

Process of 1st and 2nd Initiations in ISKCON

BY: MAHESH RAJA

23. February 2014 by Prabhupāda News — The process of 1st and 2nd Initiations in ISKCON ON BEHALF of Srila Prabhupada the current PROMINENT acarya in accordance with July 9th 1977 Ritvik Order -HENCEFORWARD- under the guidance of RITVIK REPRESENTATIVE

Madhya 24.330 The Sixty-One Explanations of the Atmarama Verse

Similarly, a disciple's qualifications must be observed by the spiritual master before he is accepted as a disciple. In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, the requirement is that one must be prepared to give up the four pillars of sinful life-illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication and gambling.

IN WESTERN COUNTRIES ESPECIALLY, WE FIRST OBSERVE WHETHER A POTENTIAL DISCIPLE IS PREPARED TO FOLLOW THE REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES. THEN HE IS GIVEN THE NAME OF A VAISNAVA SERVANT AND INITIATED TO CHANT THE HARE KṚṢṆA MAHA-MANTRA, AT LEAST SIXTEEN ROUNDS DAILY. IN THIS WAY THE DISCIPLE RENDERS DEVOTIONAL SERVICE UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF the spiritual master OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE FOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR. HE IS THEN RECOMMENDED FOR A SECOND INITIATION, DURING WHICH A SACRED THREAD IS OFFERED AND THE DISCIPLE IS ACCEPTED AS A BONA FIDE BRAHMANA.

Note:

1. **First Initiation(Hari Nama) is liberal**
2. **Second Initiation(Brahmana) is strict**

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Mahāśa: There's only five first initiations. Those ladies, I told them to wait some more time. Those ladies, I told them to wait for some more time because they were still drinking tea and coffee until yesterday.

Prabhupāda: No, if they promise they will give up, then we can give.

Mahāśa: I already told them, "You please..." They said they will give up but I said that you...

Prabhupāda: No, if they promise you can give.

Mahāśa: But, they are waiting, what shall I tell them now? I just now told them...

Prabhupāda: No, tell them that, "If you promise from today you will give up..."

Mahāśa: They promised.

Prabhupāda: Then we shall give it.

Mahāśa: All five of them?

Prabhupāda: OH, YES. IF THEY HAVE PROMISED, WE SHALL GIVE. SIMPLY YOU DON'T BREAK PROMISE. YOU HAVE PROMISED—DO IT. THAT'S ALL.

Mahāśa: I'll tell them. Another thing was those, what is, I don't know what is the position of ladies being initiated. They are young girls. They may get married. They may get married to someone outside the society.

Prabhupāda: But she can chant and observe the rules and regulations—what is that.

Mahāśa: EVEN IF HER HUSBAND DOES NOT FOLLOW?

Prabhupāda: THAT DOES NOT MATTER. IT IS INDIVIDUAL.

Mahāśa: Then there'll be five more.

Prabhupāda: My sister, while she was married, her father-in-law's house, they were all eating fish. So a new girl, ten years, eleven years old. So she was given this foodstuff with fish and everything. So she was crying. So her mother-in-law, "Why you are crying?" "No, we do not touch all these things." She immediately arranged special cooking for her. So her husband and other members they were taking fish, but she never touched. She never touched. She does not know what is fish. IF ONE WANTS TO KEEP

ONESELF PURE, HE OR SHE CAN KEEP HERSELF PURE IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Mahāṁśa: Okay. And there'll be two second initiations, two devotees from here. So I will talk to them again because just now I've told them "You must wait one month more." They were willing to.

Prabhupāda: If they'll promise, that's all right.

Mahāṁśa: So I'll tell them like that. Okay. Then the names and beads will be given downstairs by Your Grace? You'll be coming down?

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Hari-śauri: They should be wearing their neckbeads before. At least two lines.

750708mw.chi Conversations

Devotee: What is to become of those devotees that leave ISKCON and take to breaking the regulative principles, and stop chanting sixteen rounds?

Prabhupada: Explain.

Devotee: There are even brahmanas in our temple who have left the temple and they are acting just like karmis.

Prabhupada: So they were wrongly initiated. We want recommendation from the authority, whether one should be initiated, but they gave wrong information. That is the defect of the informer. (break)

Tamala Kṛṣṇa: ...HARI-NAMA INITIATION CAN BE A LITTLE MORE LIBERAL.

Prabhupada: YES.

Tamala Kṛṣṇa: BUT BRAHMANA INITIATION SHOULD BE STRICT.

Prabhupada: VERY STRICT. VERY STRICT MEANS HE MUST BE OBSERVED THAT HE IS ACTUALLY CHANTING SIXTEEN ROUNDS, FOLLOWING THE REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES. THAT'S ALL.

74-01-23. Letter: Sahadeva

Regarding second initiations, I have become very concerned lately, that some of our older students who have been given the second initiation, have not been strictly following the rules and regulations. So from now on I want our presidents to be very sure about the devotees they are recommending to me for second initiation. I think sometimes in the past devotees have been recommended chiefly because some more helpers were required in maintaining the deity work. Of course, necessity is there. It is just like in government, the government has need for a number of men to fill important posts, but first the persons must be qualified before they can award the post. Even though there may be a pressing demand, first the man must be qualified.

OUR SYSTEM IS THAT AFTER ONE YEAR FROM THE FIRST INITIATION, IF THE DEVOTEE IS STRICTLY FOLLOWING OUR PRINCIPLES WITHOUT DEVIATION, AND IF HE WILL SIGN A STATEMENT IN SERIOUSNESS, THAT HE WILL NOT DEVIATE FROM THE CHANTING AND REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES, THEN, ON YOUR MATURE CONSIDERATION YOU CAN RECOMMEND HIM TO ME. IT IS NOT THAT WE ARE STOPPING SECOND INITIATION, BUT I WANT TO BE SURE IT DOES NOT BECOME A FARCE AND NAMES BE SENT TO ME WITHOUT PROPER QUALIFICATION.

We are criticizing the caste brahmanas for saying that the Americans and Europeans cannot be awarded brahmana initiation, because according to Vedic sastra, anyone who is properly trained up under a bonafide spiritual master, can become twice born. But if our brahmanas do not take their second initiation seriously, then we will be deserving of criticism. So on this basis, if you think the men you have recommended are still eligible, you can resubmit their names to me and I will accept them.

You have also submitted two names for first initiation. With this first initiation, we can more readily give them a chance. Provided they are enthusiastic and you observe they are following the devotional practices then you can submit their names.

Madhya 15.108 The Lord Accepts Prasada at the House of Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya
“In the morning, afternoon and evening, one should worship the Deity, chant the Hare Krsna mantra, offer oblations, perform a fire sacrifice, and feed the brahmanas. These five activities constitute purascarya. To attain full success when taking initiation from the spiritual master, one should first perform these purascarya processes.”

The word purah means “before” and carya means “activities.” Due to the necessity of these activities, we do not immediately initiate disciples in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

FOR SIX MONTHS, A CANDIDATE FOR INITIATION MUST FIRST ATTEND ARATI AND CLASSES IN THE SASTRAS, PRACTICE THE REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES AND ASSOCIATE WITH OTHER DEVOTEES. WHEN ONE IS ACTUALLY ADVANCED IN THE PURASCARYA-VIDHI, HE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE LOCAL TEMPLE PRESIDENT FOR INITIATION. IT IS NOT THAT ANYONE CAN BE SUDDENLY INITIATED WITHOUT MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS. WHEN ONE IS FURTHER ADVANCED BY CHANTING THE HARE KRSNA MANTRA SIXTEEN ROUNDS DAILY, FOLLOWING THE REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES AND ATTENDING CLASSES, HE RECEIVES THE SACRED THREAD (BRAHMINICAL RECOGNITION) AFTER THE SECOND SIX MONTHS.

Note: Srila Prabhupada’s introduction of Ritvik Initiations (PANCARATRIKI) is fully justified as the formalities may be changed “ **can also be initiated according to circumstances.**”

SB 4.8.54 Purport:

Those who are not actually in the line of acaryas, **or who personally have no knowledge of how to act in the role of acarya, unnecessarily criticize the activities of the ISKCON movement in countries outside of India.** The fact is that such critics cannot do anything personally to spread Krsna consciousness. If someone does go and preach, taking all risks and allowing all considerations for time and place, it might be that there are changes in the manner of worship, but that is not at all faulty according to sastra. **Srimad Viraraghava Acarya, an acarya in the disciplic succession of the Ramanuja-sampradaya, has remarked in his commentary that candalas, or conditioned souls who are born in lower than sudra families, can also be initiated according to circumstances. The formalities may be slightly changed here and there to make them Vaisnavas.**

68-06-12. Letter: whom it may concern

In each center we have got hundreds of disciples and followers, and our initiated disciples are strictly following the restrictions as principle, as follows: (1) no illicit sex life, (2) no intoxication, including coffee, tea, and cigarettes, (3) no gambling, (4) no meat eating. We have got both Brahmacharis and Householders as disciples, and all of them are following the above mentioned principles. THE STUDENTS AND DISCIPLES ARE INITIATED ACCORDING TO AUTHORIZED PANCARATRIKI REGULATIONS. According to Srimad-Bhagavatam and Bhagavad-gita, anyone, including so-called low born men, who may take shelter unto the Lotus Feet of Lord Krishna or His devotees, is sanctified by initiation process.

*kirāta-hūṇāndhra-pulinda-pulkaśā
ābhīra-śumbhā yavanāḥ khasādayaḥ
ye 'nye ca pāpā yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ
śudhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ*

How such thing can be possible is explained in the Srimad-Bhagavatam that by special all-pervading power of Visnu this is possible.

721027ND.VRN Lecture

So we are trying to follow Sanatana Gosvami. By diksa-vidhanena, by imitating persons any, from anywhere. It does not matter. Because in this age, Kali-yuga, the diksa-vidhana is performed according, according to Pancaratrika-vidhi. Not Vaidika-vidhi. Vaidika-vidhi is very strict. Unless one is bona fide son of a dvija, the initiation was not given. To the sudras, there was no initiation. A brahmana ksatriya, vaisya. So these are the Vedic process. SO IN THE KALI-YUGA, BECAUSE IT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD THAT EVERYONE IS A SUDRA, THEREFORE VAIDIKA-VIDHANA CANNOT BE APPLIED. VAIDIKA-VIDHANA REQUIRES THAT ONE MUST BE BORN BY A BRAHMANA, KSATRIYA. THEN HE'S ELIGIBLE FOR BEING INITIATED. BUT IN THE KALI-YUGA, THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE. THEREFORE THE PANCARATRIKI-VIDHI IS ACCEPTED.

680724IN.MON Lecture

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi- / pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir / utpātāyaiva kalpate*

TRANSLATION: "Unless one refers to *śāstra* (*śruti*, *smṛti* and *purāṇādi*), one's spiritual activity simply disturbs society. There is no king or government to check people, and therefore society has fallen into a chaotic condition as far as spiritual understanding is concerned. **Taking advantage of this chaotic condition, many rascals have appeared** and proclaimed themselves incarnations of God. As a result, the entire population is indulging in sinful activities such as illicit sex, intoxication, gambling and meat-eating. Out of many sinful people, many incarnations of God are emerging. This is a very regrettable situation, especially in India." ([CC Madhya 20.353](#))

This is the definition given by Srila Rupa Gosvami, that to become a devotee of the Lord, Kṛṣṇa, one has to follow the principles of śruti and smṛti, and pancaratrici-vidhi. Especially in this age, Kali-yuga, there is no Vedic vidhi. Because Vedic vidhi is lost. Formerly, initiation was offered to a person who is actually born of a brahmana father. Otherwise... Or the higher caste, the brahmanas, the ksatriyas, and the vaisyas, they were offered initiation, and the sudras were not offered. That was the Vedic system. But in this age the sastra says that kalau sudra sambhava.

IN THIS AGE OF KALI PRACTICALLY THERE IS NO MORE ANY BRAHMANA, KSATRIYA, OR VAISYA. MAYBE BY NAME, BUT IN QUALIFICATION THEY ARE NOT EXISTING. EVERYONE IS SUPPOSED TO BE SUDRA. SO IN KALI-YUGA THE PANCARATRIKI-VIDHI IS ACCEPTED.

The pancaratrici-vidhi is also Vedic vidhi, corollary, given by Narada Mahamuni. But it is accepted by the Vedic followers, pancaratrici-vidhi. Pancaratrici-vidhi means if any one has a little inclination for spiritual development, he should be given chance. This initiation means to give chance. The Bhagavata says that kirata-hunandhra-pulinda-pulkasa abhira-sumbha yavanah khasadayah. These are the list of the candalas or less than the sudras. So Bhagavata gives open road for everyone. Even one is kirata... Kirata means... Generally they are called aborigines, or the very black aborigines living in the jungles, they are called kirata.

710329BG.BOM Lecture

Our Sanatana Gosvami gives direction in the Hari-bhakti-vilasa that one man can become a brahmana by the regular process of diksa. Diksa, this initiation, cannot be offered to a sudra. Diksa cannot be offered to a sudra. But in this age, Kali-yuga, it is the statement of the sastras that in the Kali-yuga most of the population are sudras. Kalau sudra sambhava. How they can be initiated? This initiation is offered not according to the Vedic rules, because it is very difficult to find out a **qualified brahmana**. DIKSA IS OFFERED TO A QUALIFIED BRAHMANA. THEREFORE THIS DIKSA IS OFFERED ACCORDING TO PANCARATRIKI-VIDHI. THAT IS RECOMMENDED IN THIS AGE. MY SPIRITUAL MASTER INAUGURATED THIS PANCARATRIKI-VIDHI, AND WE ARE

FOLLOWING HIS FOOTSTEPS. Anyone who is inclined to devote his life for Krsna, he should be accepted as brahmana.

75-08-04. Letter: Madhudvisa:

The GBC should all be the instructor gurus. I AM IN THE INITIATOR GURU, and you should be the instructor guru by teaching what I am teaching and doing what I am doing. This is not a title, but you must actually come to this platform. This I want.

Srila Prabhupada Radio Interview, 12/3/1968

"I AM THE SPIRITUAL MASTER OF THIS INSTITUTION, AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY, THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE MY DISCIPLES. They follow the rules and regulations which I ask them to follow, AND THEY ARE INITIATED BY ME SPIRITUALLY."

28th January, 1977, Room Conversation

"Guru-mukha-padma-vakya, cittete koriya aikya, ara na koriho mane asa. Don't think of any nonsense. Simply execute what your guru has said. That is success."

68-04-12. Letter: Dayananda

Regarding parampara system: there is nothing to wonder for big gaps. Just like we belong to the Brahma Sampradaya, so we accept it from Krishna to Brahma, Brahma to Narada, Narada to Vyasadeva, Vyasadeva to Madhva, and between Vyasadeva and Madhva there is a big gap. But it is sometimes said that Vyasadeva is still living, and Madhva was fortunate enough to meet him directly. In a similar way, we find in the Bhagavad-gita that the Gita was taught to the sungod, some millions of years ago, but Krishna has mentioned only three names in this parampara system—namely, Vivasvan, Manu, and Ikshvaku; and SO THESE GAPS DO NOT HAMPER FROM UNDERSTANDING THE PARAMPARA SYSTEM. WE HAVE TO PICK UP THE PROMINENT ACARYAS, AND FOLLOW FROM HIM. There are many branches also from the parampara system, and it is not possible to record all the branches and sub-branches in the disciplic succession. We have to pick up from the authority of the acharya in whatever sampradaya we belong to.