a path left between the Deity and the spiritual master so that he may view the Lord undisturbed. It is best to enter the temple room by chanting the name of the Deity out-loud to announce one's presence. One may chant the name like "Jaya ॐr... ॐr... Gaura-Nitāi" and ring a bell that is generally placed hanging near the entrance way.

One of the simplest and most blissful ways to perform temple worship is to worship the *tulas...* plant. The *tulas...* plant, sometimes called holy basil, is very special. *Tulas...* is the eternal servant of the Supreme Lord K Ṣa, V ndā-dev..., a *gop...* in V ndāvana, who simply exists in the plant form to offer her wonderful leaves and flowers to the lotus feet of the Lord. Wherever the Lord is, she must also be there and a leaf of *tulas...* plant must be on every preparation offered to the Deity otherwise the Lord will not accept that offering.

Tulas... is so merciful, that simply by worshiping her nicely every day, by *ārati* and *k.r.tana*, as well as offering her water with love, can bring one to the highest platform of *k Ṣa-bhakti*. Each morning after *maṅgalaārati*, and in the evening before the evening *ārati*, *tulas...* is worshiped with certain songs and *ārati*. During the *ārati*, after the devotees have finished the special *tulas...* song (*namo namaḥ tulas...! k Ṣa-preyas... namo namah*) they will circumambulate *tulas...* clockwise (one never circumambulates counter clockwise since this tightens the knot of material desires, while clockwise loosens it). While circumambulating *tulas...* they sing a *mantra*:

*yāni kāni ca pāpāni brahma-hatyādikāni ca
tāni tāni praṢa yanti pradak inaḥ pade pade*

This *mantra* says that all your sinful reactions are being wiped away each step you take around *Tulas...dev...* Therefore this worship of her should always be done in all centers to help the devotees become pure and uncontaminated.

It is easy to maintain *tulas...*, she is after all a plant, and she is highly innocent under dangerous conditions. One simply has to give her sufficient water and sunlight, while making sure that there is sufficient heat and humidity. In places where there is little sunlight in the winter, she will do quite well under the special "vitalites" available for plants. But above all, *tulas...* will be maintained by the love and devotion of her keepers. If the temple is in *māyā*, or there is not sufficient love and devotion, *tulas...* might leave her body, and this is not an auspicious sign. *Tulas...* will normally last four years if well maintained with love and devotion.

RULES FOR THE KITCHEN

The K Ṣa conscious kitchen follows different rules than the ordinary *karm...* kitchens. The most important difference is that we are cooking for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord and not for our own senses. Thus we are meditating on His pleasure and definitely not on the pleasure our tongues will feel when eating this food. If we think of ourselves, then the offering is contaminated because we think that we are the enjoyers, but if we think of K Ṣa then we will act purely since we are only thinking of His enjoyment. One who cooks must know that he is the servant of the Lord and not the master, thus his cooking can become purified and satisfy the Lord.

This means that during the cooking process, we should never try to taste the food before it is offered. Neither should we even endeavor to smell the food which we are preparing. The K Ṣa conscious cook knows the art of preparing the foods simply on the basis of sight alone. He knows what the preparation is to look like and he knows the way in which the spices act during the cooking process. Thus for him these rules are not an impediment.

The kitchen must be as clean as the altar. That is to say that both places should be immaculately clean. The best way to maintain this cleanliness is to "clean while you cook," a very useful principle taught to us directly by ॐr.la Prabhupāda. As soon as one cuts a vegetable, then immediately he should throw the useless parts on the compost heap, or in absence of one, the garbage, and wipe the cutting area with a clean cloth and wash the knife. This sequence of cleaning will take only a few

seconds when one is accustomed to it, yet the simple act of keeping a place clean while cooking is sufficient to make a world of difference in the cooking consciousness.

If one finishes using a pot, then he should transfer the material within it and immediately wash the pot with warm water. If he washes the pot while it is warm then he can clean it simply by rinsing, or with a few rubs of a cloth. If he waits till all the food gets caked on and hard, then the same pot will take thirty minutes to clean. It is only intelligent to do things the easy way and avoid the difficult methodologies.

One should never touch his hands to the floor or his mouth, and if he does he should wash them immediately before touching anything else. Hard things which fall on the floor can be washed and reused. This includes vegetables or utensils, for example, but not grains or sugar. It is more or less common sense. One should only wear clean cloth in the kitchen, and never clothes that were used in the toilet. One may however, under carefully controlled situations, pass urine and enter the kitchen after washing. One must however take a full bath and change clothes if he had to pass stool. In strict temples, the cooks are not even allowed to enter the kitchen even if they ate in the same clothes.

Women, contaminated during their menstrual cycle, should not enter the kitchen or the Deity room. In general, and especially in the kitchen, hair is considered contaminated. Therefore, the ladies who work in the kitchen should always keep their heads covered to keep the possibility of hair falling into food to a minimum. If, by chance, hair does fall into the preparation, it is immediately rejected. Thus one must be quite careful in this regard. Ladies should anyway always keep their hairs tied up behind the shoulders, the hair is only let down in front of the husband. Similarly the boys should always make sure that their *ikhas* are always tied, even when they are not in the kitchen. One can tie the *ikhas* by wrapping the tuft of hair in a loop and tying a knot.

One should generally never blow air out of his mouth onto anything and this rule absolutely applies in the kitchen. We do not even blow out candles with air from our mouths, we do it by making a wind of air with our moving hands. It is much more clean this way and does not unduly waste breath. It is said that the duration of life is measured in the amount of breaths we take.

One should not belch or pass air in the temple or kitchen. Neither should one use harsh or unkind words. In fact one should not speak about anything in the kitchen unless it is directly in relationship with the cooking process or it is about Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Jānaka Prabhupāda was always intensely grave and sober while engaging in cooking in Kṛṣṇa's kitchen, for he knew for Whom he was cooking. We cannot have useless words coming out of the mouth if we intend on pleasing the Lord with our cooking.

The preparations should be offered hot, not burning hot, but hot. It is easy to keep preparations warm even during an extended cooking process once one gets the hang of it. This is important because Śrī Jānaka Prabhupāda instructed that *prasādam* should never be reheated. The *Śyurveda* says that some foods, such as rice or ghee, become poisonous if they are reheated. One can store the preparations in the oven, or around the stove, to keep them warm until the offering time. The best cooks finish everything just before the offering and thus it is naturally hot and fresh. Foods cooked more than three hours before offering cannot be offered as they are in the mode of ignorance.

The plate used by the Lord should never be used by anyone else. It should remain exclusively Kṛṣṇa's. It should be washed immediately after being taken off the altar and strictly speaking *prasādam* should not be served until the Deities' plate is washed.

One should try to cook standard Indian preparations to offer Kṛṣṇa, since these are the most delicious. But it is difficult to cook if one has never been taught. Therefore, even if one has never been taught the bona fide method to cook, one should still cook with great love and devotion, trying to make everything as nice as he can, and certainly Kṛṣṇa will accept the offering. Actually Kṛṣṇa is accepting the love and devotion more than the preparation itself. Kṛṣṇa already has everything, what can He need? Thus we offer Him our love, since we have been keeping it to ourselves like misers for so long. He appreciates our loving offering and accepts it.

The way to make an offering is as follows: Prepare a plate by washing it and drying it nicely. Put all the cooked preparations on the plate, or in little bowls according to your means. Don't forget a cup of fresh water. Although juice may be offered, or some other drink, water must always be there. Arrange everything on the plate as nicely as you can, one can even use flowers to decorate the plate. Bring the plate to the altar and place it before the Deity. Bow down outside the altar area and while ringing a bell chant the following three *mantras* three times each.

nama o ̃ vi Śnu-pādāya k Śa-pre ṭhāya bh™-tale
r...mate bhaktivedanta svāmin iti nāmine

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who is very dear to Lord K Śa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet."

namaste saraswati deve gaura-vani-pracharine nirvishesha-shunyavadi paschatya-desha-tarine
 "Our most respectful reverences to you, oh Spiritual Master, servant of Saraswati Goswami. You have compassionately preached the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and have saved the souls of the occident whom you found immersed in impersonalism and voidism."

bhaja Sri Krsna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityananda, Sri Adwaita, Gadadhar, Sri Srivasi adi gaura bhakta vrnda.

"All Glories to Sri Panca Tattva"

namo mahā-vadānyāya k Śa-prema-pradāya te
k Śāya k Śa-caitanya nāmne gaura-tvi e namaḥ

"O most munificent incarnation! You are K Śa Himself appearing as ̃r... Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You have assumed the golden color of ̃r.mat... RādhārāŚ., and You are widely distributing pure love of K Śa. I offer my respectful obeisances unto You."

namo brahmaŚya-devāya go-brāhmaŚa-hitāya ca jagaddhitāya
k Śāya govindāya namo namaḥ

"My Lord, You are the well-wisher of the cows and the *brāhmaŚas*, and You are the well-wisher of the entire human society and world."

When this is done one may chant the first line of Gāyatrī...if he has it, and if not the offering is considered completed. One generally leaves the plate on the altar for the Lord's pleasure for either fifteen minutes or one-half hour according to the standard of his worship. When the offering is finished, one generally makes an *ārati* and chants *mantras* for the Lord's pleasure. The plate is then taken off the altar and the altar is cleaned. The plate goes back to the kitchen, is cleaned, and the *mahā-prasādam* is offered to the devotees.

Before the devotees take *prasādam*, they generally chant the following *mantra* together in unison:

ar...ra abidyā-jāl, jo endriya tāhe kāl,
j...ve phele vi aya-sāgore
tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,
tā'ke jetā ka'hina so ̃ sāre
k Śa baro doyamoy, koribāre jihvā jay,
swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi
sei annām ta pāo, rādhā-k Śa-guŚa gāo,
preme āko caitanya-nitāi

"This material body is a network of ignorance, and the senses are one's deadly enemies, for they throw the soul into this ocean of material sense enjoyment. Among those senses the tongue is most voracious and uncontrollable; it is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. Lord K Śa is very merciful and has given us the remnants of His own food just to control the tongue. Now please

accept that nectarean *kṣāprasāda* and sing the glories of Their Lordships ॐ... ॐ... Rādhā and Kṣā, and in love call out, 'Caitanya! Nitāi!'

TAKING PRASĀDAM

There are very few rules for eating in Kṣā consciousness. Especially in countries wherein it is hard to find even the basic staples of life, the rules for eating are very rudimentary. We have our restrictions as far as what we can take. These are: no eating of meat, fish, or eggs, or any food prepared with these items. Similarly, we do not take onions or garlic as these foods cause a rapid rise in the mode of passion and cause the brain to become duller. We also do not offer mushrooms since they are grown in dark, damp places in the mode of ignorance.

We also try to avoid grains cooked by nondevotees. It is stated that the sinful reactions of the *karmās* are absorbed by the grains during the cooking process. Therefore, if at all possible we only take breads, preferably in the form of *chapātās*, made by devotees. Sometimes it is impossible to get grains in the raw form, and then one has to take *karma* cooked bread, but if it is at all possible then one should make his own bread. If one tries, he can always obtain wheat grains and grind flour himself. In the Western temples, if a devotee is doing *saṅkīrtana*, he will get bread mailed to him at different cities and thus he will always be taking *prasādam* offered to the Lord wherever he is.

Generally, one should only eat food which is offered to the Lord. One should avoid eating outside of a temple. One should not accept invitations from nondevotees to eat at their homes and never at a restaurant. They always use meat products since they have no other idea. Furthermore, an impure person's consciousness will affect the devotee if he eats at his home. It is said that the *karma* of the person is transferred to the devotee if he eats at his house.

One should only offer foods which are clean and pure, and which have not been tasted or touched by others. Strictly, one should not offer to the Lord food which has been seen or touched by lower animals like dogs. One should carefully wash everything washable before offering. Generally, in temples, only initiated devotees should light and work at the fire during the cooking process. Others may help, but not cook over the fire.

When taking *prasādam*, by custom one eats only with his right hand. Generally, one eats while sitting down cross-legged on the floor, although sitting normally at a table is acceptable. One should avoid eating while standing up, and one should never engage in nonsense talk during the eating process. The best thing is to remember Kṣā at all times. Kṣā is the taste of *prasādam* and remembrance of that will make one blissful while eating.

How much *prasādam* should one take? As much as you need. If you are hungry, then eat! This is the instruction of ॐ... Prabhupāda. In the beginning one should take as much *prasādam* as he wants. After a while he will automatically cut the quantity down when he finds that his service is being hampered due to overeating. Remember, the *Śyurveda*, the Vedic medicinal system, says that there are three causes of disease: overeating, anxiety, and uncleanness. Avoid overeating and putting a strain on the stomach, for bad digestion is the cause of most problems with the body. One should not starve, for that is also a disturbance in spiritual life, but one should not eat too much as well. The best formula is to fill the stomach with half food, one quarter water, and one quarter air. This combination will make the stomach's digestive action very powerful. The fire within the stomach has to have a place to burn. The best thing is to take a glass of water with the meal, and if one has constipation problems, another glass one and a half hours after eating.

One should also avoid eating too opulent of foods for that will cause a strain on the stomach. Too much ghee and sugar will cause one's blood to become impure and boils may result. A *brahmachārī* will avoid eating sugar altogether, although at the Sunday feasts, the time when many guests are invited from outside and a nice program on Kṣā consciousness is performed in the temple, he may eat the feast. A Sunday feast may have anywhere from five to fifteen preparations.

Standard preparations such as sweet rice, *halavā*, *purīs*, *pakorās*, *samosas*, nectar drink, *sabjīs*, etc. are generally a big hit at any Sunday feast. But Sunday feasts are also a time for overeating, and this makes for “blue Mondays.” So one should be careful. In any case, always eating fried things will clog up the blood vessels and weaken the liver. One cannot serve Kṛṣṇa with a ruined liver.

There is also a common controversy about white rice vs. brown rice. One may offer either to Kṛṣṇa as it is done with love and devotion. However Srila Prabhupada has said that brown rice is considered low class and if one is able, it is much nicer to offer fine Indian or Pakistani Bhasmati rice. In general, heavily processed (“instant”) rice that has been the victim of too many machines should be avoided unless there is nothing else available.

After one has finished eating, he should wash his plate, hands and mouth with water. He should rinse his mouth very thoroughly. He should keep his hands very clean, and his plate as well. When one is finished eating, it is essential that his eating place and all other connected eating utensils be cleaned with water. The place of eating is considered contaminated after eating until washed.

One should never eat out of the pots used for cooking, neither should one touch them with contaminated hands (hands used for eating). Better that the cooking pots stay in the kitchen and other dishes used to transfer out the *prasādam* from the kitchen to the eating area. Neither should eaten food go back into a cooking pot.

TAKING REST

Usually, we devotees of Kṛṣṇa, do not consider sleeping one of the activities of devotional service, and therefore there is no need to discuss this nightly ignorance at all. But there are certain rules that should be followed in this regard and these should be noted.

The direction one sleeps is considered important. Obviously one should not sleep with his feet towards pictures of Kṛṣṇa or the spiritual master etc. neither on such pictures. Neither should he sleep on, or even wear below the waist, *harināma cādaras* or anything on which the holy name of the Lord is written. The proper direction to sleep is east. This is the best choice. If that is not possible then south will do. It is not good to sleep west, but it is acceptable if there is no other choice. Never is a devotee to sleep with his head to the north.

East is considered the direction of spiritual life and knowledge, south is for fruitive activity, west for mental speculation, and north for liberation in impersonal Brahman. One sleeps to the east, eats to the west, says Gāyatrī...to the sun's direction, etc. There are many such small rules, but they are not so important. Whatever is necessary for the service of the Lord is ultimately our guiding principle.

Generally we sleep on the floor on some mat which is lightly padded, or some hard rubber camping mat. It is also quite proper to sleep on hard beds which are lifted off the floor to protect against drafts which come in colder countries. The usage of a pillow is allowed if required.

One may sleep in the same *dhotī*...he has worn that day, and wash it the next day upon rising, or whenever it is convenient. Otherwise, one can sleep in a *gāmachā*, a light cloth worn around the waste. One should always wear a *gāmachā*, or some kind of cover, when he is taking a shower for going naked is the behaviour of monkeys.

It is best to wash the bedding frequently, as the body gives off obnoxious waste products during sleep. Those who live in the temples always wash the floor where they have slept to maintain the high standard of cleanliness.

Those who are coming into a room where others are already resting should kindly be quiet so as not to create a disturbance. In any case, excess talking, known as *prajālpa*, should be avoided in the *ā rāmas*. One should only talk about Kṛṣṇa, and discontinue the talking as soon as the time for taking rest appears.

The devotees should rise from bed early in the morning. In India, the time to rise is about two and a half to three hours before sunrise. The sun usually rises between 6-6:30 there, and the devotees are generally up between 3:30 and 4 A.M. Upon rising one should chant the verse from *®r..mad-Bhāgavatam* (10.90.48):

*jayati jana-nivāso devak...janma-vādo
yadu-vara-pari at svair dorbhir asyann adharmam
sthira-cara-v jina-ghnaḥ su-smita- r...mukhena
vraja-pura-vanītānā ^ vardhayan kāma-devam*

"Lord ®r...K Śa is He who is known as *jana-nivāsa*, the ultimate resort of all living entities, and who is also known as Devak...nandana or Ya odā-nandana, the son of Devak...and Ya odā. He is the guide of the Yadu dynasty, and with His mighty arms He kills everything inauspicious as well as every man who is impious. By His presence He destroys all things inauspicious for all living entities, moving and inert. His blissful smiling face always increases the lusty desires of the *gop..s* of V ndāvana. May He be all glorious and happy!"

Or at least K Śa K Śa K Śa, if he is unable to remember the verse. Chanting the Hare K Śa *mahā-mantra* is always perfect and auspicious for all occasions and therefore is perfectly appropriate to chant upon rising.

The time period beginning one hour and thirty-five minutes before sunrise and lasting for forty-eight minutes is known as the *brāhmamuh ̄rta* hour. It is the most important time of the day for spiritual activity. It is a very purified time and one wherein all the devotees should be engaged in chanting and hearing the holy name of the Lord. Chanting at that time is very powerful and is worth twice the effect of chanting later on.

THE K ̄ṣṇA CONSCIOUS CALENDAR

In K Śa consciousness, there is also a calendar of events. This calendar is calculated each year according to the strict formulas of the *Jyotiṣ Veda*. This section of the *Vedas* deals with astronomical calculations and according to the movements of the moon, the calendar is derived. We follow a lunar calendar, and therefore our dates of doing things are always different from year to year as the lunar and solar calendars are never equal. We try to keep them fairly equal by adding a month after every third year, called *puru ottama masa*, wherein there are no festivals or special days, to make up for the triyearly loss of thirty days.

This calendar is available each year, and one should consult it regularly to find out about the important days of the year. A list of the most important days and what one is to do on those days follows.

1) Ekāda .s or sometimes, Mahā-dvāda .s, are special days which come eleven days after the new moon and full moon. Due to special rules, if there is a certain arrangement of the moon, then the Ekāda ... is observed on the Dvāda ... In this case it is then known as a Mahā-dvāda ... which then acts as the Ekāda ... Ekāda ... means literally, the eleventh, while Dvāda ... means the twelfth.

On the Ekāda ... day, one should not eat any grains or beans. For instance, no rice, dhal, wheat, oats, rye, barley, sesame, corn, beans or peas, chick peas, *la us*, or even string beans. All these forms of grains and beans, even if not mentioned on this list, are to be strictly avoided. One should not even cook in ghee which was formally used on non- Ekāda ... days to avoid contamination.

Ekāda ... is an important day for hearing and chanting, as these activities are quickly successful on this day. Therefore, although we normally chant sixteen rounds a day, we try to chant twenty-five rounds on the Ekāda ... day, so that we can take advantage of this auspicious day. You will find that other materialistic activities are not at all successful on this day, therefore to spend it hearing, chanting, and reading is quite nice.

Ekāda ...is called the mother of devotion, because it rejuvenates the devotee and makes him enlivened.

It is also said that the sinful reactions of the world take shelter in the grains and beans on Ekāda ..., and therefore we avoid them like anything. Factually, the best way to observe Ekāda ...is to fast from everything, even water. This is hard, but some may take this up within the temple. Not all, however, since a person fasting in this way cannot perform any other service that day. Therefore some devotees who are more brahminical by nature like to take up this austerity for purification. Fasting on other days is not very recommended. We have our special days for fasting and if one fasts on these days, this will be auspicious for his spiritual life. If one fasts often, then he runs the risk of being spaced out and unable to concentrate on his service.

There are two Ekāda ...s per lunar month, one for each full and new moon. It is stated in the *āstra* that if one breaks Ekāda ..., then he will suffer very great consequences, and this is to be avoided at all costs. But if by chance he does do so, then he should observe a complete fast, even without liquids of any kind (called *nirjala*) on the day of the Pāṣ̥ava Nirjala Ekāda ... It is stated that the Pāṣ̥avas could not keep Ekāda ...because they were warriors, but they were disturbed by this.

Some great sages gave them the benediction that if they simply fully followed this one Ekāda ..., then they would get the results of following the whole year. Therefore that benediction is still there for us to follow as well and correct our foolishness.

Never take it for granted when Ekāda ...comes. Always check the *prasādam* first to make sure that there are no grains or beans being served by a careless cook. Even *mahā-prasādam* is to be avoided on Ekāda ...since it is prepared with grains and beans. The Deities, being God, do not have to follow any austerities, so They take grains etc. on Ekāda ... But we must follow strictly, and therefore we do not even take *mahā-prasādam* on Ekāda ..., we wait until the next day. Similarly, the spiritual master should not be offered grains or beans on Ekāda ..., since he is also following these rules and regulations.

Although on the Ekāda ...day we are fasting from grains and beans, the Deities of the Lord are never fasting. Therefore the *vi Śu-tattva*, the forms of the Lord, should be fed full offerings even on the Ekāda ...day. The *mahā-prasādam*, however, should not be taken. It should be saved until the next day.

Ekāda ...ends usually on the sunrise of the following day.

2) Fast and feast days on the appearance of *vi Śu-tattva* — there are days during the year on which we are supposed to observe full fasting. The most important two days for us are Janmā ^am..., the appearance day of Lord K ^ṣa in Mathurā (generally appearing in August-September), and the Gaura-p^rSimā, the appearance of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Māyāpur (generally appearing in February-March). On Janmā ^am... we fast until midnight after a day of hearing the pastimes of the appearance of the Lord from K ^ṣa book, and chanting His holy name in great ecstasy. There are also plays about the pastimes of the Lord, and other festivals according to one's imagination and facility. On many of these special days there are specific things which the Lord likes to do, but generally these things are done with Deities and therefore do not actually apply to our preaching centers.

Near to midnight, there is generally an *abhi ekha*, or a bathing ceremony of Lord K ^ṣa. The Deity is nicely called to a bathing arena and all kinds of auspicious substances are poured over Him. Milk, yogurt, ghee, sugar water, and water, are poured over the Deity, as well as fruit juices and other auspicious substances. The Deity is fanned and nicely dressed afterwards, and at midnight there is a big celebration as the appearance of the Lord is announced. After this *ārati* ceremony at midnight, there is an *ārati* style feast. Generally, there is an *ārati* feast on the fasting days of the Lord's appearance. During the day the devotees try and offer a minimum of 108 preparations to the Lord, although in some places they offer thousands. The Lord is not fasting on His appearance day and has no trouble consuming these thousands of preparations.

On Gaura-p^mr^hṢimā the fasting takes place until the rise of the full moon, the moment when Lord Caitanya appeared. Again, during the day, many hundreds of preparations are offered to the Lord and after a nice *ārati* ceremony, the devotees partake of the feast by taking Ekāda ...*prasādam*.

Other important appearance days of the Lord are RāmaṢavami, the appearance day of Lord Rāmacandra (March-April), with fasting until 2 P.M. and a special program about His pastimes; N si^h ha-caturda ..., the appearance day of Lord N si^h hadeva, fasting until 2 P.M.; and Vāmanadvāda ..., the appearance of Lord Vāmana, fasting until 2 P.M.

There are also days like the appearance of Advaitācārya, Nityānanda-trayoda ..., and other days wherein there is a fast until noon. Generally on these days, one reads from the books about Their pastimes, and chants Their names in *kṛtana*.

3) Appearance and disappearance days of *ācāryas* — Whenever the birthday of one's spiritual master comes, the disciples hold a ceremony called *vyāsa-p^mjā* wherein they worship their spiritual master as the representative of Vyāsadeva with all pomp and honor. ®r. Ia Prabhupāda's *vyāsa-p^mjā* comes the day after Janmā am... and therefore it is a two day festival. The procedure for *vyāsa-p^mjā* is simple, but the love and devotion of the disciples is shown on that day without reservation. There is generally a fast until noon, or something like that, with a schedule that more or less conforms to the following.

8:30 A.M. — greeting of the spiritual master (generally one sings the *sa^h sara* prayers at this time, along with the normal *kṛtana*)

9:00 — talks and offerings by disciples to glorify the spiritual master (interspersed with *kṛtanas*)

11:30 — an offering of *prasādam*

12:00 — a *mahā-ārati* beginning with *pu pāñjali*, and then the chanting of the normal *guru-p^mjā* prayers.

Then feasting.

Pu pāñjali means literally, the offering of flowers with folded hands. All the assembled guests come together and take a handful of flowers. The *mantra* of the *guru* is recited one word at a time, responsively by the audience. When the *mantras* are finished, then the leader chants "*pu pāñjali*" or "*svāhā*" and all the assembled devotees throw the flowers on the *vyāsāsana* and fall to the floor paying obeisances. This is repeated three times in total, and then the chanting will begin. This schedule may be adapted in different ways according to convenience and the desires of the disciples. The disciples of the spiritual master also write their offerings to him and usually produce a *vyāsa-p^mjā* book according to their means.

On the days of the appearance of other spiritual masters in our disciplic succession, in other words from ®r. Ia Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda and back, we observe a fast until noon and try to talk about them in our morning programs. A feast should always be prepared for their pleasure.

On the disappearance days of the *ācāryas*, we should also observe a fast until noon, and then prepare a feast. Usually their glories are also discussed that day. We also offer *pu pāñjali* on the disappearance day of ®r. Ia Prabhupāda as well as try to remember his instructions and pastimes.

4) Other days — There are also other days of significance, like Govardhana-p^mjā, wherein Kṛṣṇa Himself instituted the worship of Govardhana Hill as being nondifferent from Himself. On this day we make a mountain out of halavā or other grains and make a Deity of the Lord holding up the

mountain with His left pinky for seven days due to the attack of Indra on V ndāvana with rain. We read the pastimes of the lifting of Govardhana Hill and observe a feast. Generally, on this day one must distribute *prasādam* profusely to all persons.

There is also one month a year called Dāmodara (October-November). During this month we sing the *Dāmodarā ākām* song at the beginning of *māṅgala-ārati*, before the *saṅgāra* prayer, and also in the evening at the time of *gaura-ārati* just before the *ārati* song. While singing this special song at night, we also offer small ghee lamps specially made for this occasion to a picture of Dāmodara, which we keep on the altar during this month, and to the Deities as well. This lamp can also be simply made by folding tin foil into the shape of a small lamp, or rather a holder for a cotton ghee wick slightly soaked in ghee which can be picked up and offered to the Lord.

Other days are not so important, but may be observed according to time, place and circumstances.

THE SIX SYMPTOMS OF SURRENDER

*ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam
rakṣatī vi vāso goptṛe varaśaṅgātathā
ātma-nikēpa-kārpaṣye aśvidhā araśagatī*

"The six divisions of surrender are the acceptance of those things favorable to devotional service, the rejection of unfavorable things, the conviction that Kṛṣṇa will give protection, the acceptance of the Lord as one's guardian or master, full surrender, and humility."

END OF THE BOOK

Appendix "A", Offenses unto the Holy Name:

- 1) To blaspheme the devotees who have dedicated their lives for propagating the holy name of the Lord.
- 2) To consider the names of demigods like Lord Ṛṣi or Lord Brahmā to be equal to, or independent of, the name of Lord Viṣṇu.
- 3) To disobey the orders of the spiritual master.
- 4) To blaspheme Vedic literature or literature in pursuance of the Vedic version.
- 5) To consider the glories of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa as imagination.
- 6) To give some interpretation on the holy name of the Lord.
- 7) To commit sinful activities on the strength of the holy name of the Lord. (Because by chanting the holy name of the Lord one can be freed from all kinds of sinful reactions, it should not be taken that one may continue to act sinfully and after that chant Hare Kṛṣṇa to neutralize his sins. Such a dangerous mentality is very offensive and should be avoided.)
- 8) To consider the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa as one of the auspicious ritualistic activities which are offered in the *Vedas* as furtive activities (*karma-kāṇḍā*).
- 9) To instruct a faithless person about the glories to the holy name. (Anyone can take part in chanting the holy name of the Lord but in the beginning one should not be instructed about the transcendental potency of the Lord. Those who are too sinful cannot appreciate the transcendental glories of the Lord, and therefore it is better not to instruct them in this matter.)
- 10) To not have complete faith in the chanting of the holy name and to maintain material attachments, even after understanding so many instructions on this matter.

Every devotee who aspires to be a Vaiṣṇava must guard against these offenses in order to quickly achieve the desired success.

Appendix "B", The Tilaka Mantras

After bathing one should make *tilaka* markings on twelve parts of the body while thereby chant the following the *mantras*:

The forehead — *oṃ ke avāya namaḥ*

The belly — *oṃ nārāyaṣāya namaḥ*

The chest — *oṃ mādhavāya namaḥ*

The throat — *oṃ govindāya namaḥ*

The right side — *oṃ vi Śave namaḥ*

The right arm — *oṃ madhus[™]danāya namaḥ*

The right shoulder — *oṃ trivikramāya namaḥ*

The left side — *oṃ vāmanāya namaḥ*

The left arm — *oṃ sr...dharāya namaḥ*

The left shoulder — *oṃ h...ke āya namaḥ*

The upper back — *oṃ padmanābhāya namaḥ*

The lower back — *oṃ dāmodarāya namaḥ*

Wash your hands and whatever water is left should be wiped on the top of the head in the region of the *ikha* with the *mantra*: *oṃ vāsudevāya namaḥ*.