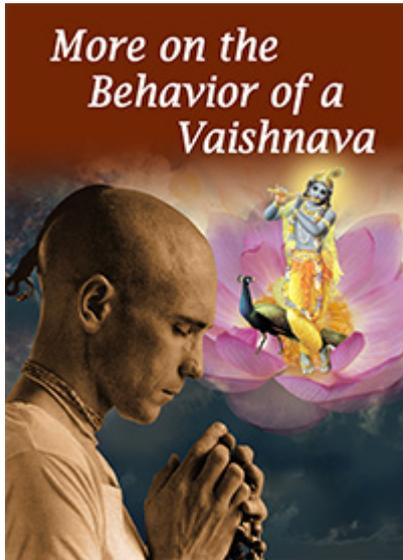


More on the Behavior of a Vaishnava



It is the characteristic of a devotee to observe and protect the Vaishnava etiquette. Maintenance of the Vaishnava etiquette is the ornament of a devotee.

CC. Antya-lila 4.129-130.

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

Quotes from Srila Prabhupada

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

When asked, "How do you recognize a Vaishnava?" Srila Prabhupada replied, "He is a perfect gentleman."

**apane acare keha, na kare pracara
pracara karena keha, na karena acara**

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

'acara', 'pracara',—namera karaha 'dui' karya
tumi—sarva-guru, tumi jagatera arya

You simultaneously perform both activities in relation to the Holy Name by your personal behavior and by your preaching. Therefore you are the most advanced devotee in the world.
CC Antya-lila 102-3 Sanatana Gosvami to Haridasa Thakura

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

Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.29.32

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

SP Letter to Rupanuga (May 9, 1972)

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

SP Letter to Patita Uddharana (December 12, 1974)

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

SP Letter to Gargamuni (February 5, 1969)

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

SP Letter to Dindayal (February 2, 1970)

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

SP Letter to Upendra (August 18, 1970)

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

very much appreciated by me.

SP Letter to Janardana (January 21, 1968)

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

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

SP Letter to Advaita (May 28, 1970)

Our dealings with others must be very clear.

SP Letter to Bali Mardana (February 22, 1970)

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

SP Letter to Satsvarupa (August 19, 1969)

But we should never steal anything like money, food, water, gasoline, etc., just to enhance our service to Krsna. That is too much dangerous, and if we are caught then all our work is finished. Just like in India recently, this Balyogi Guru Maharaji was detected by the customs authorities attempting to smuggle some small items into India. By this one tiny incident his entire effort for preaching-even he is rascal Number One and his preaching is nonsense, even so the example is there-his work is ruined now and he is practically finished, as the government will not grant him a passport to leave India. So we shall always be careful to avoid any kind of jeopardizing our high standing in the society by some foolish and small act of illegal stealing.

SP Letter to Sankarsana (December 31, 1972)

No Salaries

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

Prabhupada Lilamrta V p. 65-6