

THE FOLLOWING SEMINAR LECTURE WAS GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS
BHAKTI CARU SWAMI IN
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Hare Krishna.

The first thing today is because it is a seminar there may be a need to take notes. Did you bring paper and a pen? Everyone brought pens and paper? Who did not bring? Anyway, I can see that most of you have brought a pen and paper. That is very nice. Vaisnava etiquette is a very vast subject but here we will conduct it only for two days. Today, being the first day, we will discuss about the general understanding of Vaisnava etiquette, the general external aspect of Vaisnava etiquette and tomorrow we will deal with more of an internal and behavioural aspect of Vaisnava etiquette. For example, the first thing we will today will be "what is the meaning or definition of Vaisnava etiquette?"

So, this Vaisnava etiquette is a combination of two words: Vaisnava and

etiquette. Vaisnava everybody knows and etiquette means the activity and behaviour of a Vaisnava. So then the question arises: "who is a Vaisnava?" The general understanding or definition of Vaisnava is one who is a devotee of Vishnu is a Vaisnava. Vishnu-bhakta is Vaisnava. One - meaning one who has surrendered himself to Vishnu is a Vaisnava. Who is Vishnu? Again now the question arises, "Who is Vishnu?" Vishnu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Does anybody have any doubt about that? Do you all believe in the Supreme Personality of Godhead? Who doesn't believe in Vishnu or the Supreme Personality of Godhead? At least here everybody does.

And those who believe in the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they are the fortunate souls. They are really fortunate. So, devotees of Vishnu are Vaisnavas. The word Vaisnava has been derived from the word Vishnu, which means devotee of Vishnu. Devotee, what is the meaning of the word devotee then? We again go back to this point: "What is the meaning of the word devotee?" So the word devotee means basically one who believes in Vishnu, believes in the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who surrenders himself to the Supreme Personality of Godhead? One, as a result of his surrender, depends upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead and depending upon Him, he serves the Supreme Personality of Godhead and in this way he develops his love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

So, this devotion begins with surrender and goes up to love. First aspect of devotion is surrender. Well, another thing of course comes before surrender. What is that? Faith because we believe in Krishna, therefore we surrender to Krishna. Those who don't believe in Krishna cannot surrender to Krishna. So, therefore the first consideration is sraddha. At the beginning there is sraddha tatah sadhu- sangah. So first is sraddha. So sraddha leads to saranagati, surrender. And through the surrender it reaches prema. Atyanta durlabha prema koribare dana, sikhaya saranagati bhakatera prana. In order to bestow, in order to offer very rare Krishna prema - love for Krishna - Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is teaching us the process of surrender.

So, to be a Vaisnava one first of all has to surrender to Krishna. So, that is the definition or identity of a Vaisnava. And in the ultimate sense, what does it mean to be a Vaisnava? In the ultimate sense a Vaisnava means a pure spirit soul. A living entity exists in two stages conditioned and pure. When the living entity is in the material nature, he is conditioned. That conditioning is impurity. But when one becomes purified, then he is a pure spirit soul. And as a pure spirit soul he is a Vaisnava. Vaisnava actually means a soul who is completely pure of his material contamination. So, Vaisnava means a liberated soul. Vaisnava means a pure devotee of the Lord. So, that is the ultimate definition of a Vaisnava: he is a pure devotee of the Lord. And etiquette: whatever he does, his activities, his behaviour is Vaisnava etiquette. The way a pure devotee acts that is Vaisnava etiquette. At the stage of vaidi-bhakti - practising stage - we are practicing few

activities or few processes, practises. But ultimately it is a matter of becoming purified. Then only it will become Vaisnava sadhachar or Vaisnava etiquette. The way a pure devotee acts, that is Vaisnava etiquette. So, we have to understand, what does a pure devotee do? Whatever a pure devotee does, whatever a Vaisnava does, that is Vaisnava etiquette.

So, from the scriptures we understand a few symptoms of a Vaisnava. And the most wonderful symptom of a Vaisnava has been given by Caitanya Mahaprabhu, indicated by Caitanya Mahaprabhu in the third verse of Siksastaka: *Trnad api sunicena taror iva sahisnuna amanina mana-dena kirtaniyah sada harih*. So that is the symptom of a pure Vaisnava. Of course, not that every Vaisnava will be a pure Vaisnava. There are three stages of Vaisnavas'. There are three phases of becoming a Vaisnava. One is a kanistha adhikari-vaisnava or a neophyte devotee, the second class devotee and first class devotee. This definition of *Trnad api sunicena* is of the first class devotee. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was asked who is a Vaisnava, Caitanya Mahaprabhu mentioned that one who chants the holy name of the Lord is a neophyte Vaisnava. One who always chants the Hare Krishna maha mantra; he is a second class Vaisnava - second class devotee. And just by seeing him one feels like chanting Hare Krishna, is a first class Vaisnava.

So, there are different stages of elevation. First we are practising devotees, then we are preaching devotees, then we are loving devotees. The ultimate goal is to become a loving devotee. A devotee who has developed his pure love for Krishna. *Premi-bhakta*. *Prema*, one who developed his love for Krishna is the first class devotee. So *Trnad api sunicena taror iva sahisnuna* is the ultimate standard. A Vaisnava is more humble than a blade of grass. Although he is very advanced, although he is in the most elevated stage of devotional service, but he is very humble. When you think of a pure devotee, the example that we have is of Srila Prabhupada. We heard of many pure devotees but one pure devotee we have seen ourselves. That is Srila Prabhupada.

Srila Prabhupada, although he achieved so much, but Prabhupada always maintained such a humble attitude. That is the exemplary Vaisnava. Personally I have seen whenever Prabhupada gave some credit, whenever somebody gave some credit to Srila Prabhupada, Srila Prabhupada would always offer it to his spiritual master. I remember once in Calcutta, the reporters came to interview Srila Prabhupada and some of them were glorifying Srila Prabhupada by saying what he had done is even greater than what Caitanya Mahaprabhu did. They were telling that Caitanya Mahaprabhu spread Krishna consciousness only in India, but Prabhupada spread Krishna consciousness all over the world. But Prabhupada's response was "No, I haven't done anything. It is all the doing of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and my Gurumaharaja". So, Prabhupada did not take the credit for himself. Although Krishna gave him the credit, Prabhupada did not accept the credit. He

offered the credit back to Krishna. It is Krishna who did it. After all, everything happens by Krishna's divine arrangement. Although Krishna selected Srila Prabhupada, but Prabhupada did not accept the credit and offered it to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and his spiritual master. In this way we have seen Prabhupada always was offering all the credit to his spiritual master and did not accept any credit for himself.

And considering Srila Prabhupada's humble disposition I also think of one anecdote that I heard. I haven't seen it myself. But I heard of one anecdote. It was in Holland. Prabhupada was in Amsterdam. Amsterdam had a small temple. In those days Holland used to be very liberal. Those days the young boys and girls were into taking drugs like marihuana and hashish. And although in other countries it was banned, in Holland it was open. It was legal. So, many hippies used to come and stay in Amsterdam from all over. So, our temple in Holland also was a little spaced out temple. So, Prabhupada was going to give initiation and Prabhupada saw that nothing was organized properly. And Prabhupada was getting very very disturbed. And then at one point, you know, when Prabhupada came to give initiation to perform the fire ceremony he saw that on the yajna-vedi - on the fire altar - there were no fruits. So Prabhupada, in a little irritated way: "Yes, where are the fruits"? And one devotee ran downstairs and he got a bowl of cut fruits and brought it to Srila Prabhupada. So Prabhupada got a little annoyed. So there was one young boy, kind of a hippie who used to come to the temple. He didn't become a devotee. But he used to come to the temple and he noticed that whenever somebody would get agitated, devotees would tell him "Why don't you chant Hare Krishna?". So he told Prabhupada when he saw that Prabhupada was getting disturbed, he said: "Why don't you chant Hare Krishna?". And Prabhupada just took his bead bag and started to chant. So this is how humble Srila Prabhupada was. One hippie is instructing him what to do and Prabhupada would take the instruction, even from a hippie.

So many times I have noticed Prabhupada would have meetings with the GBC-leaders. At that time I was just a new devotee serving Srila Prabhupada. And after they left, Prabhupada would ask me: "So, what do you think of it"? As if Prabhupada cared for my opinion. And I simply felt embarrassed and I said "Prabhupada, I don't understand anything of what's going on". And Prabhupada was so tolerant. And Prabhupada always gave amanina mana-dena - not desiring any respect for him. He gave so much respect to others. So the symptom of a Vaisnava is *trnad api sunicena taror iva sahisnuna*, that's the perfect definition of a Vaisnava. And another consideration is that a Vaisnava is a soul surrendered to Krishna. Surrendered soul.

Prabhupada often used to say that a Vaisnava is a perfect gentleman. And Prabhupada wanted the devotees of ISKCON to become perfect gentlemen. Everybody in ISKCON should become a perfect gentleman. So this is how people will develop respect for our organisation, for our institution. They are

watching how we are behaving, therefore our behaviour should be very exemplary. Now, this is the qualification or symptom of a Vaisnava.

Then, what is the external appearance of a Vaisnava? How do you recognize a Vaisnava? We recognize a Vaisnava by his tilaka, by kantimala, by his sikha, especially for men, and the dress especially in the temple. Nowadays, most of the devotees are householders. They have to work. They have to go to the office. So, in the office they may wear western clothes, but when one comes to the temple, one should be very cautious, very careful that he is dressed in devotee clothes. I'm very impressed to see how you all are here today. All of you, most of you are wearing, those who could go home and change, you have dressed yourself in dhoti, kurta and sari. So, this dress code is very important.

I remember when I was a new devotee. I was asking one devotee Tirthapada prabhu, who was kind of my mentor. He was like my elder brother. He was very very caring. I was sharing the room with him and he was a very loving, very caring devotee. And I was asking him, what is wrong with wearing trousers? And he gave a very wonderful explanation of that. He told me that the trouser rubs the inner part of our thighs which causes sexual agitation. And I immediately could see the dhoti is so soft and so easy to wear. I mean, so much nicer a feeling it is to the body, dhoti and kurta. So everything that we do is scientific, has a scientific basis. So trousers, wearing trousers causes sexual agitation. And the goal of human life is to conquer sex desires. To overcome sex desires, because this material nature is a prison house of sex desires. As long as we have sex desires, we are going to be bound to this material nature. If we want to get out of this material nature, if we want to become free from the bondage of this material nature, we have to overcome sex desires. There is no other way! You can't maintain your sex desires and want to become free from material bondage, it will never work.

Anyway, therefore dress code is also very important. The way we dress ourselves is very important. So matajis, ladies please wear saris. Nowadays I notice in India also people, women are not wearing saris. They are wearing jeans. They are wearing trousers. Sometimes it becomes difficult to figure out who is man and who is woman. They are wearing jeans, they are wearing salwar kameez, but sari is so graceful. It is so nice to wear saris. They look so beautiful. Women look so beautiful in them and it covers them.

So, this is how the Vaisnavas have the perfect system, the perfect arrangement, the perfect way of life. So, it is important that all the devotees of ISKCON wear tilak. Will you make it a point to wear tilak? I'm seeing many of you forgot to put on the tilak today, although you came to the program. One thing I can tell you, Prabhupada used to be very very upset when he saw that we didn't have tilak. So make it a point to wear tilak.

There is no need to hide your identity. You rather feel proud of your identity that you are a Vaisnava.

Can you imagine the early days when there was just a handful of devotees. They were dressed in a perfect way, tilak , kantimala, shaved head, sikha, dhoti, kurta, and sari. Although they did not know how to wear dhoti- kurta properly, although they didn't know how to, they were mostly westerners. They didn't know to wear saris but still they wore. That is how their commitment and conviction was to Krishna consciousness.

Also, many of you are working, so probably you cannot keep shaved head. But please make it a point to keep a sikha. Those who are initiated and those who want to become initiated, make it a point to wear sikha. Ladies can have long hair, but temple devotees should have shaved head. So these are our uniforms. When people used to ask Prabhupada : "why do you do that"? Prabhupada used to say: "Just like when a policeman is wearing the uniform, you know that he is a policeman. And if you are in difficulty you approach a policeman. Similarly, when you want spiritual guidance, you can see a Vaisnava. Therefore the Vaisnavas have to identify themselves in a proper way". So make it a point to present you as Vaisnavas. Are you proud to be a Vaisnava? Once again. Thank you very much.

So become, it is actually an honour, it's a glory, it's a pride to become a Vaisnava. It's a privilege to become a Vaisnava. Can you imagine who is a Vaisnava? Lord Shiva is a Vaisnava, Brahma is a Vaisnava, Narada is a Vaisnava, Prahlada Maharaja is a Vaisnava, Bali Maharaja is a Vaisnava, Yudhishtira Maharaja is a Vaisnava. So these are the Vaisnavas, the best of the people. Rupa Gosvami was a Vaisnava, Sanatana Gosvami was a Vaisnava, Bhaktivinoda Thakur was a Vaisnava, Prabhupada was a Vaisnava. So these are the Vaisnavas. The best of the people of this world. So do you want to belong to the same clan? Yes, naturally.

Now as a Vaisnava we also maintain a very strict standard of cleanliness. This is, we have to also be very careful about. Vaisnava is very clean. A Vaisnava takes a bath every morning. Specially, preferably just after getting up, what do you do? You go to the bathroom, do your morning rituals, take a bath, isn't it? Brush your teeth etc..., take bath. Get ready for mangala-arti. If you don't have the time, if you are not staying in the temple, in the morning you have some programme at home. And make it a point to get up early. Vaisnava preferably gets up by Brahma-muhurta, before 4:30. Again many of you are working, so you have late night and things. You may not be able to get up so early as 4:30, but try to get up as early as possible.

Generally, a devotee should take bath how many times a day? Well, we can say that a brahmachari, sanniyasi they should take at least three baths a day. And the householders can take at least two baths. At least in the morning

when you get up and in the evening when you come home take a bath. And the bath actually is very healthy. The more often you take bath it actually balances your body's metabolism. Pouring water in the body has a very healthy effect. Besides, keeping this standard of cleanliness; it also helps maintaining a healthy body. And in the early days in India bath actually meant you go to a river or you go to a pond and take a bath. That kind of bath is even better. Nowadays we go to the bathroom, open the shower. That is also nice, but better is to take a bath completely immersing the body in the water. In Mauritius you have such a wonderful facility. There is such a beautiful ocean. But I noticed that Mauritians don't like to go the ocean to take a bath. So the time to take bath is when one is, as I said, like getting up in the morning. Then after evacuating, after passing stool also one should take bath. In this way after any unclean act one should take bath. You go to a dirty place, take bath. You touch something dirty, like if you step onto something unclean, take bath. After any unclean act take a bath. And then wash hands and feet also before eating. Wash hands and feet after urinating. These are the activities that a Vaisnava must do. So keep yourself very clean in this way. Vaisnava means clean. Externally keep your habits clean. Internally your spirit soul will become clean. It will have its effect.

Then, Vaisnava is respectful and as an expression of his respect Vaisnava offers obeisances. When you go in front of the Deities you offer obeisances. When you approach a senior, when you go to a senior devotee or see a senior devotee, you offer obeisances. By doing that, what happens? Your soul becomes purified. Your soul cultivates this culture of respect. Sometimes it is seen that some devotees don't really want to show any respect. But who is a loser? The person they're not showing their respect? Is it that person is losing? No, the one who is failing to show respect, he is becoming contaminated within. He is missing out on this opportunity to become purified. Therefore, the seniors should be respected. The Deities should be respected and even the objects of worship should be respected like tulasi-mala, or the temple. Not only the Deities should be respected, the temple also should be respected. When you approach a temple, you should offer obeisances to the temple. Even the scriptures should be respected. Don't use the scripture like, don't put the books on the floor. The scriptures, don't keep them on the floor; show respect on a stand or on your lap at least, keep them. Offer obeisances when you approach the scriptures. Before giving Bhagavatam class or approaching some scriptures for reading, yes offer respect to them. Because by offering respect, what is happening? By offering respect our heart is becoming purified.

And then, whatever you have, you cultivate the habit of offering them to Krishna first. And then accept it as Krishna's prasada. Whether it is food or whatever it is. Hari Bhakta Vilas says even cloths. When you get new cloths, offer it to Krishna and then accept it as Krishna's remnants - Krishna's

prasad. Whatever you have, you offer it to Krishna first. And this culture is very common in India or in Indian culture. Like I notice, when people buy a car, they bring it to the temple. Do they do it here? They want to do the puja, which actually means they want to offer it to Krishna. Maybe we should remind them that this is how they should develop their consciousness, offering to Krishna. So everything, offer everything to the Lord and accept everything as His mercy or as His prasad.

So these are the six points that I covered, decided to cover today. And tomorrow we will discuss more about our behaviour. Like, how should we deal with each other? That is a very important aspect. In order to make spiritual advancement, it is very important that we develop proper relationship with each other. So that is an important aspect of Vaisnava etiquette.

Does anybody have any questions? I think it will be better if you write the questions on a piece of paper. Then it will be easy for me to answer. Does anybody have any question written already? Or anyway, so if anybody has any question that you want to ask directly you can do that.

Yes, Krishna Chandra Prabhu.

Question: not clear.

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "Okay no, it's a very nice question. You see, Vaisnava etiquette is teaching us how to become a Vaisnava. But what is Kali-yuga trying to teach everybody? How to become an offender to the Vaisnavas, right? How to become a demon. That is what Kali-yuga is teaching: adharma. Devotees stay on the path of dharma. Kali-yuga is the time of adharma. So Kali-yuga is taking everyone away from the Vaisnava culture. Therefore, we have a very important job in hand. That is stop Kali's influence and re-establish dharma. Thank you Krishna Chandra Prabhu, Hare Krishna."

Question: not clear

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "When you come to Krishna consciousness, you become proud. Yes, that is a neophyte stage. But more he makes advancement, he'll become humble. See, more he becomes a Vaisnava, the more humble he'll become. So when we come, we are not really quite Vaisnavas. But as we become Vaisnavas, our attitude will become humble. But initially one may have a little tendency of being arrogant. "Oh I have become a Vaisnava". It's natural, otherwise why should he join ISKCON. If he is not proud of being a devotee, then why should he join? So it is good that he is proud. But that pride will automatically dissolve into humble disposition in course of time."

Question: not clear

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "Okay very good, the question is: what is the place of TV, cinema in life style on a preaching devotee? You see, generally what is presented in a TV? As I said, like Kali-yuga means Kali's arrangement to make to spread adhama. So through TV, cinema - what is ultimately happening? - adhama is being promoted. But people will, people have a tendency to watch TV. So what to do? So, eventually we have to make TV-programs to promote Krishna consciousness. That is how we have to counter that. And another thing is, generally it is better not to watch TV because so much time just goes to waste. What to speak of TV, Prabhupada told us not to even read newspapers. And TV's and newspapers, what they do? They are meant to give news, but in today's world there is no good news, it is all bad news. So what's the point in watching that news or reading that news. It simply contaminates your consciousness. But life goes on without even reading or watching them. There is a revolution in Libya. Everyone, people are so excited about that. What's happening in Libya? But how it's going to affect me? How it's going to affect us? If there is a revolution here, then we could think about it. After all, by Krishna's mercy it's not happening here. Mauritius is a peaceful place. So let us not get affected by all that, because this kind of news simply agitates the mind. And the movies and things, what they are doing? They are simply promoting materialistic culture. They are simply promoting sex life. Materialistic culture means sex life. So TV and movies and all that, are simply promoting that.

Question: Hare Krishna Maharaja, from what age do you recommend parents to introduce their children, children to the basic principles of Vaisnava etiquette? Should we impose upon them or let them decide for themselves? Thank you Maharaja.

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "Okay yes, nice question. The question is: "from what age we should try to teach our children about Vaisnava etiquette or should we impose it upon them or leave it up to them?" You see, children need to be guided and when they reach their maturity, then they can decide what they want to do. So that means from the age of six to sixteen or even before, you have to educate them. You teach them what is right and what is wrong. But when they are seventeen and eighteen, then you leave it up to them "okay, it is your life, you decide". But still continue to guide them. If they are obedient, please guide them. The main point is, when they are young, educate them, give them the right guidance. Guidance means: tell them what is right from what is wrong.

Question: Why even after coming to Krishna consciousness since so many years, one fails to develop the mood as Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu recommended, that is *Tmad api sunicena taror iva sahisnuna*?

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "It may take time, but keep on practicing. It will happen. Keep on endeavouring. We won't be able to achieve perfection overnight. It may take years. It may take lives. It may take life times, doesn't matter. Keep on practicing it, since you know that this is the right thing to do."

Question: Maharaja, you have just mentioned that one should offer food or any other things and then accept as prasadam. Is it okay if we buy breads from outside and offer it and eat it as prasadam or is it not good?

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "Well, if the bread is, if you have to eat it, that's the question. If you can avoid eating bread from outside, that's one thing. But if you have to eat it, then yes offer it to Krishna and eat it. But it is not the ideal thing to offer because it is grains and cooked by non devotees. So things that are cooked by non devotees, is better to avoid those stuffs. But if you cannot, sometimes you have to eat it, offer it to Krishna. You won't be able to offer it to Krishna in the temple, but at least offer it to a picture of Krishna. Offer it in your mind. Sometimes, early days, devotees used to offer the whole supermarket to Krishna. Yes, you can offer anything to Krishna.

Question: Nowadays we understand that most devotees living outside buy bread and eat. What to speak about other things?

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "That's why I said, like you see, we have to be practical. People working outside, for everybody it may not be possible to carry food from home and they have to eat outside. So when they have to eat outside, at least if it is vegetarian and before accepting it, if they can offer it to Krishna, that will be nice. We have to also understand that Krishna is very merciful. If you are sincerely offering yourself to Krishna, Krishna is not going to watch all these petty things, "oh, is it karmi bread or devotee bread?". The basic idea is: accept everything with the right kind of consciousness. It belongs to, everything belongs to Krishna. Krishna has given to us for our sustenance. So be grateful to Krishna before accepting it.

Question: Devotees performing devotional services in a view of public but keeping extra marital life?

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "What is this? What is the question actually? Devotees performing devotional life, devotional service in view of public but keeping extra marital life?

Well, I mean, you deal it with those ones. This kind of question I cannot deal with.

Question: Before marriage devotees walking hand in hand with his fiancée.

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "Well, I mean, if it is not right? Yes, it is not. Because devotees maintain, as I mentioned, devotees maintain pure standard. So please maintain a pure standard. And man woman relationship is a sacred relationship. It is not a thing for public display. Like nowadays we are seeing like the whole materialistic culture is degrading the society. Now the question is: are we going to become a part of that or we're going to set the right standard in this degraded world?"

Question: Should a devotee of Krishna actively participate in other processes such as Shiva-ratri and Kali-puja?

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) " Shiva- ratri is okay because Lord Shiva is a devotee of Krishna. And if you approach Lord Shiva to receive devotion, then there is nothing wrong in that. And Shiva-ratri, according to Lord Shiva, Shiva-ratri is a time when he becomes very easily pleased. It's a time which is very dear to him. So if you want to win the favour of Lord Shiva and ask him to bless you to become a devotee of Lord Krishna. Then yes, you can. But Kali-puja is a different thing all together. Kali-puja, people worship Kali. The dacoits worship Kali. The meat eaters worship Kali, because they want to eat meat, so they want to offer it to Kali first and take it. But the purpose of offering meat to Kali was also to take her permission. Because she is the mother and mother's child is being slaughtered, so mother's permission is taken. And what is the condition? The condition is: what I'm doing to him today, he will do it to me tomorrow. I'm killing him today, tomorrow he will kill me. You want a condition like that? Go ahead! That's why Kali-puja is not really meant for the Vaisnavas.

Question: In the verse *trnad api sunicena* it is said that we should not be proud, we must be humble. What is the difference between pride less and humble?

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "It is the same. When you become pride less, you become humble. "

Question: What message does your Holiness have to devotee's children who behave differently to their aspiration.

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "Well, make them understand that to become a devotee of Krishna is for their own benefit. When they become a devotee of Krishna, Krishna will be very pleased with them. And Krishna will give them everything they want. Krishna will give them all the toys, all the chocolates. I'm sorry, all the gulab jamuns. Then they will be attracted to worship Krishna. Just don't present it to them in a very rigid way. Present it to them in such a way that they will be able to appreciate that."

Question: Please elaborate why not to eat onion and garlic? As Ramadev Swami is preaching to consume it, it is important for our health as it acts as medicine. So, common people often get confused whether to eat or not? Thank you Maharaja.

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "Well, as you said, if it is taken as a medicine probably it can be taken. But not on every day with every food. Like, you can take medicine, sometimes you take poison for medicine. Do you take antibiotics every day? Do you put antibiotics with your breakfast? Crush the antibiotics and put it in your chapatti? Why not? Because medicines are taken at a certain time to cure the disease. Yes, onion and garlic may be good as medicine when it comes to it. But it is not meant for to be taken every day. Somebody may say that well, onion and garlic are also vegetables. So many vegetable plants are poison. Do you eat them? They are vegetables. There is a plant called hemlock. You know hemlock? Socrates was given that juice of hemlock which was poison. So, so many plants, do you make a sabji out of that, the poisonous plants? Similarly, onion and garlic have poisonous effect on our consciousness. That is why we don't take onion and garlic. Do you want your consciousness to become contaminated? So onion and garlic do that. Now you are cultivating your consciousness to become Krishna conscious. So can you afford to contaminate your consciousness? Therefore, don't take onion and garlic. It doesn't matter what Ramadev baba or Bamadev baba says. These people don't have any knowledge. They are just promoting some hatha-yoga. They are not devotees. They don't understand the purpose. They don't even know what a soul is. They don't have any information about spirit soul. What they are doing? They are promoting the body culture. Practice yoga, practice pranayama, practice this and that. For what: To have a healthy body. So is that our objective? No. That is why stay away from these people. Just stick to Prabhupada. He gave the perfect understanding. This hatha yoga and pranayama is not going to help you at the time of death. Do you think you will be able to practice hatha yoga at the time of death?

Question: We have seen that devotees tend to look at the faults of others, why do they do that?

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "Well, I don't know whom you saw but at least I tell people. I tell the devotees: that if you're so expert in finding faults, if you're so expert, if you're such a good critic, then find faults with yourself first. If you're such a good critic, become your critic first.

Question: We see that these days the younger generation devotees do not follow proper etiquette. They openly keep beard, piercings, expose tattoos, marks on their bodies as if it is all natural.

Answer by HH Bhakti Charu Swami (Guru Maharaja) "It is happening because you are not teaching them what to do and what not to do. Did you tell them not to do that? So try to educate them properly. We can't blame them without reminding them what is right and what is wrong. "

Thank you very much.
Hare Krishna. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you very much. There were so many nice questions. The question answer sessions are the most interesting part of the seminar.
