

# GUEST RECEPTION MANUAL (Campus Hospitality)

International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness  
(ISKCON)

Founder Ācārya:

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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## 01. INTRODUCTION

The process of Krishna consciousness involves realizing the presence of the Supreme Lord Krishna in His material manifestation, in His Deity form, in His devotees and in the hearts of all living entities.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada the Founder Acharya of International Society for Krishna consciousness (ISKCON) toiled hard to make mercy of the Supreme Lord available so easily by establishing Radha-Krishna temples all over the world. He gave us wonderful preaching programs such as book distribution, food for life, Deity worship, Harinaam Sankirtan by which many conditioned souls get an opportunity to receive the mercy of the Lord. The purpose of all outdoor programs is to invite people to come to their real eternal home. When new visitors and devotees come to the temple, they should feel Srila Prabhupada's love for them. They should feel that they have come to their real home.

Since International Society for Krishna consciousness (ISKCON) is a preaching mission, the proper reception of guests is very important.

In Sri Sri Radha Gopinath Mandir, ISKCON, Chowpatty. There is a department consisting of devotees whose service is receiving guests at the temple.

Every guest coming to the temple is warmly welcomed with folded palms and cordially received. As followers of Srila Prabhupada, the founder Acharya of ISKCON, we should consider any guest in the temple is considered to be his guest. Proper reception of a guest can make a difference between a person coming once to the temple and never returning, or becoming a regular visitor & ultimately becoming a devotee of Krishna. Therefore each and every guest should be dealt with great care and hospitality.

The compilation of this manual is a small attempt to guide the devotees who are taking care of the newcomers in their respective temples. The purpose of the service is create Vaikuntha atmosphere in the temple for the new visitors so that they become part of the devotee family and can be engaged in varieties of devotional services.

The contents of this manual have been taken from different sources like Bhakti Vriksha Manual, Pancharatrika - Pradipa books, Srimad Bhagavatam and Chaitanya Charitamrita. Also through the lectures, letters and personal instructions of local GBC of the temple His Holiness Radhanath Maharaj.

This manual shall be useful to ISKCON temples, affiliates of individual ISKCON temples and all devotees in general in establishing the culture of receiving guests.

## 02. VEDIC WAY OF RECEIVING GUESTS (ATITHI – SEVĀ)

The Lord's temple, whether open to the public or in one's home, should be a place where visitors can take part in temple activities as far as possible. In the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, the proper reception of guests is very important, since the Society is a preaching mission.

As followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON, we should consider any guest in the temple to be his guest. Proper reception of a guest can make the difference between a person coming once to the temple and never returning, or becoming a regular visitor and ultimately becoming a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

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

Every devotee should learn how to take care of guests, but temple devotees who regularly worship the Deity should especially be expert in this matter, for they directly represent the proprietor of the temple.

Even the most first-class, opulent Deity worship will fail to attract a guest if the temple residents neglect him.

Although a Vaiṣṇava may be an unexpected guest, we will for clarity's sake exclude Vaiṣṇavas from the category of atithi-sevā in preference to the category of vaiṣṇava-sevā, for a Vaiṣṇava is afforded special consideration, whether he is an unexpected guest or not. The term atithi-sevā may refer to receiving guests other than Vaiṣṇavas, yet the principles observed in receiving unexpected guests apply also to the reception of Vaiṣṇavas who arrive unannounced.

Proper reception of guests is the special duty of the gr̥hastha. If the gr̥hastha does not receive an unexpected guest warmly, no matter who he is, he commits a great sin.

As the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (8.16.7) states, "Homes from which [uninvited] guests go away without having been received even with an offering of a little water are like those holes in the field which are the homes of jackals."

And in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 3.41, purport), Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "According to the Vedic principles, there must always be a guest in the householder's house.

In my childhood I have actually seen my father receive not less than four guests every day, and in those days my father's income was not very great. Nonetheless, there was no difficulty in offering prasāda to at least four guests every day."

Not only gr̥hasthas, however, but everyone in every āśrama and varṇa should properly receive guests.

Lord Caitanya Himself set the example:

After everyone had finished his lunch and washed his mouth and hands, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu [as a sannyāsī] personally decorated everyone with flower garlands and sandalwood pulp. [Cc. Madhya 11.210]

How elaborately you can greet guests will vary according to your means:

In India the custom is that even an ordinary person is offered a glass of water if he suddenly visits and if one cannot offer him foodstuff.

If there is no water, then one can offer a sitting place, even if it is on straw mats.

And if one has no straw mat, he can immediately cleanse the ground and ask the guest to sit there.

Supposing that a householder cannot even do that, then with folded hands he can simply receive the guest, saying 'Welcome.'

And if he cannot do that, then he should feel very sorry for his poor condition and shed tears and simply offer obeisances with his whole family, wife, and children. [Bhāg. 4.22.10, purport]

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

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

You should respect a guest according to his position, determined by wealth, age, and relationship as your relative, by varṇa (brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, and so on), and by knowledge (teacher, spiritual master).

### Manu Samhita quotes on Guest Reception

trinadi bhumir udakam, vak caturthi ca va sunrita  
etany api satam gehe, nocchidyante kadacana

'In the houses of pious people there may be a scarcity of rice or other staples due to poverty, but a straw mat, water, resting place, and sweet words should always be available for serving guests.'

[This verse is found in the Manu-samhita (3.10) and in the Hitopadesa.]

The word trina refers to straw that is used for making an asana or bed.

The word bhumi refers to a resting place.

The word udaka refers to water for cleansing one's hands, legs, and mouth or for performing acamana.

The words sunrita vak mean "truth" or "sweet words," and the word caturthi means "the four items."

-CB Adi-khanda 14.24

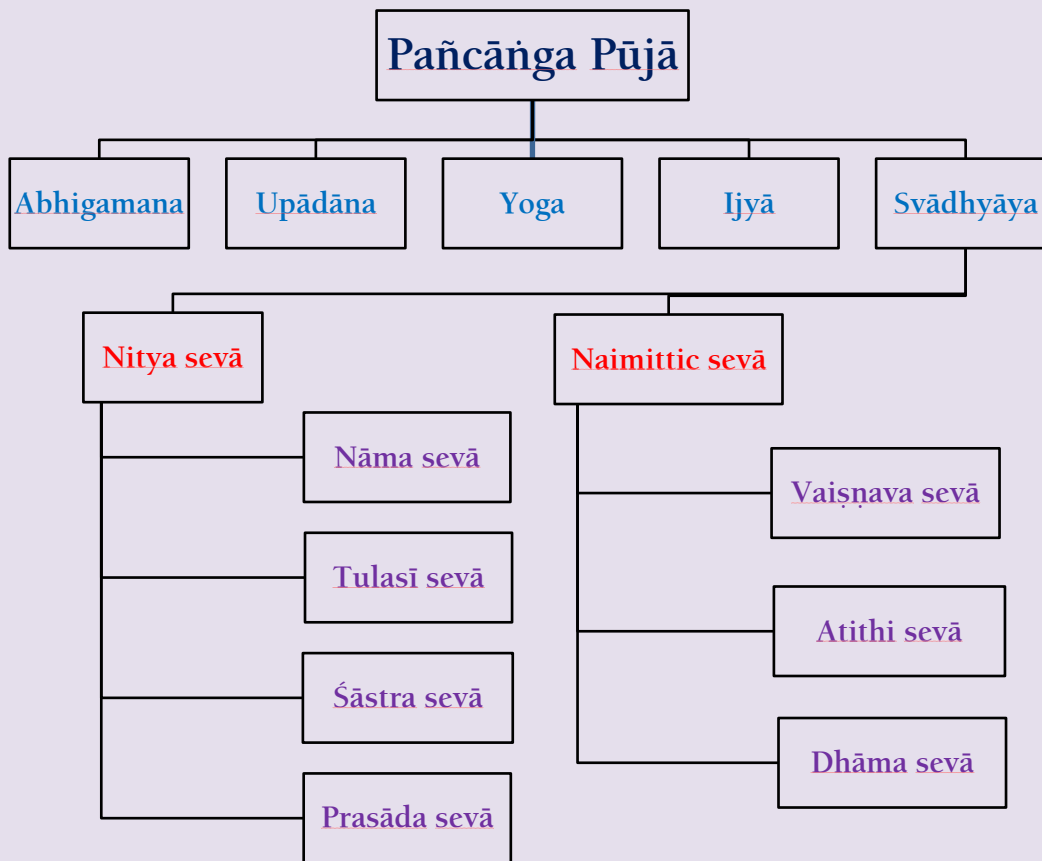
"If one has nothing more to offer, he should apologize without duplicity; then he is not guilty of neglecting his guest. If a householder happily serves his guests without duplicity and according to his ability, he is considered hospitable."

### 03. GUEST SERVICE AS A PART OF DEITY WORSHIP (PANCARATRIKA WAY)

In this chapter we shall see the connection between the deity worship and guest service.

#### The Five Aspects of Worship (pañcāṅga-pūjā)

The Pañcarātra scriptures divide Deity worship into five categories (aṅgas) of activity. These categories are interrelated and interdependent, making an all-encompassing program of service. Although the fourth item, ijjā, refers specifically to the direct worship of the Lord, the worship is not complete without the remaining four activities. Here is a brief description of pūjā.



### 1. Abhigamana (approaching the temple)

This includes such preliminary functions as

Bathing, donning fresh cloth, ornamenting the body with tilaka and tulasī beads, cleaning the temple, removing used articles and cleaning them, and decorating the temple.

Generally all activities performed up to and including the early-morning maṅgala-āratī are considered abhigamana.

### 2. Upādāna (gathering articles for worship)

This includes gathering flowers, suitable foodstuffs, and tulasī leaves, preparing cooked foods, and selecting the proper utensils for the worship.

More broadly it refers to collecting funds to worship the Deity or to help maintain the Lord's temple.

### 3. Yoga (establishing and becoming fixed in one's spiritual identity)

This includes cleansing the body of the material conception and assuming a spiritual body fit for service to the Lord, chanting mantras,

bhūta-śuddhi (identifying oneself as the servant of the servant of Kṛṣṇa) and other processes.

The worshiper further prepares his consciousness by worshiping the spiritual master and Lord Caitanya before performing the main worship of Kṛṣṇa.

Dhyāna (meditation on the form of the Lord) and mānasa-pūjā (worship of the Lord within the mind) may also be considered part of yoga.

These purificatory procedures, performed just before the main worship of the Deity, are also called pūrvāṅga-karma.

### 4. Ijyā (worship of the Lord)

This refers to the offering of sixty-four items of worship, or upacāras, such as āsana, padya and snāna.

### 5. Svādhyāya (cultivation of devotional service)

This is again divided in two parts.

#### A) Nitya sevā (daily service)

Including hearing and chanting the names and glories of the Lord (Nāma sevā)

Serving tulasī (Tulasī sevā)

Studying śāstra, revealed scriptures (Śāstra sevā)

Respecting prasāda (Prasāda sevā)

#### B) Naimittic sevā (occasional service)

Serving the Vaiṣṇavas (Vaiṣṇava sevā)

Receiving guests (Atithi sevā)

Serving the holy dhāma (Dhāma sevā)

Thus studying the śāstra becomes complete when one follows the instructions of śāstra and performs these activities.

From this analysis one can understand that arcanā consists of much more than simply offering external articles to the Deity of the Lord; rather, it involves various preparatory and supplementary

activities, all of which are necessary to ensure devotional purity and concentration, without which external worship simply becomes a dry ritual.

Therefore, although Vaiṣṇava-sevā, atithi-sevā are not direct Deity worship, however to improve the quality of service to the Lord, it is necessary to observe these services.

In this way a sādḥaka is trained to see the Supersoul in the heart of every living entity, especially Vaiṣṇavas and guests.

Receiving with respect

Offering arghya as a sign of welcome and respect (arghya)

Arghya is a mixture of auspicious items offered above or touched to the head of an honored guest as part of reception. To literally offer a person arghya entails either sprinkling it on his head or offering it into his hands so he can sprinkle it over his own head.

According to the Pañcarātrika-vidhi, one shows respect by

- (1) Rising from one's seat when a superior approaches (pratyutthāna),
- (2) Identifying oneself by name and offering greetings (abhivādana),
- (3) Offering prostrated obeisances with five or eight limbs (see description) and touching the superior's feet with crossed hands (i.e. right hand to the right foot, left hand to the left foot) (praṇāma, namaskāra),
- (4) Offering simple or elaborate worship (pūjā) and
- (5) Giving gifts, such as cloth, gold, money, or grains (dāna).

One should generally respect elders, parents, and teachers by rising from a sitting position, identifying yourself and offering obeisances.

Worship and gifts are reserved for the spiritual master or for special occasions, such as weddings or sacrifices.



#### 04. PROPER BEHAVIOR AS A GUEST

In Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 8.49, purport) Śrīla Prabhupāda cautions us against indiscriminately accepting invitations (especially if the occasion involves eating food):

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted the invitation of the Vaiṣṇava brāhmaṇa. Even though a person is a brāhmaṇa strictly following all the rules and regulations of brahminical culture, if he is not a devotee, a follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, one should not accept his invitation. At the present moment, people have become so degraded that they do not even follow the Vedic principles, to say nothing of Vaiṣṇava principles. They eat anything and everything-whatever they like-and therefore the members of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement should be very cautious about accepting invitations.

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

1. If you are an invited guest, you should not overstay your invitation. For example, if invited for a meal, you may rest a short time after the meal to aid your digestion, but do not burden your host by staying and conversing for several hours, unless encouraged to do so.
2. Do not bring your own guests on the strength of your invitation. If you wish to invite other guests, ask your host's permission.
3. If you are permitted to use a telephone, fax machine, or other such facility, offer to pay accrued expenses.
4. When planning to visit a friend or acquaintance uninvited, try to let your prospective host know when you will arrive and how long you intend to stay.
5. Unless you have been invited or have informed your host, try to avoid arriving at a temple or your host's house at noontime or early afternoon, when both the Deity and persons in general rest after lunch.
6. If you stay for some days at your host's house, it is appropriate to give token gifts to the household residents as a gesture of gratitude.  
(Śrīla Prabhupāda did this after staying at a life member's house for some days in Bombay.)

## 05. CAMPUS HOSPITALITY (Guest Reception)

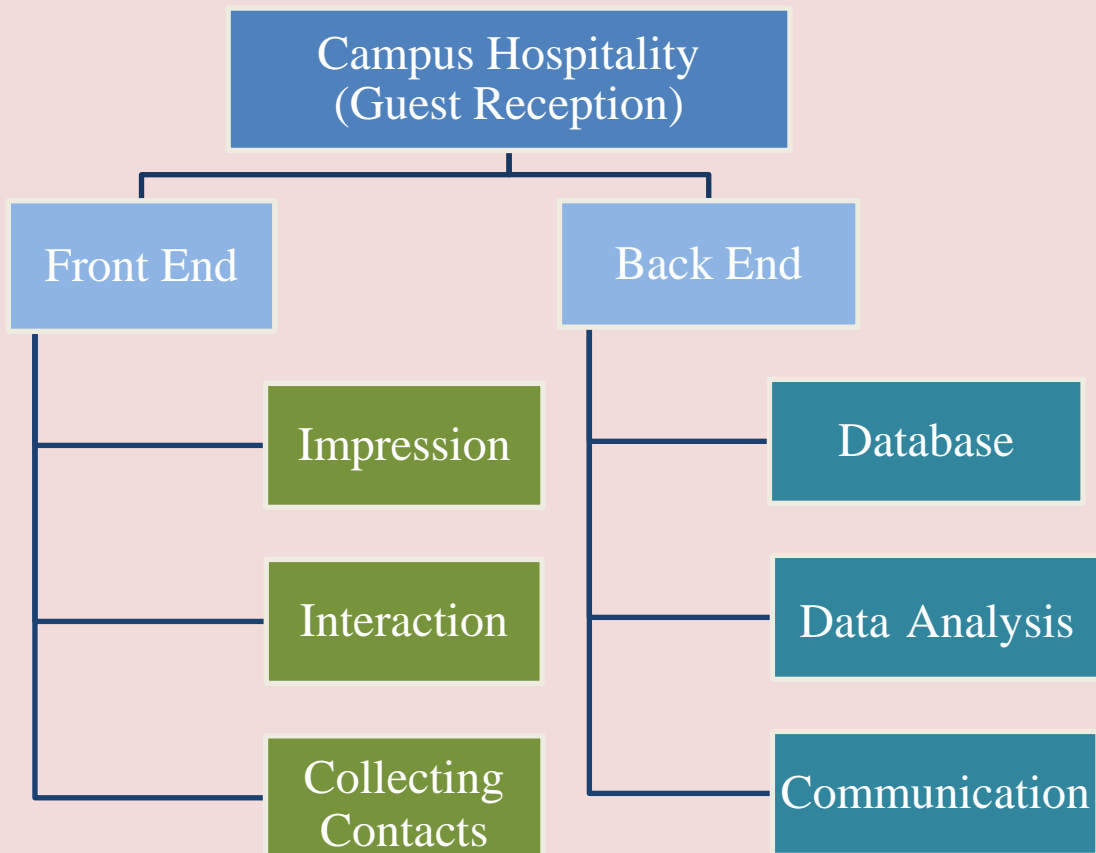
We have divided Campus Hospitality (Guest Reception) in two parts, namely Front End and Back End

Front End involves

1. Impression
2. Interaction
3. Collecting Contacts

Back End involves

1. Database
2. Data Analysis
3. Communication



## **Impression**

New visitors are getting different impressions in various ways.

It may be categorized as follows.

1. Meeting a devotee while distributing a book or prasadam
2. Meeting a devotee in the temple chanting on bead bags or performing kirtan in the temple or outside
3. Observing a devotee performing arati, smelling the incense or flowers
4. Temple cleanliness
5. Hearing a devotee in a satsang program

It is observed that ISKCON preaching strategy involves going out of temple to cultivate new people and bringing them or inviting them in the temple. Certainly there is a lot of energy involved just to bring the person closer to Krishna. However campus preaching involves cultivating or encouraging people who are already coming in the temple. This service involves giving more attention to people coming to temple and follow up with them according to their needs, interests and concerns. In this way they are more likely to become more regular to visit temple and eventually becoming active members of the organization. First impression is the last impression.

**Some of the following points may be noted to give a positive impression about the temple.**

1. Creating a favorable atmosphere in the temple premises  
First of all it is important that there are proper sign boards at various stations in temple premises. Sign boards directing towards 'Darshan', 'Drinking Water', 'Washroom', 'Gift Shop', 'Exhibition', etc.  
Presentable devotees greet the new visitors while they are entering the main temple hall.
2. Sitting arrangement  
A proper place where guests are received, which is well lit, ventilated and clean. A place where guests meet department devotees and are comfortable to discuss with them.
3. Sound levels  
The sound levels around should be minimal. It should not disturb the talk with new guests.
4. Cleanliness  
Temple management may assure that the cleanliness of the temple premises is of high standard. Nothing gives more impression than the cleanliness of the temple. Cleanliness is next to Godliness is immediately felt by the sensitive people.
5. Dress and Appearance  
Department devotees should dress in a proper traditional Vaishnava way with proper Vaishnava tilaka and kanthimala.
6. Other devotees or employees need not flock around the department devotees.

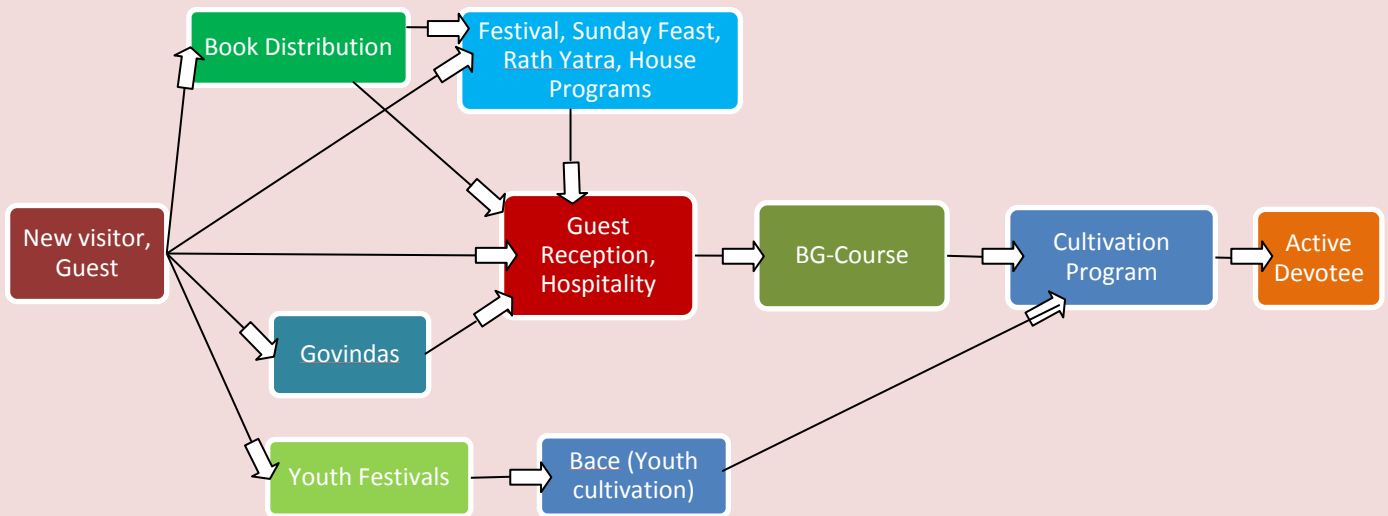
### Flow diagram (Progress of New visitor to Active Devotee)

(Department devotees to keep this in mind while dealing with new visitors)

It has been seen that a new visitor may interact with different affiliates programs of the temple program till he actually comes in contact with Temple.

A systematic program may then follow till new visitors become active devotee.

Devotees at the front end should be able to connect them at the various stages of the process.



## **Interaction**

In many temples guest reception service is not existing, therefore although many visitors are visiting temple, there is hardly anyone to attend them. If guests coming to temple are not attended by anyone or attended by non-authorized people, they shall carry a wrong impression about not only of one temple, however about ISKCON in general. Sometimes they may be carrying a very strong impression since many years and are apprehensive to visit temple. Therefore it is very important for every resident devotee, employee to be aware that while they are interacting knowingly or unknowingly they are giving an impression on the newcomers.

To facilitate this every temple must appoint some devotees at various times of the day to interact with new / regular visitors at various key areas of the temple.

### **Service at various times of the day**

Since temple is public place, people shall visit at any time of the day.

Department devotees should organize themselves in such a way that at least they are ready to receive the guests when darshan of the Lord is open.

### **Location of the reception place / table**

Guest reception devotees should choose a proper place where they shall be able to interact new visitors.

They should keep ready various items required while dealing with them.

- 01) Welcome brochures
- 02) Address slips
- 03) Temple address cards
- 04) Chanting beads
- 05) Writing pads
- 06) Vaishnava calendar
- 07) Back to Godhead Magazine copies
- 08) Writing pens
- 09) Any other latest information

Department devotees should be able to give relevant information regarding following items.

FAQs

About Temple, Timings

Srila Prabhupada and ISKCON

List of Satsang Programs in and around temple

List of ISKCON Centers

Basic Etiquettes

(Please check Appendix at the end of this Manual)

Temple management should see that the devotees working under guest reception are not pulled in different departments.

The line of authority should be very clear.



## Back End

1. Database
  2. Data Analysis
  3. Communication
- Database
    - Database Software
    - Data Entry
    - Data Entry Guidelines
  - Data Analysis
    - Taking Reports
    - Follow Up
  - Communication
    - Emails
    - Letters
    - Telephone calls

(This section shall be discussed in the next version of Guest Reception Manual.)

## 06. BASIC ASPECTS OF DEALINGS WITH NEW GUESTS

01) Understanding – First of all it is very important to understand a person properly, before one starts actually preaching about Krishna Consciousness philosophy to newcomer.

To keep in mind that they might have come from far distance places.

They may be tired.

They may be from different religious groups or faiths (spiritual organizations).

They may be life members.

02) Be a good listener – People need to be heard first.

Unless you listen carefully, you cannot expect other person to hear from you. E.g. Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's hearing from Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya.

Best way of respect is to keep quiet and hear.

03) Opening the talk - One must open the talk on the right footing. This requires little practice & sensitivity. One can begin with some basic questions like

Where do they stay?

Whether they are having their own business/service?

In case of students: What are they studying?

How did they come to know about the temple?

04) Developing the Talk - One can preach according to the level & interest of the person. In this way one can develop the talk.

05) Time – If person seems in a hurry, don't take their valuable time in going into details, but just explain the basic things like timings of the temple, schedule of different spiritual talks in our temple or the programs nearby their place of staying. Such talks should be brief & meaningful. (In short you may give temple brochure, Radha Gopinath photo cards)

06) Closing the talk – what to speak while departing is also important aspect of dealings.

Don't close the talk with pushy words.

We should sincerely thank them for coming to temple and sparing their valuable time. We should encourage them to come again and ready to offer our services to them.

07) Appreciation – Many times visitors brings different types of offerings (like flowers, fruits, sweets, tulasi leaves, etc.) All these items should be used in Lord's service. These offerings should not be kept here and there.

This service done by visitors should be appreciated. It is the duty of devotees who receive these offerings to be used in the service of the Lord.

Srila Prabhupada writes letter in this regard:

“The system is that anyone (who) comes to the temple, he brings something ... to offer to the deity ... That is he beginning of love (to) give something... If I love you, I must give you something, and whatever you'll give me, I shall accept it. So give something to Krishna and take His instruction.



If people take advantage, automatically he becomes devotee, lover of Krishna. That is the success of life.

(Srila Prabhupada's letter, March 18, 1976.)

08) Be warm - If you are friendly people come close to you. Others also come and reveal their hearts to you. Preconceived notions about a person will obstruct our warmth.

E.g. Srila Prabhupada and Giriraja Maharaj's mother.

09) Be pleasant - as far as possible. Don't become repulsive. Welcome with a smile.

10) Courteous - Basic manners and rules.

E.g. Srila Prabhupada saw lady walking near airport with child in arms and allowed the lady to enter first, opened the door and allowed her to go first.

11) Helpful - This makes a person really feel that you are really serious about preaching. E.g. people at reception desk at a hotel "How can I help you?" If you don't know solution to a particular problem, but if you know and can direct to someone who can solve that problem - that's part of help.

12) Concerned - Mayapur festival 1975 Srila Prabhupada's guru puja. Thousands of disciples assembled. Srila Prabhupada spotted injury of one amongst those thousands disciples and immediately arranged for his medication.

13) Hospitable - Making arrangements for comfortable stay, prasadam, etc. Esp. for Srila Prabhupada's disciples, devotees who bring recommendation letter from their temple presidents.

14) Learning From them – Somebody more experienced in their particular field may give some suggestions regarding improving particular services. In such cases one should be open-minded. One should accept such guidance. One should not neglect it.

15) Always give Prasadam

Nature of prasadam- One remembers the prasadam, though one may not remember what you preach.

Srila Prabhupada's pastime of giving prasadam to a guest, directly from the altar.

16) Be prepared to deal with one's material problem

Give sympathetic hearing to problems of the person, when you are preaching.

A: at one's outset,

B: after one starts chanting.

E.g. overflowing jar of milk. If one is fully occupied with his problems, he may not be able to take up your instructions.

e.g. - plants will not thrive even you may have best seed, best soil, but unsuitable environment. For the person to progress in bhakti, he needs a favorable environment for practice of devotional service. Problems are not material, because it is related to spiritual life. Preaching is to win the faith of the person.

17) Don't be overly aggressive

Be careful with the devotee dealing, if not, may end up with no more devotees.

a) Florida University student later becoming bank manager immediately sanctioned loan for devotees - we never know when we are preaching.

b) While giving prasadam be courteous, don't be aggressive. Some families have stopped coming to temple because they are not treated properly.

18) Develop nice personal relations

a) Keep personal relations with all.

b) Srila Prabhupada was loving and caring for all devotees.

George Harrison became devotee just by Srila Prabhupada's reciprocation.

Devotees harassed him for fund collection, but Srila Prabhupada's gesture of giving him his ring before his departure made him appreciate.

19) Encourage them to read books

You may keep track of their reading.

(Please refer APPENDIX for the suggested order of reading books.)

20) Guide them according to one's level

After having understood the person properly, one should try to guide him/her to a devotee or a counselor group who have similar interests. One should not try to solve all of their problems at the beginning; one should guide them to the proper devotees.

E.g. person of medical field to be guided to devotees doctors, college students to be guided to college preachers.

Also, one should preach according to one's level of understanding.

E.g. Srila Prabhupada's preaching to motor car racer. He was champion Srila Prabhupada started talking about car races; talk went about 1 hour... accidents leading to death. Next two hours Srila Prabhupada was speaking about overcoming death.

21) Don't get into heated arguments

a) This is the biggest loophole. Some understand easily, but some take a lot of time.

We want our speech to be fully accepted.

Srila Prabhupada: If opponent is in a challenging mood, then best to give him prasadam.

In such heated arguments, actually we may want to show how many books we have read.

## 07. DEALING WITH DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF GUESTS

One should anticipate different types of people visiting the temple; therefore one should be expert in dealing with them.

While speaking/discussing with individuals:

- 1) One should know what to speak
- 2) How much time to speak
- 3) To let them express their views
- 4) How to conclude the topic

Depending upon one's relations with them one should deal with them. The discussions need not be philosophical always.

One should have balanced approach towards all different types of people, whether individually or collectively (while addressing to a small group.)

### 1) Newcomers

- a) To give them temple brochure and prasadam.
- b) To inform about upcoming festivals, BG-course, etc.
- c) To direct them to satsang programs nearby to their staying place.
- d) To note down their name, address, phone numbers for further follow – up.
- e) To show them books of Srila Prabhupada.
- f) To explain Deities in our temple.

### 2) Students

- a) To explain them about upcoming BG-course, PRERANA/CHETANA- youth festival programs, etc.
- b) To guide them to college preachers.

### 4) Ladies/Gents

- a) Generally gents should be received by a male devotee and ladies should be received by a female devotee.
- b) One should very respectfully guide them to meet with the same gender without offending them. However in case of dealings one should observe Vaishnava etiquette very carefully.

### 3) Small children

- a) To make them happy by giving them Maha prasadam. If they insist on taking more prasadam do not argue with them. In fact you can please their parents by pleasing their children.
- b) To give them small picture of Sri Sri Radha Gopinath.
- c) Not to become frivolous with them.
- d) Always remember that they are young Vaishnavas and in the future they can become good leaders of ISKCON.

### 5) Senior citizens

- a) Just treat them nicely.
- b) Do not preach them heavily.

6) ISKCON devotees

- a) Observe Vaishnava Etiquette while dealing with them.
- b) Make them feel at home.

7) Life Members

- a) No need of preaching to them; just be courteous.
- b) Give them Prasādam and Caraṇāmṛta.

8) Press reporters/Journalists

- a) Generally these people come unassumingly, so be very careful in giving information.
- b) If you do not know, do not exaggerate.
- c) It is better to direct them to the president or Media representative, who can give them relevant information.

9) V.I.P.s

- a) Although all types of people are treated properly, sometimes members of upper class societies, socially, politically influential people may come to visit the temple they should be treated very respectfully.
- b) Someone should personally guide them, show them the temple campus, and explain about the deities.
- c) They can be offered Prasadam, place for resting etc, as much as possible.

10) Suspicious people

- a) Sometimes suspicious/doubtful people may visit the temple. So do not become angry upon them. Just give them 'only' Prasadam.
- b) Demanding money – Somebody unknown person demanding money, then politely refuse.
- c) A person may demand money after showing some interest by coming regularly over sometime. Still you should avoid.

11) Relatives

Śrīla Prabhupāda instructs us how to deal with a relative, especially one who is unsympathetic to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

As father and mother, they should be offered proper respect according to social custom, but you cannot accept their non-godly instructions. Best thing, to avoid misunderstanding, is to remain silent without any affirmation or negation of their instructions. [Letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda, 29 March 1968]

You must treat your father as respectfully as myself; even if you are sometimes ill-treated, you should tolerate ... You should follow the example of Prahlad Maharaj ... "You will never agree to your father's demoniac principles, but still you will try to serve him as faithfully as a nice obedient son."

[Letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda, 22 November 1968]

## 08. GUEST RECEPTION AND VARIOUS AREAS IN TEMPLE PREMISES

Temple Hall

Reception Room

Govinda's Restaurant

Matchless Gift Shop

Book Distribution Table

Security

Shoe-service

Prasadam Distribution

(The discussion in this manual mostly applies to Temple Hall. We shall discuss the remaining areas in the next version of Guest Reception Manual.)

## **09. DEALING WITH DIFFERENT SITUATIONS**

### **01. Handling donations**

If guests give donation you may hand over to donation coordinator, who will submit / remit the same to Accounts department and give the respective donors official receipts.

To ask the person to give his address, contact numbers, e-mail address so that the donation coordinator is able to send receipts to them.

### **02. Sponsorship**

Well wishers desiring to sponsor lunch prasadam, deity services, then in that case you may direct them to respective Departmental Heads.

### **03. Offerings**

If they bring offerings, like fruits, sweets, etc, then to see that these items are actually offered in front of their Lordships and not kept inside somewhere.

To give them back after offerings are over, with some flowers, tulasi leaves or a maha garland.

### **04. Chanting beads / Chanting bags / Neck beads**

Pujaris to offer these items at the lotus feet of the lord

### **05. Guests want to take photographs of the Deities**

You may allow them to take the photographs of only deities, however you may ask them to avoid taking photos with deities or Srila Prabhupada in the background.

### **06. Guests want to take Prasadam with devotees**

To coordinate with devotee in charge of serving prasadam. To see that the guests do not leave unsatisfied.

### **07. Guests want to stay overnight**

You may check with your respective temple policy and discuss with concerned authorities.

### **08. Taking initiative**

Sometimes visitors come and they sit in the temple or they are expecting someone to explain about temple timings. Sometimes they may be leaving without taking prasadam or charanamrita.

In all such cases one should take initiative and explain to them about temple timings, give prasadam etc.

### **09. Speaking to a group, whether it may be**

One family, College students, Professional group

One should try to give attention to everyone equally.

In a family if you please a small child you can please everyone, however others should not be neglected.

(Srila Prabhupada gave the example: "If you love me, love my dog.")

One should remember that in a group the relationships are interwoven, therefore one should become expert in his/her words, behavior, & dealings.

## APPENDIX

### 01. QUOTATIONS AND STORIES FROM ŚRIMAD BHĀGAVATAM

SB 1.18.28 (Mahārāja Parīkṣit Cursed by a Brāhmaṇa Boy, Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī to sages of Naimiṣāranya)

TRANSLATION

The King, not received by any formal welcome by means of being offered a seat, place, water and sweet addresses, considered himself neglected, and so thinking he became angry.

PURPORT

The law of reception in the codes of the Vedic principles states that even if an enemy is received at home, he must be received with all respects. He should not be given a chance to understand that he has come into the house of an enemy. When Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Arjuna and Bhīma, approached Jarāsandha in Magadha, the respectable enemies were given a royal reception by King Jarāsandha. The guest enemy, namely Bhīma, was to fight with Jarāsandha, and yet they were given a grand reception. At night they used to sit down together as friends and guests, and in the day they used to fight, risking life and death. That was the law of reception. The reception law enjoins that a poor man, who has nothing to offer his guest, should be good enough to offer a straw mat for sitting, a glass of water for drinking and some sweet words. Therefore, to receive a guest, either friend or foe, there is no expense. It is only a question of good manners.

SB 4.3.16 (Talks between Lord Śiva and Satī)

TRANSLATION

The great Lord replied: My dear beautiful wife, you have said that one may go to a friend's house without being invited, and this is true, provided such a friend does not find fault with the guest because of bodily identification and thereby become angry towards him.

SB 4.3.18 (Talks between Lord Śiva and Satī)

TRANSLATION

One should not go to anyone's house, even on the consideration of his being a relative or a friend, when the man is disturbed in his mind and looks upon the guest with raised eyebrows and angry eyes.

SB 4.22.10 (Pṛthu Mahārāja's Meeting with the Four Kumāras, Pṛthu Mahārāja to the Four Kumāras)

TRANSLATION

A person who is not very rich and is attached to family life becomes highly glorified when saintly persons are present in his home. The master and servants who are engaged in offering the exalted visitors water, a sitting place and paraphernalia for reception are glorified, and the home itself is also glorified.

PURPORT

It may be argued that all householders are not very rich and that one cannot receive great saintly persons or preachers because they are always accompanied by their disciples. If a householder is to receive a saintly person, he has to receive his entourage also. It is said in the śāstras that Durvāsā Muni was always accompanied by sixty thousand disciples and that if there was a little discrepancy in their reception; he would be very angry and would sometimes curse the host. The fact is that

every householder, regardless of his position or economic condition, can at least receive saintly guests with great devotion and offer them drinking water, for drinking water is available always. In India the custom is that even an ordinary person is offered a glass of water if he suddenly visits and if one cannot offer him foodstuff. If there is no water, then one can offer a sitting place, even if it is on straw mats. And if one has no straw mat, he can immediately cleanse the ground and ask the guest to sit there. Supposing that a householder cannot even do that, and then with folded hands he can simply receive the guest, saying, "Welcome." And if he cannot do that, then he should feel very sorry for his poor condition and shed tears and simply offer obeisances with his whole family, wife and children. In this way he can satisfy any guest, even if the guest is a saintly person or a king.

SB 5.26.18 (Description of the Hellish Planets, Śukadeva Gosvāmī to King Parīkṣit)

TRANSLATION

A person is considered no better than a crow if after receiving some food, he does not divide it among guests, old men and children, but simply eats it himself, or if he eats it without performing the five kinds of sacrifice. After death he is put into the most abominable hell, known as Kṛmibhojana. In that hell is a lake 100,000 yojanas [800,000 miles] wide and filled with worms. He becomes a worm in that lake and feeds on the other worms there, who also feed on him. Unless he atones for his actions before his death, such a sinful man remains in the hellish lake of Kṛmibhojana for as many years as there are yojanas in the width of the lake.

SB 5.26.35 (Description of the Hellish Planets, Śukadeva Gosvāmī to King Parīkṣit)

TRANSLATION

A householder who receives guests or visitors with cruel glances, as if to burn them to ashes, is put into the hell called Paryāvartana, where he is gazed at by hard-eyed vultures, herons, crows and similar birds, which suddenly swoop down and pluck out his eyes with great force.

PURPORT

According to the Vedic etiquette, even an enemy who comes to a householder's home should be received in such a gentle way that he forgets that he has come to the home of an enemy. A guest who comes to one's home should be received very politely. If he is unwanted, the householder should not stare at him with blinking eyes, for one who does so will be put into the hell known as Paryāvartana after death, and there many ferocious birds like vultures, crows, and corks will suddenly come upon him and pluck out his eyes.

SB 6.7.29, 30 (Indra Offends His Spiritual Master, Bṛhaspati, The demigods requesting Viśvarūpa, the son of Tvaṣṭā to perform sacrifice)

TRANSLATION

The ācārya, the spiritual master who teaches all the Vedic knowledge and gives initiation by offering the sacred thread, is the personification of all the Vedas. Similarly, a father personifies Lord Brahmā; a brother, King Indra; a mother, the planet earth; and a sister, mercy. A **guest personifies religious principles, an invited guest personifies the demigod Agni**, and all living entities personify Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

PURPORT

According to the moral instructions of Cāṇakya Paṇḍita, *ātmavat sarva-bhūteṣu*: one should observe all living entities to be on the same level as oneself. This means that no one should be neglected as inferior; because Paramātmā is seated in everyone's body, everyone should be respected as a temple



of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This verse describes the different ways in which one should respect a guru, a father, a brother, a sister, a guest and so on.

#### 7.14 Ideal Family Life, Summary

A grihastha should not be very much attached to his wife; he should engage even his own wife in serving a guest with all attention. Whatever money a gr̥hastha accumulates by the grace of God he should spend in five activities, namely worshipping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, receiving Vaiṣṇavas and saintly persons, distributing prasāda to the general public and to all living entities, offering prasāda to his forefathers, and also offering prasāda to his own self. Gr̥hasthas should always be ready to worship everyone as mentioned above. The gr̥hastha should not eat anything not offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

#### SB 8.16.6 (Executing the Payo-vrata Process of Worship, Kaśyapa Muni to Aditi)

##### PURPORT

It is the duty of a householder to receive guests, even if a guest be an enemy. When a guest comes to one's home, one should properly receive him by standing up and offering him a seat. It is enjoined, gr̥he śatrum api prāptam viśvastam akutobhayam

**If even an enemy comes to one's home, one should receive him in such a way that the guest will forget that his host is an enemy. According to one's position, one should properly receive anyone who comes to one's home. At least a seat and a glass of water should be offered, so that the guest will not be displeased.** Kaśyapa Muni inquired from Aditi whether disrespect had been shown to such guests or atithis. The word atithi refers to one who comes without an invitation.

#### SB 8.16.7 (Kaśyapa Muni to Aditi)

##### TRANSLATION

Homes from which guests go away without having been received even with an offering of a little water are like those holes in the field which are the homes of jackals.

##### PURPORT

In a field there may be holes made by snakes and mice, but when there are very big holes, it may be supposed that jackals live there. Certainly no one goes to take shelter in such homes. Thus the homes of human beings where atithis, uninvited guests, are not properly received are like the homes of jackals.

#### SB 9.4.45 (Ambarīṣa Mahārāja Offended by Durvāsā Muni, Durvāsā Muni to Ambarīṣa Mahārāja)

##### TRANSLATION

Mahārāja Ambarīṣa, you have invited me to eat as a guest, but instead of feeding me, you yourself have eaten first. Because of your misbehavior, I shall show you something to punish you.

##### PURPORT

A devotee cannot be defeated by a so-called mystic yogī. This will be proved by the failure of Durvāsā Muni's endeavor to chastise Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. *Harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇāḥ* (SB 5.18.12). One who is not a pure devotee of the Supreme Lord has no good qualifications, however great a mystic, philosopher or fruitive worker he may be. Only a devotee emerges victorious in all circumstances, as will be shown in this incident involving the rivalry between Durvāsā and Mahārāja Ambarīṣa.

## 9.21 The Dynasty of Bharata

### King Rantideva

The following narration from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.21 Chapter Summary and Texts 10-13) illustrates how important it is to receive guests properly:

Once, after King Rantideva spent forty-eight days fasting, not even drinking water, excellent food made with ghee was brought to him, but when he was about to eat it a brāhmaṇa guest appeared. Rantideva therefore did not eat the food but instead he immediately offered a portion of it to the brāhmaṇa. When the brāhmaṇa left and Rantideva was just about to eat the remnants of the food, a śūdra appeared. Rantideva therefore divided the remnants between the śūdra and himself. Again, when he was just about to eat the remnants of the food, another guest appeared. Rantideva therefore gave the rest of the food to the new guest.

Thereafter, only the drinking water remained, and there was only enough to satisfy one person, but when the king was just about to drink it, a caṇḍāla appeared and said, 'O king, although I am lowborn, kindly give me some drinking water.' Aggrieved at hearing the pitiable words of the poor, fatigued caṇḍāla, Mahārāja Rantideva spoke the following nectarean words: 'I do not pray to the Supreme Personality of Godhead for the eight perfections of mystic yoga, nor for salvation from repeated birth and death. I want only to stay among all the living entities and suffer all distresses on their behalf so that they may be freed from suffering. By offering my water to maintain the life of this poor caṇḍāla, who is struggling to live, I have been freed from all hunger, thirst, fatigue, trembling of the body, moroseness, distress, lamentation, and illusion.'

### SB 9.24.32 (Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śukadeva Gosvāmī to King Parīkṣit)

#### TRANSLATION

Once when Durvāsā was a guest at the house of Pṛthā's father, Kuntī, Pṛthā satisfied Durvāsā by rendering service. Therefore she received a mystic power by which she could call any demigod. To examine the potency of this mystic power, the pious Kuntī immediately called for the sun-god.

### SB 11.3.55 (Liberation from the Illusory Energy, Śrī Āvirhotra to King Nimi)

#### TRANSLATION

Thus the worshiper of the Supreme Lord should recognize that the Personality of Godhead is all-pervading and should worship Him through His presence in fire, the sun, water and other elements, in the heart of the guest one receives in one's home and also in one's own heart. In this way the worshiper will very soon achieve liberation.

### SB 11.17.54 (Lord Kṛṣṇa's Description of the Varṇāśrama System, the Supreme Personality of Godhead to Uddhava)

#### TRANSLATION

Deeply considering the actual situation, a liberated soul should live at home just like a guest, without any sense of proprietorship or false ego. In this way he will not be bound or entangled by domestic affairs.

## 02. QUOTATIONS AND STORIES FROM ŚRĪ CAITANYA CARITAMRITA

### Ādi-līlā 14.37

#### TRANSLATION

On one occasion the Lord ate the food of a brāhmaṇa guest three times, and later, in confidence, the Lord delivered that brāhmaṇa from material engagement.

#### PURPORT

The story of the deliverance of this brāhmaṇa is as follows. A brāhmaṇa who was touring all over the country, traveling from one place of pilgrimage to another, reached Navadvīpa and became a guest in the house of Jagannātha Miśra. Jagannātha Miśra gave him all ingredients for cooking, and the brāhmaṇa prepared his food. When the brāhmaṇa was offering the food to Lord Viṣṇu in meditation, child Nimāi came before him and began to eat it, and because of this the brāhmaṇa thought the whole offering had been spoiled. Therefore by the request of Jagannātha Miśra he cooked for a second time, but when he was meditating the child again came before him and began to eat the food, again spoiling the offering. By the request of Jagannātha Miśra the brāhmaṇa cooked for a third time, but for a third time the Lord came before him and began to eat the food, although the child had been locked within a room and everyone was sleeping because it was late at night. Thus, thinking that on that day Lord Viṣṇu was not willing to accept his food and that he was therefore ordained to fast, the brāhmaṇa became greatly agitated and cried aloud, hāya hāya: “What has been done! What has been done!” When Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw the brāhmaṇa in that agitated state, He told him, “Formerly I was the son of mother Yaśodā. At that time also you became a guest in the house of Nanda Mahārāja, and I disturbed you in this way. I am very much pleased by your devotion. Therefore I am eating the food you have prepared.” Understanding the favor offered to him by the Lord, the brāhmaṇa was greatly pleased, and he was overwhelmed with love of Kṛṣṇa. He was thankful to the Lord, for he felt himself greatly fortunate. Then the Lord asked the brāhmaṇa not to disclose the incident to anyone else. This pastime is very elaborately explained in the Caitanya-bhāgavata, Ādi-khaṇḍa, Chapter Five.

### Ādi-līlā 17.103

#### TRANSLATION

On another day an astrologer came who was said to know everything - past, present and future. Thus Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu received him with all honor and put this question before him.

#### PURPORT

Brāhmaṇas generally used to become astrologers, Āyur-vedic physicians, teachers and priests. Although highly learned and respectable, such brāhmaṇas went from door to door to distribute their knowledge. A brāhmaṇa would first go to a householder's home to give information about the functions to be performed on a particular tithi, or date, but if there were sickness in the family, the family members would consult the brāhmaṇa as a physician, and the brāhmaṇa would give instruction and some medicine. Often, since the brāhmaṇas were expert in astrology, people would also be greatly inquisitive about their past, present and future.

Although the brāhmaṇa appeared at Lord Caitanya's house as a beggar, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu received him with great respect because he was a qualified brāhmaṇa who knew the astrological science perfectly. **Although brāhmaṇas would go door to door just like beggars, they were honored as very respectable guests.** This was the system in Hindu society five hundred years ago, during the time of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This system was current even one hundred years ago; even fifty or sixty years ago, when we were children, such brāhmaṇas would visit householders like humble

beggars, and people would derive great benefit from the mercy of such brāhmaṇas. The greatest benefit was that a householder could save a great deal of money from being spent on doctor bills because the brāhmaṇas, aside from explaining the past, present and future, could ordinarily cure all kinds of diseases simply by giving instructions and some medicine. Thus no one was bereft of the benefit of a first-class physician, astrologer and priest.

### Madhya-līlā 3.41, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Stay at the House of Advaita Ācārya

#### TRANSLATION

All the eatables were first cooked by the wife of Advaita Ācārya. Then Śrī Advaita Ācārya personally offered everything to Lord Viṣṇu.

#### PURPORT

This is the ideal householder's life. The husband and wife live together, and the husband works very hard to secure paraphernalia for worshipping Lord Viṣṇu. The wife at home cooks a variety of foods for Lord Viṣṇu, and the husband offers it to the Deity. After that, āraṭi is performed, and the prasādam is distributed amongst family members and guests. According to the Vedic principles, there must always be a guest in a householder's house. In my childhood I have actually seen my father receive not less than four guests every day, and in those days my father's income was not very great. Nonetheless, there was no difficulty in offering prasādam to at least four guests every day. According to Vedic principles, a householder, before taking lunch, should go outside and shout very loudly to see if there is anyone without food. In this way he invites people to take prasādam. If someone comes, the householder offers him prasādam, and if there is not much left, he should offer his own portion to the guest. If no one responds to his call, the householder can accept his own lunch. Śrī Advaita Prabhu was an ideal gr̥hastha, and His house was the ideal gr̥hastha-āśrama.

### Madhya-līlā 22.141, The Process of Devotional Service

#### TRANSLATION

“One who has given up all material duties and taken full shelter at the lotus feet of Mukunda, who gives shelter to all, is not indebted to the demigods, great sages, ordinary living beings, relatives, friends, mankind or even his forefathers who have passed away.”

#### PURPORT

It is said:

adhyāpanam brahma-yajñam pitṛ-yajñas tu tarpaṇam

homo daivo balir bhauto nṛ-yajño 'tithi-pūjanam

“By offering oblations with ghee, one satisfies the demigods. By studying the Vedas, one performs brahma-yajña, which satisfies the great sages. Offering libations of water before one's forefathers is called pitṛ-yajña. By offering tribute, one performs bhūta-yajña. By properly receiving guests, one performs nṛ-yajña.” These are the five yajñas that liquidate the five kinds of indebtedness—indebtedness to the demigods, great sages, forefathers, living entities and common men. Therefore one has to perform these five kinds of yajñas. But when one takes to the saṅkīrtana-yajña (the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra), one does not have to perform any other yajña. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Nārada Muni made a statement about the systematic performance of bhāgavata-dharma in connection with statements previously made by the nine Yogendras before Mahārāja Nimi. The sage Karabhājana Ṛṣi explained the four incarnations of the four yugas, and at the end, in this verse (text 141), he explained the position of Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee and how he is absolved of all debts.

### 03. ŚRILA PRABHUPADA ON GUEST RECEPTION (FROM LECTURES)

#### **Bhagavad-gītā 7.1-3 -- London, August 4, 1971**

Prabhupāda: Gṛhe śatrum api prāptam. Śatrum means enemy. If you see that an enemy has come to your house, śatrum api. Śatru means enemy; api, although. You should receive him in such a way that he'll completely believe you that you are not his enemy. That was the system. In the Kurukṣetra war, the two brothers, I mean to say, cousin-brothers are fighting. But after finishing the fighting there is no enmity. These people are going to their camp; they are coming, talking or taking lunch. Very friendly. Friendly. There was another fight between Bhīma and Jarāsandha. The whole day there was fighting. It was decided that one should be killed. That's a fact. The fighting between kṣatriyas it will not end unless one of them is killed. That is kṣatriya spirit. So they know... Bhīma and Jarāsandha knew it very well that this fighting is going on until one is dead, one of the belligerent parties. But at night Bhīma is the guest of Jarāsandha, eating together, talking friendly. This is brahminical culture. For duty's sake, for some cause, we may fight. That's all right. But that does not mean we shall remain inimical always.

Gṛhe śatrum api prāptam viśvastam akuto bhayam.

#### **Bhagavad-gītā 7.2 -- London, March 10, 1975**

"But I don't like yajña." Then karma-bandhanaḥ, they are becoming entrapped, working under the influence of certain material modes of nature. Therefore you are infecting that material mode of nature, and according to the infection, you will develop the next body. Just like according to infection you develop the disease, so this material body is disease. That we do not understand. We are soaping this material body, keeping it fit, but we do not know that this is disease. Anyone, does anyone want to keep the disease and say, "My dear disease, please live with me forever"? (Laughter) Is there any intelligent man say like that? Disease is to be cured, is to be driven away. In Hindi they say,

jara ar para okhane kha na baviya ar.(?)

Means "Unwanted guest and disease, you do not give him to eat and he will go away."

He will go away. So any disease, you starve for few days, two days, three days, it will go. And any unwanted guest, you don't supply him food. He will automatically go away. So disease should not be maintained. Disease should be cured.

#### **Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.3.17 -- Los Angeles, July 12, 1969**

So this king, being tired, being thirsty, entered the home of a sage, and he was in meditation. So the king called him. Because he was king, so he is habituated to order. A king is not supposed to submit, although they submitted to great sages and brāhmaṇas. But generally, their spirit is ordering, commanding spirit. So he commanded, "Give me a glass of water. I am very thirsty." So that sage, who was in meditation, could not hear him. The king became little angry, that "I am your guest. I am king. I am asking you water, and you are not hearing me. You are in your meditation." So he became little disgusted, and there was a dead snake. So he took that dead snake and got it round about the neck of the sage and went away in disgust, that "This sage did not offer me even a glass of water." Because, according to Vedic system, if somebody comes in your home, even if he is enemy, it is the injunction of the Vedas: gṛhaṁ śatrum api prāptam viśvastam akuto 'bhayam. When a person comes at your home, never mind even if he's enemy... Friend is welcome, that's all right. But even an enemy comes, they are not forbidden. Not that in the gate there is, oh, "Beware of dog," "No trespasser allowed." No. There was no restriction. Even enemy was admitted, "Come on." So gṛhaṁ śatrum api prāptam viśvastam akuto 'bhayam. Even an enemy enters your house, you'll receive him in such a

friendly way that he will forget that you are his enemy. That was the system. So because Mahārāja Parīkṣit was king, he saw that there is negligence of this disciplinary action. "I became... I was king, and I was thirsty. I became his guest, I came..." Atithi. This guest is called atithi. Atithi means there are some guests who give notice before, prior to coming there, and some guests come without any notice. So the guest who comes without any notice, he's called atithi. So according to Hindu custom, the householder is to keep always some foodstuff for atithi guest. Somebody may come without notice, so some foodstuff is already in the stock. That is called atithi food. And a gr̥hastha, the householder, is ordered that before eating, a householder was to see in the members of the family, first the children must be fed, then diseased person must be fed, then elderly, old person must be fed. In this way, when everything is finished, then the proprietor of the household, he will take his meals, and before taking his meals, he will stand outdoors and call loudly, "If somebody is hungry, please come. Still there is food here." And if there is no response, then he'll take. This is the system of Vedic civilization.

So when Mahārāja Parīkṣit saw that "This sage, although he's sage, he's to be ideal man, he did not hear me. I am thirsty, I asked him water, and..." The injunction is, when you receive somebody, even if you are very poor man, you should offer the guests a comfortable seat and a glass of water. That is not expensive. You can offer anyone a seat: "Please come and sit down here and take a glass of water." And if you can provide, you can give him nice foodstuff, but even if you have got nothing at your home, this thing you can offer without any expenditure, without any botheration: to receive him, "Please come on, come here, and sit down. Take a glass of water." That is the system still.

#### **Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.31 - San Francisco, July 16, 1975**

According to Vedic system, at home a sannyāsī is welcome, a brāhmaṇa is welcome. Because they will give good instruction, so they are welcome. Just like when Gargamuni came to Mahārāja Nanda, Nanda Mahārāja's house, how nice reception he gave him. That is the... Especially... Of course, any guest is welcome, but especially a brāhmaṇa, a sannyāsī, is very well received. Still in Indian village, if a sannyāsī goes, he has no problem for eating or staying, residence.

#### **Sunday Feast Lecture -- Atlanta, March 2, 1975**

We have invited Kṛṣṇa, Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as our guest, and He has consented to come here. So we must offer foodstuff, what He wants, not that according to my whims. That is not etiquette. If some respectable guest comes to your house, you ask him, "What shall you eat, sir? What kind of food I can give you?" So whatever he orders, you have to supply. That is real receiving the guest. So Kṛṣṇa says that "Give Me food amongst these items-patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyāṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati. That also with bhakti, not neglectfully. With great devotion, if somebody offers Me these things, then I can take." So Kṛṣṇa takes these, these patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyāṁ, grains, food grains, and milk and vegetables and fruits. So we prepare hundreds of items with these things. You can do that. And they are all delicious and full of vitamins. So why one should kill unnecessarily the poor animals and become vicious and sinful?



#### 04. ŚRILA PRABHUPADA ON GUEST RECEPTION (FROM CONVERSATIONS)

##### Room Conversations -- April 22, 1972, Japan

**Prabhupāda:** So hospitality is one of the duties of the householder. Atithi. Atithi means guest without any information. That is called atithi. Tithi means date. So if I go to your house, I inform you that "Such and such date I am coming there." But atithi, he does not inform you, all of a sudden comes. So you should have to receive him. That is called atithi. Pāntha. People are moving... Formerly, if some of the walkers in the street suppose he has become hungry, so he enters anyone's house. So "I am hungry sir. Give me something to eat." He'll immediately, "Take." Pāntha-bhāga. There is a stock of foodstuff which is called pāntha-bhāga. If somebody comes all of a sudden, he should take.

**Pradyumna:** The temple should always have some prasādam there?

**Prabhupāda:** Temple must have. Even ordinary gr̥hastha. That is Vedic civilization, not that we cook for ourself, for my husband, for my wife and children, eat it sumptuously and go to bed. No. Even gr̥hastha, he should be always prepared to receive guest. Yes. And even a guest comes, your enemy, you should receive him in such a nice way that he will forget that you are all enemies. Gr̥he śatrum api prāptam viśvastam akutobhayam. This is Vedic civilization. So actually we are teaching what human civilization is.

##### Room Conversation -- September 2, 1973, London

If one is engaged in his cultivation of spiritual life, then he should tolerate all these bodily pains and pleasure. Because they come and go. Just like you are medical man, you treat some patient. Suppose he's attacked with fever. Everyone knows that fever has come; after some time, it will go away. So the one who is cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he's not very much disturbed with fever. He knows that it has come, it will go automatically. If we fast for few days. There is a Bengali proverb, jvaranpar ketanadali palab... (?) If you receive one unwanted guest and fever, you don't give him eat. Then it will go away. Unwanted guest, if you do not give him food, he'll go away. Even a fever also, if you don't eat, it will go automatically. So after all, these things come and go.

##### Morning Walk, July 3, 1975, Denver

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. There is an Indian proverb that "Disease and unwanted guest, if you don't give food, they will go away." If some guest has come whom you do not want, don't give him food. Then he will go away. (Laughter) Similarly, disease, if you fast, it will go away. [Break] ...another story: prahareṇa dhanañjaya. One gentleman had eight or nine daughters and son-in-law. So when they came, he was giving them good food and shelter, everything. So then they saw, "We are very comfortably living at father-in-law's expense." So they did not want to go. The father-in-law saw, "It is very dangerous that all the son-in-laws are not going." Then he began to... First day he did not supply salt. So one son-in-law say, "Oh, they are now disrespectful, they have not given salt." So one went away. And next day, something else, something else, something else, shortened, shortened. So those who were intelligent, they went away. The last one, he was not going. Then his brother-in-laws thought that "Give him good beating." Then he went away. Prahareṇa dhanañjaya. Others, those who were intelligent, they, when they thought that "Now there is disrespectful dealing, they are not giving everything," so they gradually... The last one, he was a rascal. He was beaten severely; then he went away.

## 05. VISION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SERVICE

### Special instructions given by His Holiness Radhanath Maharaj regarding Guest Reception Services

#### Instructions through lectures:

Actually in our temple, Sri Sri Radha Gopinath temple, we should try to adopt the spirit. We should know that this is Radharani and Sri Gopinath's home. This is the home of Lord Nityanand Prabhu, Lord Gauranga Mahaprabhu. Srila Prabhupada is the caretaker; he is teaching us how to take care of their home. We have been quoting Srila Prabhupada's instructions. So anyone who comes through these doors of this temple, we should know they are special guests caring to visit the Supreme Personality of Godhead and it is expected of us to give them such hospitality, without discrimination, what their material status in society may be. They should be given affectionate loving words. They should feel wonderful. Srila Prabhupada explains this principle is so important. When a guest comes to the house of a king, he gives them royal treatment, but even if you are very poor, if you give that person a little straw mat, a little water and affectionate words, you will completely satisfy him, or her. So this must be established, when people come they should be welcomed with affectionate words. They should be given a nice explanation of the Deities. They should be given some nice Krishna Prasadam. They should feel by the love and behavior of the devotees towards them that they have entered into Vaikuntha, the spiritual world. So we should try to establish this principle, as far as possible. And not only for guests but even for devotees, the residents who live here, even congregational devotees when they come they are also like guests. We should feel like that, we should try to welcome them with great affection, make them feel very happy, comfortable, give them love of Vaishnava and this type of exchange will bring about the real presence of Krishna. Because Krishna is revealed through the loving exchanges of devotees, through this process He is pleased to make His presence known to the world. (Lect. dated 5.9.95, SB: 1.13.9, #767)

Guest is considered to be someone who is sent by Krishna. When guests come to our temple, Sri Radha Gopinath Temple, its Prabhupada's temple and every single devotee who has faith in Prabhupada. We are the caretakers of this temple. Not only the department of Guest Reception but everyone, everyone should be eager and anxious to receive any guest that comes to the temple in such a way that they feel Prabhupada's love for Krishna. No one should walk in these doors without feeling Prabhupada's love for Krishna and Prabhupada's love for them. And how will they feel that? Through us, through how we treat them, through how we speak to them, through how we respect and honor them. We are the vessels, we are all representatives. They are coming as Radha Gopinath's personal guests, as Srila Prabhupada's guests into their house. And we are the servants. If a rich person has a guest and the maid or the butler of the house mistreats them, they will be cast away. So it is everyone's duty. Any guest that comes, from India, from abroad should give them, whether we have lot or little, that is not important. It is the spirit of affection, spirit of respect, the spirit of servitude. (Lect. dated 12.1.03, SB: 4.21.4)



### **Instructions through personal letters:**

“The culmination of all our preaching efforts is when a sincere soul experiences his or her spiritual home when they visit our temple. I cannot overestimate the great importance the service, which you have accepted as a guest receptionist. I am most indebted to you for taking this service so seriously. Any person who ever visits our temple should feel so personally welcomed that they feel they have made a true friend. A devotee who genuinely is concerned with their spiritual lives. The beauty of the temple may attract people to come, but it is the hospitality of devotees, which will attract them to sincerely hear the divine message of Srila Prabhupada.”

(Dated 16th July, 1998)

“For many years I dreamt of having a first class Guest Reception Department. You are so kindly fulfilling that dream. Each and every congregational devotee, guest and temple devotee should be lovingly greeted with sweet words, folded palms, literature, caranamrita and prasadam. Make them feel that they have finally arrived in their eternal home at the lotus feet of Krishna. Your goal should be to treat people so nicely that they will come back again and again. To those who wish to hear, offer them a sitting place, and graciously discuss Hari-Katha. To those who wish only Darshan, graciously encourage them to receive causeless mercy of the Lord. When possible, take names and offer them to our database. Offer services to those who are sincere according to their spiritual needs. The overall spirit of our temple should be established by this wonderful service.”

(Dated 15th May, 1999)

“Thank you very much for your sincere service. We should not be attached to the results but rather we should be attached to pleasing Lord Krishna and the devotees by our honest efforts.

May Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu bless your devotional service.”

(Dated 14th Oct, 1999)

## 06. ISKCON AND ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

### Who is Srila Prabhupada?

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada appeared in this world in 1896 in Calcutta, India. He first met his spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada, in 1922.

At their first meeting Srila Prabhupada's spiritual master requested him to broadcast the essence of Vedic knowledge in the English language all over the world.

In 1950, Srila Prabhupada retired from his family responsibilities to dedicate his life for fulfilling the compassionate mission of his guru and Krishna.

In order to fulfill this instruction, Srila Prabhupada traveled to the Holy city of Vrindavana, where he lived in very humble circumstances in the historic medieval temple of Radha Damodara, at the site of Krishna's rasa-lila. There he engaged for many years in worshiping Sri Sri Radha and Krishna in ecstatic spiritual love. In this Holy place he began his monumental service of writing translation and commentaries to Srimad Bhagavatam in the English language.

In pursuit of his mission to dedicate his life for the ultimate welfare of humanity he accepted the renounced order of life (Sannyasa) in 1959.

In 1965, Srila Prabhupada went to America by the cargo ship JALADUTA with only 40 rupees and no contacts to assist him. His only assets were his implicit faith in God's Holy Names and deep compassion for humanity.

Struggling alone, overcoming great obstacles, he established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in New York City in July of 1966. After which he traveled and taught Sanatana-dharma circling the world 14 times.

Srila Prabhupada has presented to the world authorized commentaries on over 60 volumes of principal Vedic literatures, which are now published in almost every major language of the world. Since his departure from this world in 1977, his disciples have carried on his mission.

### What are the purposes of ISKCON?

When Srila Prabhupada began ISKCON, he defined seven purposes:

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate a consciousness of Krishna, as it is revealed in Bhagavad-Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam.
3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Krishna, the prime entity, thus developing the idea within the members and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Krishna).
4. To teach and encourage the sankirtana movement, congregational chanting of the holy names of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.
5. To erect for the members and for society at large, a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the personality of Krishna.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.
7. With a view toward achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, books and other writings.

## 07. HARE KRISHNA MAHAMANTRA

The transcendental vibration established by the chanting of

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare  
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare

is the sublime method for reviving our transcendental consciousness. By chanting this transcendental vibration we can cleanse away all misgivings within our hearts.

This chanting of the Hare Krishna Maha mantra is enacted from spiritual platform and this sound vibration surpasses all lower strata of consciousness namely sensual, mental and intellectual.

The word Hare is the form of addressing the energy of the Lord and the words Krishna and Rama are the forms of addressing the Lord Himself. *Krishna* is the Sanskrit name of God meaning “all attractive”, and *Rama* is another name for God meaning “reservoir of all pleasure” and Hara is the supreme pleasure energy of the Lord, changed to hare (Hah-ray) in the vocative. So the Hare Krishna mantra means, “O all-attractive, all-pleasing Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your service”.

These three words, namely Hare, Krishna and Rama are the transcendental seeds of the mahamantra. The chanting is a spiritual call for the Lord and His energy, to give protection to the conditioned soul. This chanting is exactly like the genuine cry of a child for its mother's presence. Mother Hara helps the devotee to achieve the Lord father's grace and the Lord reveals Himself to the devotee who chants this Maha mantra sincerely.

### What is the Hare Krishna Chant?

A mantra is a spiritual sound vibration that purifies the consciousness and awakens love of God. The chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra—Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare—is recommended in the Vedic literature as the easiest method for this age to attain spiritual realization. *Hare* refers to the divine energy of the Lord. There are two ways to chant this mantra: group chanting (*kirtana*) and individual chanting as on beads (*japa*). No strict rules apply for either method, and anyone can chant at any time.

Devotees of Krishna chant the Hare Krishna mantra:

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare  
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare

Because the Vedas refer to it as the maha - mantra or "Great Mantra".

This sixteen-word mantra is especially recommended as the easiest method for self-realization in the present age.

There are two ways to chant the maha mantra: group chanting (*kirtan*) and softly saying the mantra to oneself (*japa*). The latter is done by using a string of 108 wooden prayer beads to enhance concentration. In both methods there are no hard and fast rules, and anyone can chant with good results.

## 08. SUGGESTED ORDER OF READING ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S BOOKS

The following is a list of Srila Prabhupada's books to be read by interested readers, aspiring to be serious in their spiritual life. Systematic reading of these books will help the reader to clearly understand the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness and thus develop more faith and conviction.

	CATEGORY I
	ON THE WAY TO KRISHNA
	ELEVATION TO KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
	KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS – THE MATCHLESS GIFT
	KRISHNA – THE RESERVOIR OF PLEASURE
	PERFECTION OF YOGA
	KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS – THE TOPMOST YOGA SYSTEM
	BEYOND BIRTH AND DEATH
	PERFECT QUESTIONS AND PERFECT ANSWERS
	EASY JOURNEY TO OTHER PLANETS
	RAJA VIDHYA: KING OF KNOWLEDGE
	TRANSCENDENTAL TEACHINGS OF PRAHLAD MAHARAJ
	COMING BACK
*	MESSAGE OF GODHEAD
*	CIVILISATION AND TRANSCENDENCE
*	HARE KRISHNA CHALLENGE
*	SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
*	SWORD OF KNOWLEDGE
	NECTAR OF INSTRUCTION
	PATH OF PERFECTION
•	ISSUES OF BACK TO GODHEAD MAGAZINE, IF AVAILABLE
•	PRABHUPADA LILAMRITA
	CATEGORY II
	These books are to be read after one has completed reading all the books in Category I
	INTRODUCTION TO BHAGAVAD GITA AS IT IS
	SCIENCE OF SELF REALISATION
	JOURNEY OF SELF DISCOVERY
	LIFE COMES FROM LIFE
	NECTAR OF DEVOTION
	TEACHINGS OF QUEEN KUNTI
	TEACHINGS OF LORD KAPILA
	TEACHINGS OF LORD CAITANYA
	SRI ISOPANISAD
•	FEW SLOKAS OF BHAGAVAD GITA EVERYDAY
•	KRISHNA BOOKS
•	SRIMAD BHAGAVAD (1ST CANTO)
•	SECOND CHANCE
	CATEGORY III
	The following books are to be read after all of the earlier mentioned books have been read
	BHAGAVAD GITA AS IT IS
	SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM (CANTO BY CANTO)
	NECTAR OF DEVOTION (PART II AND PART III)
	CAITANYA CARITAMRITA
*	OPTIONAL
•	CAN BE READ SIMULTANEOUSLY

## 09. SELECTED VERSES FROM SRĪMAD BHAGAVAD GĪTA

Chap No	Selected Verses
01	1,39,40,41
02	1,2,3,5,7,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,22,23,24,27,40,41,44,45,46,47,48,49,50,51,52,55,56,57,59,60,61,62,63,64,65,66,67,69,70
03	4,5,6,7,8,9,10,13,14,16,17,21,22,24,26,27,28,30,35,37,39,40,41
04	1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,13,34,35,36,38,40,42
05	2,6,7,10,16,18,20,22,24,29
06	1,5,6,7,8,16,17,19,22,24,26,27,29,30,34,35,40,41,42,43,44,45,47
07	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,12,13,14,15,16,19,20,22,23,24,25,26,27,28
08	5,6,7,8,14,15,16,17,20,21,28
09	1,2,3,4,5,10,11,12,13,14,17,22,23,24,25,26,27,29,30,31,32,33,34
10	2,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,34,39,41,42
11	33,54
12	1,2,5,6,7,8,9,13,14
13	3,9,14,21,22,26
14	3,4,10,18,26,27
15	1,6,7,15,16,18,19
16	7,8,19,20,21,23,24
17	23
18	5,42,43,44,45,46,47,48,54,55,57,58,61,65,66,68,69,78

## 10. JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

'Bhagavad Gita', means 'Song of God'. However, many a times, it is kept aside with the thought that it is a mythological book or outdated knowledge. But one can realize that 'Bhagavad Gita' is very practical.

Advanced technology has made life comfortable but failed to solve problems like stress, indecisiveness, unstable mind etc. The Bhagavad Gita can provide spiritual and scientific solutions to help solve these problems. When this knowledge is applied under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual teacher, it proves to be timeless wisdom.

Sri Sri Radha Gopinath Mandir, ISKCON, Chowpatty conducts a scientific presentation on the essence of Bhagavad Gita known as 'The Journey of Self Discovery', the topics of which are –

### 1. Search for Happiness.

Special prerogative of human life  
Real and relative problems  
Temporary solutions - a cure worse than the disease  
Search for a permanent solution

### 2. Does GOD really exist?

Can God's existence be proved?  
Definition of God.  
Is Scripture word of God?  
Relative and absolute knowledge.

### 3. One GOD or many GODS?

Different conceptions of God.  
Is God personal or impersonal?  
God, Demigods and Incarnations.  
Who is Supreme God?

### 4. Who am I?

The true identity of the self.  
Reincarnation : fact or fiction  
Mystery of consciousness  
Is ghostly existence a reality?  
Understanding life and death.

### 5. Why do bad things happen to good people?

Can the problem of evil be solved?  
Why unending suffering if laws of nature are just?  
Understanding the subtle laws of Karma.  
Escaping the laws of karma.

### 6. The Complete Science of Yoga.

What is Yoga?  
Different types of yoga.  
Do all paths lead to the same goal?  
Success and failure in yoga.  
Yoga for the modern age.

### 7. Practical spirituality

Balancing material and spiritual life.  
Do we need a Spiritual Guide?  
Making one's home and heart into a temple.  
ABCD of spirituality.

An interactive Q & A session and simple method of meditation is an added feature of the seminar.  
Please register at the reception or  
contact 23665580/23665581 (from 6 - 9 pm) or +919619480644.

## 11. ISKCON INDIA CENTERS

Center	Physical Address	Temple Email	Phone	Website
Agartala	Sri Sri Radha Govinda Mandir, Mathchowmuhan Assam-Agartala Rd. Banamalipur Agartala, Tripura 799 001	premadatadas @rediffmail.com	+91(381)2327053, 2204518, (M)9436167045	iskconagartala.org
Ahmedabad	Satellite Road Crossing Sarkhej Gandhinagar Highway Ahmedabad, Gujarat 380059	ISKCON.Ahmedabad @pamho.net	+91(79)2686-1945, -1645, -2350	iskconahmedabad.com
Allahabad	ISKCON, Sri Sri Radha Venimadhava Mandir, A/161 Kashiraj Nagar Baluaaghat Allahabad UP 211 003	iskcon.allahabad @pamho.net	+91(532)2416718, (M)9455622950	iskconallahabad.com
Amravati	Sri Sri Rukmini Dwarkadhish Mandir, Sarswati Colony Rathi Nagar, VMV Road Amravati, Maharashtra 444603	abhinandan.lok @pamho.net / iskconamt @ymail.com	+91(721)2666849 / 2661763/ 9421805105	
Anantapur	ISKCON - Hare Krishna Land, Somuladoddi National Highway No.7 Anantapur AP 515 001	gopinathdasa @yahoo.com		
Angul	NH 55 Near Turanga Seva Samabaya Samiti Ltd. P.O. Turanga, Angul, Odisha 759122	iskconangul @gmail.com		
Aravade	At Post Aravade Taluka:- Tasgaon District Sangli, Maharashtra 416312	gaura.krishna.lok @pamho.net	+91(2346)255515, 255766	iskconaravade.com
Bangalore Hare Krishna Hill	Hare Krishna Hill 1 'R' Block, Chord Rd. Rajaji Nagar Bangalore 560 010	madhu.pandit.jps @bbt.se	+91(80)332-1956	
Bangalore SLNT	Sri Laxmi Narasimha Temple, Project Office #849/5 2nd Floor Ramdev Garden Kachrakanahalli Thomas Town Bangalore 560084			
Bangalore South	ISKCON South, Site #1, Samvrudhi Enclave 3rd Main Road Kumaraswamy Layout, 2nd Stage Uttarahalli Bangalore 560078	info @iskconbengaluru.co.in	+91()9844098108	iskconbengaluru.co.in
Bangalore Sri Jagannath Mandir	ISKCON Sri Jagannath Mandir, No.5 1st Cross Sripuram, Sheshadripuram Bangalore, Karnataka 560 020			
Beed	Sri Sri Radha Govind Mandir, Savatamali Chowk MIDC Road, Beed, Maharashtra 431 122	iskcon.beed @pamho.net	+91(02442)231799	
Belgaum	Sri Sri Radha Gokulananda Temple, 211, Shukrawar Peth Tilak Wadi Belgaum, Karnataka 590 006	iskcon.belgaum @pamho.net	+91(831)2436267, 2400108, 4204672, 3290518	

Bhadrak	Gour Gopal Mandir Kuansh Bhadrak, Orissa 756 100		+91(6784)251730	
Bhaktivedanta Institute - Mumbai	Bhaktivedanta Institute, Hare Krishna Land Juhu, Mumbai 400 049	rgomatam @bvinst.edu	+91(22)26200596, 26206860	
Bhubaneswar	Sri Sri Krishna Balaram Temple, NH No.5, IRC Village Bhubaneswar, Odisha 751 015	gm.iskconbbsr.ggs @pamho.net	+91(674)2553517, 2553475, 2554283	iskconbbsr.org
Brahmapur	Sri Ram Govinda Mandir, Aska Road At Post Ankuspur, Brahmapur District Ganjam 761100	srigopalccd @yahoo.co.in	+91(680)2485720	
Brahmapur - NH5	ISKCON Preaching Center, N.H.-5 Brahmapur, District Ganjam Orissa 760008	panchratna.gkg @pamho.net	+91(680)2350100, (M) 9437179400	
Chamorshi	ISKCON Krishna Nagar, 78 Krishnagar Dham Chamorshi Dist. Gadchiroli, Maharashtra 442 603		+91()9423422914	
Chandigarh	ISKCON Chandigarh, Hare Krishna Dham Sector 36-B Chandigarh, U.T. 160 036	ISKCON.Chandigarh @pamho.net	+91(172)2603232, 2601590	iskconchandigarh.com
Chennai	ISKCON, Hare Krishna Land Bhaktivedanta Swami Road Off East Coast Road Akkarai Sholinganallur Chennai 600 119	iskconchennai @pamho.net	+91(44)32911472, 24530921/23	iskconchennai.com
Coimbatore	Sri Jagannath Mandir, Hare Krishna Land 100 Feet New Scheme Road Opposite CIT Coimbatore TN 641014	info @iskcon- coimbatore.org	+91(422)2917509, 2626508, 2629396	iskcon- coimbatore.org
Dabilpur	ISKCON - New Naimisaranya, Dabilpur Village Medchal Taluq R.R. District, AP 501 401	naimisaranya @pamho.net	+91(40)65520070, (M) 9440057263	
Dhekiajuli	ISKCON, Danga Basti A.T. Road, Dhekiajuli District Sonitpur, Assam 784110			
Dwaraka	Shree Shree Radha Shyamasundar Mandir, Bharatiya Bhavan Devi Bhavan Rd. District Jamnagar, Dwaraka, Gujarat 361 335		+91(2892)34606	
Gadeigiri	Sri Radha Gopaljew Temple, ISKCON Gadei Giri Post Alabol Via Balikuda Dist. Jagatsinghpur, Orissa 754108	srigopalccd @yahoo.co.in	+91(6724)238112	
Ghaziabad	Sri Sri Radha Madan Mohan Mandir, ISKCON ,Hare Krishna Marg ISKCON Chowk, R-11/35 Raj Nagar Ghaziabad UP 201002	iskcon.ghaziabad @pamho.net	+91(120)2824200, 9810844108 9654446108 9990443957 9312393539 9818777562	



Guwahati	ISKCON, Ulubari Chariali South Sarania, Guwahati, Assam 781 007	ISKCON.Guwahati @pamho.net	+91(361)2525963, 2527890 (M) 9435048110	
Habibpur	ISKCON, Gour Dham, Habibpur Ranaghat, Nadia 741403	iskcon_gourdham @rediffmail.com	+91(3473)281150, 281226	
Haridaspur	ISKCON Haridaspur, P.O. Chhaygharia Bangaon 24 Parganas, West Bengal 743 704		+91(3215)57856	
Haridwar	Sri Sri Gour Radha Krishna Mandir, Gouranga House Nai Basti-Bhim Goda Haridwar, U.K. - 249401	haridwar.iskcon @gmail.com	+91(1334)260818 9411111894, 09868843228	iskconharidwar.com
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## 12. FAQs

### **According to the Krishna conscious philosophy, what is the goal of life?**

The *Vedas* state that the goal of life is to learn how to properly serve God, revive one's love for God, and return to live eternally with Him in the spiritual world at the end of life. The chanting of the *mahamantra* fully awakens the awareness of our true eternal spiritual identity, which is beyond the temporary body and the limitations of this existence within the material realm. This Self-realization purifies our consciousness and frees us from the cycle of repeated birth and death, or reincarnation.

### **Why do some members wear robes and saris?**

In the ancient Vedic culture a person dressed according to his or her social and spiritual position. Following those traditions, women who live in Hare Krishna communities wear *saris* and men wear robes called *dhotis*. Married men wear white, and unmarried men wear saffron. Men living a monastic lifestyle shave their heads and leave a tuft of hair in the back, called a *sikha*. This is done as a sign of renunciation and surrender to Krishna, as well as for cleanliness and simplicity. The *sikha* is also a sign of accepting the premise that God is a person and not merely an impersonal force. The clay marking on the forehead signifies that the body is a temple of God. The clay comes from sacred rivers in India.

### **Why do you dress like you do?**

We dress in the way of the Vedic tradition, men in *dhotis* (robes) and *kurtas* (shirts) and women in *saris* and *cholis* (blouses) reminds us that we are servants of Krishna.

One can be a devotee of Krishna without wearing these traditional clothes. But dressing in this way identifies us as Krishna's devotees, encourages us to act accordingly and reminds others of Krishna when they see us.

### **The four regulative principles are good for Brahmacharis.**

#### **Why should a Grihashta person follow them and how do they help?**

The four regulative principles namely no meat eating, no intoxication, no gambling and no illicit sex help to regulate the mind so that the Grihashta who has to deal with the outside world and worldly disturbances can be focused on the real goal of life and service to Krishna.

### **Are you a cult?**

The actual definition of the word "cult" is a system of belief and worship. We fit that definition. But today the word "cult" has taken on negative connotations. We are not that kind of cult - a dangerous group of people with a charismatic leader, a group that will capture people's minds and seduce them into joining and doing things harmful to the well-being of themselves and others. That's not us. The Krishna consciousness movement is a bona fide spiritual path coming from one of the oldest, most respected religious traditions in India. Far from being a dangerous cult, Krishna consciousness teaches people how to live a life of high morals and ethics and to respect the integrity of all beings. We practice a process of self-realization that cleanses the mind of all unwanted things such as greed and hate. Krishna consciousness helps a person develop his individuality and realize his highest potential. People are sometimes fearful of the unfamiliar. Trying to make sense out of things they don't understand, they sometimes conveniently label them and put them into boxes. One of those boxes happens to be the cult box. Because people are uninformed or misinformed, the Krishna consciousness movement sometimes erroneously ends up in such a box.

### **No mystic powers?**

#### **Why do devotees in ISKCON not have mystic powers like yogis and gurus in India?**

Devotees don't want mystic powers. We are followers of the Gita and Lord Krishna never says that we should try for mystic powers. You get what you work for, and working for mystic powers is a waste of time. The goal of life is love of God, so that we can return to Him. Mystic powers won't help us; rather, they will distract us from our real business: awakening our love of God.

### **How can selling the Bhagavad Gita bring about a change in our society?**

Members of the Hare Krishna Movement follow ancient India's Vedic literature, primarily *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. These teachings date back over 5000 years and are practiced by more than 900 million people today. The *Bhagavad-gita* also forms the basis of the world's third largest religion, Hinduism.

The human society is suffering due to ignorance of their true self. So by distribution of transcendental knowledge in the form of Bhagavad Gita, people's ignorance is destroyed and they start their journey on the spiritual path to understand that they are part and parcel of Krishna and are meant to serve Him. As they engage in Krishna's service, automatically all their sufferings vanish and they become totally satisfied.

### **Krishna belongs to all so why limit His mercy to only the congregation members?**

#### **What is the advantage of having a congregation?**

Krishna is not limited to the congregation. He belongs to everyone who love and surrender to Him. Therefore devotees go out and preach, distribute books and prasadam, organize Harinaam Sankirtan so that more and more people can become devotees and be part of the Krishna consciousness movement.

Congregation is important.

In the sense that when people see such a strong congregation with unity, and a spirit of co-operation they feel inspired to be a part of it and thus by coming in regular association with the devotees they gradually become part of the congregation.

Radha Gopinath's congregation at Chowpatty sets a beautiful example by their devotional service which inspires people all over the world to join the movement of Krishna consciousness.

### **How can I participate?**

Many people wonder if they have to shave their heads and wear robes, or live in the temple to join or participate in the Hare Krishna Movement or Vedic philosophy. But that is not necessarily the case. A person can easily participate or become involved in whatever level they feel most comfortable. You do not have to give up your job or career or your family. If you look around, you will see many members of the Hare Krishna community who are in full agreement with the Vedic goal of life, but still have their families, careers or pursue further academic studies or skills. They simply add the Vedic lifestyle, the study of the Vedic philosophy, and the joyful chanting of Hare Krishna to what they already have. So it is very easy to begin participating in the Hare Krishna practices to whatever degree is most suitable for you.

### **Why do some Hare Krishnas look like Buddhist monks?**

Shaven heads and orange robes actually pre-date Buddhism by many centuries. In Vedic culture a person dressed according to his or her social and spiritual position. Simple robes, although external, have traditionally been worn to help cultivate humility and freedom from vanity.



In keeping with this reasoning, the Hare Krishna Movement has retained certain elements of Vedic tradition wherever practical. Following this principle, women in Hare Krishna communities wear the traditional sari, while men wear robes known as dhotis.

Young men who have gone forward to observe a celibate student life and train as monks wear saffron colored robes; married men wear white. Most choose to shave their heads leaving a single lock of hair in the back called a sikha. This is done as a sign of renunciation and surrender to Krishna, as well as for cleanliness and simplicity. The U-shaped marking of clay on the forehead is known as tilak, and is made with yellow clay from the banks of sacred rivers in India. Together with these traditional ascetic practices, fully committed devotees of Krishna, whether residing in a temple community or not, also abstain from all types of intoxication, and do not gamble or have sexual relationships outside of marriage.

### **What do you do all day?**

The activities of the members of ISKCON are as varied as their strikingly diverse lifestyles. For instance, although most members are naturally vegetarian, all other practices are a matter of their personal choice and commitment. Thus one member of ISKCON lives in a religious community, rises at 4 o'clock in the morning, and leads a strict monastic life, while another cares for a young family or works in a busy office. The circumstances may vary greatly but the basic aim is the same.

### **I was wondering what relevance the Hare Krishna movement has in today's society?**

#### **Could you please spare some of your thoughts on the topic?**

Srila Prabhupada, the founder of the movement, used to say that we're giving society a brain. Presently, society has no spiritual direction. The leaders of society don't know the purpose of human life. They mislead people under the misconception that this life is all there is. Just try to enjoy as much you can with your senses.

But we're spiritual beings, and human life is the chance to reawaken our love for God and return to Him. If we waste our time in material pursuits and neglect our spiritual life - which should be our main business - we'll have to return to this world after death and take birth in any one of millions of species of life. The Hare Krishna movement is relevant to anyone who wants to make the proper use of human life. We're an educational institution, teaching people about God, our relationship with Him and the process for going back to Him.

### **What are those beads around your neck?**

The neck beads that Krishna devotees wear are meant to symbolize submission to God. They serve to remind the person wearing them and those who see them that we are all servants of God or Krishna. The beads are made from Tulasi wood. Although Tulasi appears in the material world as a plant, she is a great devotee of Krishna. By wearing Tulasi beads we please Krishna.

### **What is the need of the bag to keep beads?**

The bag holds our prayer beads. It keeps our beads clean and allows us to carry them wherever we go, reminding us that we can always chant the Hare Krishna mantra and thus stay in spiritual consciousness.

### **Why do you put Tilak?**

*Tilak* is a traditional mark to identify devotees of Krishna. *Tilak* is made with sacred clay from a holy place in India, and it marks the body as a temple.

It is worn to remind the wearer and everyone that within the body resides the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, Lord Krishna.

It is a stamp of Lord Krishna's lotus feet and His great devotee Tulasi on one's body declaring that this body is the property of Krishna and should be used in His service only.

### **Why do Hare Krishna men shave their heads?**

Hare Krishna men shave their heads to symbolize renunciation of the material way of life and dedication to spiritual pursuits. The small tuft of hair at the back signifies that they are devotees of Krishna, distinguishing them from other renunciants who shave their heads, such as Buddhists.

Shaving one's head is not a strict rule for Krishna devotees and is done mostly by men living in a monastic environment or ashram. Most Hare Krishna men live and work outside Krishna communities and don't shave their heads.

### **Why do you worship Tulasi plant?**

Worshipping Krishna's devotees is an essential feature of devotion to Him. Sometimes great devotees appear in forms other than the human form. One such devotee, whose worship is central to the worship of Krishna, is Tulasi. She serves Krishna in the form of a plant, and devotees worship her in that form. Full of love for Krishna, she can give it to others.

*Srimad-Bhagavatam* (3.15.19) explains the special position of the Tulasi plant: "Although there are numerous flowering plants full of transcendental fragrance in the spiritual realm, they are aware that Tulasi is given special preference by the Lord, who garlands Himself with Tulasi leaves."

In her form as a plant, Tulasi always stays at the Lord's feet and around His neck. (Her leaves and flowers decorate His feet and are strung into garlands to be worn around His neck.) The Vedic scriptures say, "Krishna gives Himself to a devotee who offers Him merely a Tulasi leaf and a palmful of water."

The wood of dead Tulasi plants is used to carve sacred beads devotees wear around their necks and use for chanting the Hare Krishna mantra.

### **Where does the Hare Krishna religion originate?**

Krishna consciousness has its roots in the Vedic scriptures of India. According to the Vedas, the spiritual culture practiced by Hare Krishna devotees was once spread all over the world. In recent years archeologists and anthropologists have unearthed artifacts and histories that reveal a past connection to the Vedic culture in many parts of the world.

### **What do you do in your temples?**

The temple is a place to especially remember God and deepen our relationship with Him. It's a holy place to develop community with others through glorifying God and increasing our understanding of spiritual knowledge.

Our temples are open to the public. Although services are held throughout the day, most visitors come for the special Sunday program, the "Sunday Feast."

A typical Sunday Feast program consists of a formal ceremony called arati in which deities (forms of Krishna) are worshiped to the accompaniment of sacred songs sung by the congregation. This is followed by a lecture on the Vedic scriptures. At some temples there might be a play or more singing. The festival always includes a vegetarian feast of delicious food that has been prepared for and offered to the Lord.



### **Why do you worship cows?**

Because all living things are part of God, all life is sacred and worthy of respect. The Supreme Lord is most worthy of honor and respect, and the Vedas teach that whatever or whoever is dear to God is also sacred--fit to be worshiped in relation to God.

Krishna is known as Govinda, "the Lord of the cows." The cow is sacred and fit to be honored or worshiped because she is dear to God. Worship or honor given to the cow is pleasing to God. If human beings can have favorite animals, why not God? Since the cows are dear to Krishna, they are also dear to his devotees.

The cow is also dear because of her gentle nature and her important service to humanity. Cows provide us with milk, "the miracle food," which the Vedas consider an ideal food for health. It helps develop the brain for understanding religious and philosophical topics. Since the cow supplies us milk, she is considered another mother. We don't think highly of a society that practically worships pets but sends cows to be slaughtered.

### **Where do the teachings come from?**

Although the Hare Krishna movement has only been established in the West since 1966, its roots extend thousands of years into India's past. The lifestyle and philosophical beliefs are based on ancient scriptures known as the Vedas. Originally preserved in the spoken word, the Vedas were written down in the Sanskrit language 5000 years ago.

Their compiler, Srila Vyasadeva, divided the work into various departments of material and spiritual knowledge, entrusting his disciples with particular sections. In this way, the scriptures developed into four principal Vedas, including the Vedanta Sutra, 108 Upanishads, and 18 Puranas, collectively known as the "fifth Veda." The final Purana, the Bhagavat Purana or Srimad Bhagavatam, contains the essence of the Vedic wisdom in 18,000 verses. A further work was the Mahabharata, which includes the well-known Bhagavad gita. The process described in the Vedas is one of gradual elevation to the platform of God-realization. Vedic wisdom was then carefully preserved and passed down for centuries through the tutorial vehicle of guru-parampara, a disciplic succession of self-realized teachers.

In the early 16th century, a remarkable spiritual renaissance took place within India. This was led by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1534). He challenged the religious leaders of his day whom he felt were stifling the teachings of Vedic knowledge. Caste-conscious priests alone had access to the Vedas and considered spiritual life the prerogative of an educated minority. Taking religion out of the temples and amongst the people, regardless of their caste, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu propagated devotion to Lord Krishna and pioneered a massive movement which swept the subcontinent, gaining a following of millions.

The ancient wisdom of the Puranas and Upanishads, through the practical teachings of Sri Chaitanya is now finding expression outside India in the Hare Krishna movement.

### **Hare Krishna and Hinduism**

The terms Hare Krishna and Hinduism are intimately connected, yet not synonymous. The word "Hindu" was first used by Persians to denote "those South of the Indus River". It has come to include the many diverse strands of Indian and Vedic culture which make up Hinduism, the world's third largest religion, with over 600 million practitioners worldwide. As such, "Hinduism" describes not a single, monolithic religion, but a vast spectrum of spiritual paths, many tracing their origins to particular branches of the Vedas.

The word 'Veda' literally means knowledge, and refers to the original Vedic shastras (scriptures) and civilization, dating back many thousands of years. One of these shastras, the Bhagavad Gita, forms the philosophical and theological basis of the Hare Krishna Movement, and is often referred to as "The Bible of Hinduism."

Hare Krishna is a major monotheistic tradition, known academically as Vaishnavism or Sanatana dhama, "the eternal teaching". The core practice is bhakti (devotion) to Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is both a major strand of Hinduism, and a transcendental, non-sectarian and inclusive process applicable to any religious culture such as Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism or Islam, all of which include devotional practices and branches, such as Sufism.

### **What are the teachings?**

It is often assumed that the final goal of Indian spirituality is nirvana - the extinguishing of individual existence and the simultaneous absorption into an amorphous Absolute. Bhagavad-Gita reveals that this is only the preliminary stage of self-realization. Beyond this is the awakening of the soul's eternal consciousness of Krishna, the personal form of the Absolute Truth.

In brief, the Gita explains as follows:

1. We are not our bodies, but eternal spirit souls (atma), parts and parcels of God (Krishna). Although we are essentially spiritual (brahman), we have temporarily forgotten our true identity.
2. Having lost touch with our original, pure consciousness we are trying to achieve permanent happiness within a temporary world. Our attempts produce karmic reactions which cause us to remain within this world for repeated lifetimes (samsara).
3. By sincerely learning and following a genuine spiritual science (dharma) under the guidance of a self-realized teacher, we can be free from anxiety and come to a state of pure, blissful enlightenment in this lifetime.
4. Krishna is eternal, all-knowing, omni-present, all-powerful and all-attractive. He is the seed-giving father of all living beings and He is the sustaining energy of the entire cosmic creation.
5. Our dormant relationship with Krishna can be reawakened by the practice of bhakti-yoga, the science of spiritualizing all human activities by dedicating them to the Supreme. This ancient yoga system gradually frees us from the entanglement of karma, and thereby the cycle of birth and death.

### **Why are you Vegetarians?**

The Vedic scriptures establish nonviolence, called *ahimsa*, as the ethical foundation of vegetarianism and for a peaceful society. According to the *Vedas*, God is the Supreme Father of all creatures, not just humans. Therefore, slaughter of innocent animals is considered equivalent to killing one's brother or sister.

Krishna devotees follow a wholesome lacto-vegetarian diet excluding meat, fish and eggs. Although it may be argued that vegetarians are guilty of killing vegetables, foods such as fruits, nuts, milk, and grains do not require killing. Also plants have an undeveloped consciousness as compared to animals. Therefore, when a plant's life is taken, the pain involved is dramatically less than that of a highly-sensitive animal such as a cow or lamb.

Further, in Bhagavad-Gita (9.26), the Lord says, "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I will accept it." Here He clearly specifies what He will accept. According to karma, nature's law of action and reaction, human beings must suffer for any killing that is against God's laws. For this reason, as well as to show recognition and appreciation for the supreme proprietor and supplier of all food, devotees prepare vegetarian meals as devotional offerings to

Krishna, God. Then food is called *prasadam* (spiritual food), which can be fully enjoyed without karmic reaction.

### **Why do you avoid meat?**

The most important reason we refrain from eating meat is Krishna's instruction to us in the Ninth Chapter of the Bhagavad-gita. He requests us to offer Him everything we do, including our eating. He asks us to offer Him with love and devotion, "a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water." Because Krishna doesn't ask for meat products, we don't offer Him any. Since the true aim of life is to please God and reestablish our love for Him, we don't want to displease Him. The Gita's third chapter gives the process of purifying our lives or making them pleasing to God. Krishna is very merciful. He understands our need for material things. Therefore He created a way for us to offer or sacrifice the things of the world for a spiritual purpose. In that way we can fulfill our desires and needs for material things and not incur karmic reactions. Krishna says that if we offer our food to Him we become free from sinful reactions. The idea behind "offering" something to God is that everything actually belongs to Him. If we don't acknowledge that, we're subject to a "fine," or karmic reactions. This is just like taking advantage of gas, water, electricity, and so on, in your home. You can use these only if you're willing to pay for them. Besides the spiritual consideration, a vegetarian diet is natural (humans have vegetarian digestive systems) and compassionate. It brings economic benefits both individually and collectively, and it is beneficial to one's health and to the environment.

### **Why do you avoid smoking or drinking coffee, tea or alcohol?**

Caffeine, nicotine, alcohol—to varying degrees these are all intoxicants. That is, they all have a toxic effect on the body. Devotees of Krishna eat and drink only things that can first be offered to Him, and in the scriptures He requests pure, nutritious food and beverages. By avoiding caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, and similar substances devotees keep their minds clear for concentrating on spiritual goals.

### **What is reincarnation?**

The Bhagavad-Gita states that life does not begin at birth nor end with death. It is eternal. The soul is constantly transmigrating from one body to another according to its desires and quality of activities (karma). The Vedas further explain that the soul in the material world moves through a cycle of 8,400,000 forms of life. The human form, however, is the only birth which affords one the chance for self-realization. Lower-than-human species are not endowed with sufficient intelligence to understand the self as different from the body.

### **Do you believe in reincarnation?**

Yes. The *Bhagavad-gita*, the principal scripture of the Hare Krishna movement, and the roots of understanding reincarnation, states "As the embodied soul continually passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change."

The *Vedas* further explain that the soul in the material world transmigrates within a cycle of material birth and death through 8,400,000 forms of life. The human form, however, is the only birth which affords one the chance for spiritual realization. Species lower than humans are not endowed with sufficient intelligence to understand the soul as different from the body.

### **Why do you chant the Hare Krishna Mahamantra and why specifically 16 rounds?**

There are four yugas i.e. Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kaliyuga and for every yuga a specific process has been recommended in the scriptures for self realization.

Satyayuga – meditation

Tretayuga – yajna

Dwaparyuga – Deity worship

Kaliyuga – Harinaam sankirtan

The scripture Kali Santaran Upanishad mentions the specific Mahamantra (comprising of the Holy name of the Lord) i.e. "Hare Krishna Mahamantra" to be chanted as the only process required for self realization in Kaliyuga.

Moreover this Mahamantra has been given by Lord Chaitanya who is none other than Lord Krishna himself. So as followers of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu we chant this Mahamantra.

Srila Prabhupada, the founder Acharya of ISKCON always recommended that we should chant the whole day. But seeing the restless nature and hectic lifestyle of the present yuga he mercifully reduced it to 16 rounds.

### **What does Hare Krishna mean?**

"Hare Krishna" refers to the Sanskrit prayer we sing (the maha-mantra, or "great chant for deliverance") and to our group. Since we are often seen chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, we are referred to as the "Hare Krishnas."

Srila Prabhupada came to the United States from India in 1965 to introduce the Western world to bhakti-yoga, which features the chanting of Hare Krishna as its main spiritual practice.

Srila Prabhupada represents a lineage of teachers dating back into antiquity, but which was revitalized 500 years ago by the incarnation of God named Lord Chaitanya.

The voluminous Vedic scriptures of India contain everything we need to know about how to live happily in the world while we realize our spirituality and our relationship with God. These scriptures describe many methods of spiritual attainment, but they specifically recommend the chanting of Hare Krishna as the most effective method of God realization for the time we live in.

Since God is unlimited, He has unlimited names with different purposes and meanings. The purpose of the Hare Krishna prayer is to awaken us to our eternal nature as servants and lovers of Krishna.

The Hare Krishna mantra is composed of three Sanskrit words: Krishna, Rama and Hare. Krishna and Rama are both names for God. Krishna means "the all-attractive," and Rama means "the supreme pleasure." We can approach the all-attractive Supreme Lord, and experience the supreme pleasure of His company, through the help of His devotional or pleasure energy, Hare.

Placed together the words of the prayer mean "O Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your loving service." By chanting Hare Krishna we become purified of material conditioning and become reinstated in our normal eternal position.

### **Do you meditate?**

Members of the Hare Krishna movement practice mantra meditation. In Sanskrit, manah means "mind" and tra means "freeing". So a mantra is a combination of words that is meant to relieve the mind of anxieties arising from worldly entanglement. Vedic literature compares the mind to a mirror, and our present state of spiritual forgetfulness to a mirror which has accumulated dust.

Mantra meditation clears the dust from the mirror of the mind so that we can see our original self.

When our spiritual nature is inwardly perceived, then the anxieties caused by illusion cease, and we experience spiritual happiness.

### **Why do you chant in the streets?**

Most scriptures of the world, and particularly the Vedas, extol the chanting of God's names as a powerful means of spiritual realization. Someone who enjoys their spiritual life naturally feels inclined to share it with others. This enthusiasm caused the founder of ISKCON to not only teach Krishna consciousness, but to organize his early students as a formal society for the purpose of teaching others. Devotees of Krishna, therefore will often be found in public places performing sankirtana, by chanting with musical instruments, as introduced by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu 500 years ago.

### **Who Started the Hare Krishna Movement?**

In 1965, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada traveled alone from India to America to establish the timeless tradition of Krishna consciousness in the Western world. He single-handedly began the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), a worldwide society of over 500 temples, farm communities and schools, with a membership of over three million members in the West, fifty million worldwide. Srila Prabhupada translated over 50 books on Krishna consciousness, now available in over 65 languages. Before he passed away in 1977, he arranged for the movement to be guided by a Governing Body Commission composed of his senior disciples. Also, after Srila Prabhupada's departure, his disciples themselves began to accept disciples, carrying on the age-old system of disciplic succession. Thus, he touched enough people who can pass along this knowledge to others that this movement will continue well into the future.

### **Why did Srila Prabhupada preach in the west and not in India?**

#### **Why wasn't he successful in India?**

Srila Prabhupada was ordered by his spiritual master Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaj to preach the message of Lord Chaitanya in the English language in the western world. Secondly Srila Prabhupada tried his level best to preach in India and he even started "The League of Devotees" in Jhansi, but it was unsuccessful because people were not interested and all who came were mostly coming as a formality as generally people do upon seeing a sadhu. They had no genuine devotion. Also Srila Prabhupada saw that Indians were imitating the westerners so he thought if the westerners would become Krishna devotees, seeing them Indians would automatically follow them.

### **Why did Srila Prabhupada alone go to U.S.?**

Srila Prabhupada went alone to the U.S. because he did not have any congregation in India. He tried for many years to preach but people were not interested at all. As the famous saying goes "familiarity breeds contempt". Whenever Srila Prabhupada would say something they would respond by saying "O Swamiji what is this Krishna, we are Indians, we know everything about Krishna".

### **Why did Srila Prabhupada build so many temples abroad and very few in India?**

Srila Prabhupada was ordered to preach in the west in the English language. So in whatever little time he had he did his best to preach in the west and because of his earnest desire to preach, preaching spread rapidly and everywhere in Europe, America, as people started becoming devotees and naturally so many temples came up in order to provide shelter for these devotees and association of similar kind of people with same goals.

As far as India is concerned Srila Prabhupada was aware of the importance of having temples in India and he established three temples in three most important cities of India i.e. Mayapur (Lord

Chaitanya's birthplace), Shri Vrindavan Dham (Lord Krishna's abode) and Juhu Mumbai (the business capital of India). Srila Prabhupada had limited time and therefore although he wanted to build many temples in India he put emphasis on the most important places. In fact he even instructed that we should have at least 10 temples in Mumbai. Knowing Srila Prabhupada's desire his followers have taken up the service left by him and in India the number of temples is increasing.

#### **Why are temples so important for the ISKCON movement?**

Srila Prabhupada wanted ISKCON temples to be spiritual institutions. Temples are very important for the ISKCON movement so that people can come and associate with devotees and learn about how to practice Krishna consciousness.

The basic aim of this movement is to preach Krishna consciousness. Temples provide the right environment and facilities to preach. When people admire the splendor of our beautiful temples their spiritual life begins at that moment and they get connected to Krishna.

#### **Today ISKCON is a big organization so why does it not take up more projects for the masses like schools, colleges or hospitals?**

ISKCON already has many projects for the masses like:

Schools like Gopal's Garden in Mumbai.

Gurukuls in places like Vrindavan, Mayapur.

Hospitals in Mira Road and Vrindavan.

Midday meal program where lakhs of school children are fed Krishna prasadam everyday.

Value education programs where school children are being taught the message of Bhagavad Gita from the very beginning.

#### **ISKCON propagates simple living and high thinking then why Lord Krishna lives in such opulence?**

The spirit behind the principle is that devotee does not desire any material opulence for himself, but aspires to offer the best to Krishna as a gesture of his love, affection and devotion.

Even in this material world we like to offer the best to our near and dear ones out of our affection for them. So why not offer the best to Krishna, who is an all loving personality. After all He is the Provider of all opulence and he distributes what you offer to Him to the people who need it the most.



### 13. NOTABLE QUOTES ON HOSPITALITY

*“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”* – Hebrews 13:2

*Hospitality has been important from ancient time to the present day – all over the world.*

*“Some folks make you feel at home; others make you wish you were.”* – Arnold H. Glasow

*“May we be a channel of blessings for all that we meet.”* – Edgar Cayce

*“Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast.”* – William Shakespeare

*“There is an emanation from the heart in genuine hospitality which cannot be described, but is immediately felt and puts the stranger at once at his ease.”* – Washington Irving

*“Hospitality should have no other nature than love.”* – Henrietta Mears

*“Hospitality is more important than facility.”* – Radhanath Swami

Does your home have an ‘open door policy?’

Do you regularly have guests over?

God wants you to be hospitable.

Make your home a place of ministry to all who the Lord sends your way.

You will be a blessing to many in need of help.

Who knows you might be ‘touched by an angel’ in the process.

Difference between “Hospitality” and “Entertaining”

Entertaining says: “I want to impress you with my home, my clever decorating, my cooking.”

Hospitality says: “This home is a gift from my Master. I use it as He desires.”

Hospitality aims to serve.

Entertaining puts things before people:

“As soon as I get the house finished, the living room decorated, my house-cleaning done – then I will start inviting people.”

Hospitality puts people first:

“No furniture – we shall eat on the floor.”

“The decorating may never get done – you come anyway.”

“The house is a mess – but you are friends – come home with us.”

Entertaining subtly declares:

“This home is mine, an expression of my personality. Look, please and admire.”

Hospitality whispers:

“What is mine is yours.”

**14. INFORMATION TO BE ADDED BY INDIVIDUAL TEMPLES IN THEIR GUEST MANUALS**

01. Layout of the temple giving directions for important places in the temple premises
02. Temple Darshan Timings
03. Temple deities and brief description
04. Some information about the various developments of the temple
05. List of programs conducted by temple preachers
06. Regular courses, seminars conducted by the temple preachers (BG-course, Bhakti-Shastri)
07. List of Temple Departments and contact details (emails and landline numbers)
08. Intercom list of temple devotees and departments contact details (emails and landline numbers)
09. List of temple websites and brief description
10. How to reach temple from various places
11. List of devotees working in Guest Reception department
12. Temple Tour (Write up of various important places in the temple)