

The Temple President

A guide for all who care about spiritual community life
by Swami B.A. Paramadvaiti

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Aspects of Human relationships

The Temple President and his Vaisnava council

One of the biggest problems in any individual is the tendency to strive for the best position. Every conditioned soul tries to enjoy to the utmost and readily looks down upon others or envies those who have what he feels he should have. Even such great souls as those who attain responsibility in the lives of others as a Temple President are often affected by these human weaknesses. This creates a hostile atmosphere around them. Often they don't listen to good advice, or they do not give good facility for the development of other members of their community. To make things worse, they often cover up their own mismanagement by preaching that their "position" is almost infallible. This creates a system of inefficiency that greatly hampers the advancement of the temple community. It is not supposed to be like that, because Srila Prabhupada has given us several directives to create community leadership which is always just and dynamic and which functions in accordance with the dictum of Guru, Sastra and Sadhu.

Srila Prabhupada set an example for the management of temples which is given below:

He established a Vaisnava Board in the early days of his first temple in New York, while he was present there, for managing the affairs of the temple. This Board consisted of the president, vice president, treasurer, secretary and other appointed members.

He condemned centralization and wanted each one of his disciples to become individually responsible and capable of executing any service required.

He asked the advice of his disciples on many occasions in resolving certain problems.

He granted acceptance when some leader in his movement was rejected by the group of devotees under that leader's care, and on many occasions gave credibility to the opinion of any devotee who expressed dissatisfaction with their leaders' action(s).

In short, the Vaisnava Board is of great importance for any temple. Every member of the community who for more than three months is performing serious devotional service, even if he lives outside the temple premises, could be invited to assist in the weekly meetings of the Vaisnava Board. The Vaisnava Board should meet weekly regardless of the quantity of members who are able to assist. Every meeting should be documented in a meeting report book by the secretary. The members of this Board should be eager to include as many members of the community as possible in this forum for the synergistic expansion of Krishna Consciousness.

This Board is the best place to learn how to preach and how to manage and to be Krishna Conscious. The president has Veto Power in general but should not at all be eager to exercise it. In case the whole Board is dissatisfied with the president's veto decisions, the spiritual master or his representative must be consulted for (hopefully) reaching a happy conclusion. All devotees jointly share the same interest, which is to protect the interest of the Deity and the spiritual master. Therefore the Vaisnava Board has its interest in making all devotees in the community happy. Even when there are vastly different opinions, discussions must be held in a courteous and happy Vaisnava way under all circumstances. We have not joined Srila Prabhupadas movement to spend our valuable human lives fighting.

The Vaisnava Board is the forum for making all the major decisions of the temple. Thus it needs to be supplied with good accounting and accurate information from the respective temple departments and especially the financial department. Without such reports it is impossible to make wise plans. Temple Presidents do not need to be in control of the Laksmi personally. That is rather undesirable in any temple with six members or more. Laksmi is to always be managed in a transparent way.

We need a transparent, transcendental transmission between us and Krishna. Only sincere devotees can provide that. All financial affairs must thus be abundantly clear to the Vaisnava Board such that mistrust never surfaces. There is no better way to serve the community then to teach everyone to be excellent leaders.

Such meetings are sometimes time consuming. Do not think that this is time wasted. A truly religious community depends on the enthusiasm of every member and his or her disposition to sacrifice for the common goal. In a material company with a private owner it depends on the leader's good decisions and on his ability to motivate his employees to work according to his plan. But in a spiritual community everyone is a voluntary participant. That makes things more difficult. But this is what is attractive: devotional service for the pleasure of God, not motivated labor executed under the threat of losing one's sense gratification.

Devotees make great preachers and managers, but are rarely good low income workers fitting into the scheme of some leader who wants them to produce and not think very much. The Vaisnava Board is the answer to all these problems and will supply all of us with the Sadhu sanga we are all anxious for. Hari Bol

The Temple President and the new devotees

The subject of "making new devotees" is very extensive. Many devotees have meditated on how to convince others to become members of the family of the spiritual master. Faith in Krishna and the spiritual master is a gift of Srimati Radharani and no one else can control this. All rights are reserved by the Lord of love and his confidential devotees.

But many people may join a temple influenced by ulterior motivations. This is quite common and produces a group of devotees who are Kanishta Adhikaris, neophyte in every aspect. Also we find that such Bhakti is mixed with fruitive desires (Karma misra) and with mental speculations (Jnana misra). But this is even explained by the Lord in his Gita when he said that four type of persons will come to him for help: the wise, the inquisitive, the poor and the afflicted.

Giving shelter to all those who are willing to become internal or external contributing members of the Ashrams, the Temple President is the real friend all. Below is some advice on how to deal with new aspirants who desire to connect their lives to a spiritual master.

Be extremely conscious that new devotees harmonize with the group and do not create a disturbance to the temple. To assure this, one should know whether that person has any stability in his previous life. He should have no problem with the authorities and should have no contagious illness. You should get references on the person from his previous workplace or place of living. It is best to have full information about his mother and father, their position, their attitude toward the movement, any possible connections which could become problematic due to their anger, etc. If you have personal contact with the mother of a new devotee it is not very likely that such a newcomer will steal from the temple, as no one wants his mother to know of such nonsense activities.

In case such information is not available about a devotee and it is obvious that he comes from a chaotic background, you should be very cautious about him.

New devotees should have documentation and these documents should be kept locked in the temple office for security. He can carry photocopies for the purpose of identification.

It is advisable that newcomers should be kept in the association of one mature Brahmin or room leader to study his personality and motives. If that Brahmin gives his opinion that the candidate is sincere, then the devotee is transferred to the Bhakta leader.

The Bhakta program is an important first step in one's spiritual life. Well trained from the beginning, it will be easier for the devotee to follow the Vaisnava etiquette and accept the responsibility of becoming a real disciple.

He has now got his first authority in spiritual life. Other older devotees should not disturb him by giving different instructions to this new devotee. New devotees should have time to study with the help of their leader, but sometimes the amount of service makes it difficult to maintain that standard. That is no big problem. Emergencies and Marathons are the real field of training. A friend in need is a friend indeed. A devotee who likes to help when he is needed is going to be stable in Krsna consciousness.

I was sent out on samkirtan from the very first day in Srila Prabhupadas movement, and I do not repent one hour of service done, even though I did not stay in the same place and as a Brahmachari I kept contributing to whichever temple I stayed in. But it is a fact that all the effort I spent trying to distribute books or collecting funds for the temple or any other service was done because I felt the desire to do it. I was never forced to do anything, and I also would not have accepted being imposed upon by anyone. This is a loving and voluntary movement, and it is expected that any serious candidate will automatically make himself useful and liked by all other devotees.

Srila Prabhupada used to say: "It is my duty to enthuse and to correct as I travel and visit the devotees." But as we know, Srila Prabhupada's disciples were very enthused and if any correction came from him, everyone was more than eager to change.

External devotees should also have full chance to get initiation and to be able to cooperate with the temple. Since they have their own entanglement, we cannot expect the same attitude as that of the resident devotees. All we want to see in an external devotee is his sincere desire to help and participate in the mission of his Guru. They should be invited to special preparation classes to qualify to take initiation.

The property of devotees such as cars or houses or other valuable items should not be accepted easily as donations. It is best they keep them and use them for Krishna's service themselves. If that is impossible make sure that they will not change their mind later about any possible donation. We must not forget that the Vaisnava family has a spiritual and a social responsibility in the world and in the lives of its members. Most members are young and have not yet organized their life. Often they do not yet know how to earn a living or maintain a family. They do not yet know whether they will marry one day or not. The Guru is a guide for becoming a good devotee and a responsible citizen. Krishna consciousness does not mean that everyone has to be poor because he has given all his assets to the temple to which he belongs. How will the temple exist if the devotees do not donate to the cause? We have to be mature and not encourage fanaticism or impulsive actions. Everything belongs to Krishna and not one atom can be removed from the world. Why worry? Krishna can give us what he likes and he can also take away what he likes. But we shall make sure

that no one is angry with our activities. If a devotee or member insists that he wants to donate something, it shall be documented well and legally.

The Temple President and the parents of new devotees

The parents of new devotees can be understandably upset about their offspring's change of lifestyle and beliefs. Often I have seen that they too change out of affection for their child. Anyhow, one has to deal with them as a perfect gentleman, even if they come in a very rude way and insult you.

Personal and religious freedoms are not as convincing to them as is a friendly, well balanced reception with subsequent explanations about how our devotees are many times happily married, fulfilling their duties in this world on top of their spiritual dedication. Take away their fears. Tell the new devotee to preach softly to his parents and to be sensitive to their suffering and to pray for their understanding. We have to always be kind and patient. It took my mother fourteen years to accept Vegetarianism. Today she chants the holy name and does devotional service.

Let the new devotees assure their parents that they will always love them and that Krishna only increases our responsibility. Don't forget. It takes parents time digest this shock and to be able to balance the facts. Also with so much negative propaganda against minorities with uncommon beliefs due to a few groups' terrible activities, we should not be surprised that some parents fear that the worst has happened to their child. Tell new devotees to contact their family at least once a month, unless the communication is absolutely impossible. Letters are very good, because they are not so emotional and give the other person time to think about what he is being told.

Let them send gifts to their parents such as prasadam, books, etc. Everything well done will have some wonderful result. But we should not expect quick results. Avoid fighting at every cost with anyone.

Try to connect parents of devotees with the favorable parents of other devotees. Educators share opinions on what will be good for the young people and similarly, good parents can quickly appreciate that their children have received great blessings to have come into contact with Krishna and the spiritual master. At least there will be respect in most cases.

If a new devotee's parents are ready to create a big problem for your temple, you should consider sending him home to work out the difficulties himself. The temple should not suffer because of some individual karmic trouble. Do not send such a devotee to another city. It is not fair that the local devotees should suffer because of such a troubled situation. Trouble must be avoided. In South America, for example, if some father has connection to some Army general or other influential persons it is possible

that the entire preaching can be disturbed by such a situation. We shall always think: World first and my temple second.

What to speak of those who are minors. You should not even let minors enter the temple programs without being accompanied by their legal guardian. It is not good to preach to children and thus make their parents upset. Spend your time preaching to adults and only let children into the temple in the company of their parents.

If any minor wants to join and has the legal permission of BOTH parents, still you should be very careful. There are always some demonic sexual criminals in this world, trying to abuse some persons' innocence. Children rarely decide to become devotees. Generally it is only their rebellion against their parents which has them searching for other friends and environments. No doubt, it is great mercy for them to be exposed to Krishna Consciousness at a tender young age, but there is no reason whatsoever to come into conflict with a legal guardian of any child. Do not be fooled by their intensive devotional plea. It is their Karma to be born in that family, and if they are serious they can wait until they reach the age of adulthood and surrender to Krishna without disturbance.

The Temple President and the Media

Preaching can be greatly enhanced if the Temple President knows how to deal with the media. Sometimes we forget that everything should be used for Krishna, and thus we miss important opportunities. The Vaisnavas' presence in a city or country should be felt at every instance. We should be informed of any public gathering and try to be present there in the form of a Hari nam party or a Prasadam booth or a book table.

Advertisement is very costly, but devotees can use the media to preach in many ways. Some suggestions are as follows: Make friends with the media writers and directors of all media organizations by visiting them personally with the ISEV materials. Speak about your projects and invite them for Prasadam. Try to get your programs published in the local Culture section. For special festivals try to get them covered. Many devotees have been able to be part of the media programming.

Never trust the press, but be prepared to deal with them in every aspect. Journalists are salespersons and need scandals. Objectivity is useless to them. Only personal friendship can save you from their misuse. Always represent your Guru as if he were personally present. Srila Prabhupada utilized all types of media in his worldwide preaching, and Krishna is famous because of his expert utilization.

The Temple President and the Neighbors

We should never be insensitive to our neighbors. They may be non devotees, but they should get a fair chance to be benefited by the devotees in their vicinity. If we push them with insensitivity, such offenses will be our fault. We shall again experience neighbors who are not happy about the temple in their vicinity. Their real estate value may even fall due to the presence of a Vaisnava temple, with many visitors, etc. We should especially consider their sound tolerance level, which is usually the cause for conflicts. Yes, we would always like to chant without any restriction. But this is not always possible. We have to be considerate and not disturb anyone with our Kirtan. It is great if we can soundproof our temple, but generally that is not possible, in which case we have to quiet down. No conches blowing and no big Kirtan unless we can get permission from the neighbors, such as for a Sunday feast. Many neighbors fight and often without logical reason. Still it is in our interest to keep everyone as favorable as possible. Humility again will be our best approach.

The Temple President and the spiritual master

This is a subject which can not be explained in full in this book, since the understanding of the entire Guru tattva is necessary to cover this item. Anyhow, since preaching is our life and soul, and since our spiritual master Srila Prabhupada personally started the first temples and Ashramas, later sending his disciples to follow in his footsteps, who, by his grace accomplished the most surprising results even after having been in the movement for only a short time, we can understand that the mystic transaction between the Guru the Temple President and the new aspiring members is quite transcendental. This is the fact: The Temple President generally has more contact with the devotee than their Guru. He also represents the words and orders of the Guru, and tries to maintain the devotees, inspire them on the path of Saranagati.

The Temple President shares in the full responsibility of the protection of the new devotees. He should try to increase the spiritual family as much as possible, and also look after the spiritual standards of the devotees. It is not easy to set clear guidelines on when and how initiation should take place, since time, place, person and circumstances are unique. Srila Prabhupada, for example, initiated one Russian disciple on the first day of meeting him. That person later turned out to ignite Krishna Consciousness all over Russia. It is clear though that if the devotees become negligent in their spiritual practices, they will most likely fall down. Thus the chanting of Sixteen rounds and coming to Mangal Arati and Class every day should always be emphasized, even if it is impossible for all to follow, especially if they live far from a temple, or if they are over burdened with devotional services.

The Temple President, in close connection with the Spiritual Master, has to decide who can get first or second initiation. Generally it can be seen that first initiation is very much in the mood of trust that the disciple earnestly wants to follow the path correctly and that his connection is permanent. Pre-initiation is much easier. If a friend of the movement promises to follow the standards of Pre-initiation, he can be accepted. By these pre-initiations we are trying to tie souls to the path of Bhakti such that they do not go astray into some impersonal influence after their interest in the Yoga path has been awakened.

For second initiation the criteria should be quite strict to make sure that actually only fully practicing devotees take the Brahminical vows and become true satellites of transcendental transmission.

The happiness of all is the first duty of the Temple President and of all senior devotees. If they are actually concerned with that than automatically the devotees will be happy and the transcendental family will grow. The Temple President has to also take care that the new devotees know how to relate to the Spiritual Master and to other senior visitors of the temple, in accordance with Vaisnava etiquette.

The Temple President has to be careful not to become proud and independent in his service as an authority over others. He should never forget that he derives that authority exclusively from the fact that he surrenders to the spiritual master, and the fact that the devotees in the temple love and trust him as a true servant of Krishna. It is a fact that being the Temple President is a very high service and he is very dear to Krishna and the spiritual master, but he has to be very careful not to abuse his position. He has to be very anxious to please all the members of his community. We never graduate from humility or service to all others who cross our path.

It is true even though it is not perfect that new devotees usually have a hard time accepting anyone besides their initiating spiritual master as their full authority. Just to get someone to accept the principle of spiritual authority is so difficult. In Vrindavan, the Land of Gurus, the great souls see everyone as their Guru. But for the newcomer to accept the Guru and his representatives is not easy. Often the disciples will search out a direct contact with their Guru because somehow the Temple President and his decisions could not please them in their conditional position. That is natural and the Temple President should never be upset with that. It is the right and the need of the disciple to search out his Guru whenever he feels the need for that. The Temple President should encourage that connection; and automatically he will be trusted also in an increased way. Love means to be capable of forgiving. In relationships of this type it is easy for misunderstandings or mistakes to sneak in. Taking care of the disciples of your Guru or another Vaisnavas disciples requires a lot of love. Don't easily

become disturbed. During the struggle to advance everyone commits mistakes. Since we love each other though, we should not be so eager to judge or reject someone. This applies to all sides. As long as the sincerity of the Temple President is trusted, all problems can generally be resolved.

The Temple President and Sannyasis

This topic is very important. Sannyasis are a great inspiration for all members of Society. We should accommodate within our heart that there are many empowered persons in this world who deserve our help and should not be envied. Actually Mahaprabhu requested all of us to adopt the lifestyle and internal development of someone who is worshipable, who protects others and only delivers the truth. Not only Sannyasis are to receive honor. All genuine Vaisnavas are spiritual masters of a kind. The Temple President himself is also a spiritual master, otherwise how can he give spiritual directives in the daily life of so many Sadhakas? But we must be careful not to eliminate the divisions of the social orders, which were created by Krishna in order to give continual guidance and ideals to all the members of human society. And last but not least, the Sannyasis' life is the highest welfare activity and also the goal of everyone on his way home, back to Godhead.

There is an important verse in the Caitanya Caritamrta which states that it is the natural symptom of spiritual advancement that a devotee feels that he has not a drop of love for Krishna. And naturally we should never forget that a devotee should be ready to honor all others without expecting anything in return. It is not easy to harmonize these two considerations if you are dealing basically with newcomers to Vedic culture. Therefore we sometimes experience Temple Presidents who are not very respectful to Sannyasis or Sannyasis who do not behave very humbly.

It is not the Sannyasis' job to create any disturbance for the Temple President, but sometimes he may visit a place which is already very disturbed. Naturally in such a situation many may approach him for help. Pride on any side will ultimately create a disturbance. Therefore we have to educate the new devotees (what to speak of the older one's), how such relationships are properly conducted. We should not be afraid to show honor to the spiritual master and to his representatives. That is natural and good in a civilized spiritual culture. When people see that we love, trust and honor our elders it will give them hope and faith very easily. Who can be enthusiastic when he notices politics and party business in a spiritual community?

Sannyasis have a duty to listen to the problems of those trying to take shelter of them. Many times the advice the Sannyasi gives will not coincide with the way the Temple President would have advised. That is human and natural. Impartial vision is required to see things properly. But the Sannyasi

should remember that he must give help to the local preacher he visits. That is top priority. Otherwise why visit some Vaisnava, if you do not respect his service. Sannyasis should council devotees, but consult personally and private with the Temple President before making any decisions or giving any definite guidance to the members of that community.

Such a situation is also a great opportunity for the Temple President to exercise his own humility, service attitude and to reflect on the validity of his service. Generally the Temple President is surrounded by young devotees, who without being critical will go along enthusiastically with his plans. The critics within themselves may not have had the capacity to bring up their misgivings to him personally or in the Temple meetings such as the Isthagosti or the Managing Board.

Now, with the presence of a visiting Sannyasi, the Temple President has the duty and opportunity to show himself as the servant of the Culture he is preaching every day. He will possibly have to hear how many members are dissatisfied with his performance, and he may thus have to realize that he is not reaching all the hearts he wants to reach. No doubt, that is a difficult moment in his service, but very beneficial. At the same time he has the opportunity to discuss his service ideas with someone who may have more experience and who can give some solutions and fresh ideas. All in all it is a reason to be happy and advance.

Even if the Sannyasi is younger in experience than the Temple President, still some recognition must be given to him just as we would give recognition to a favorable God brother of the spiritual master. We should be eager to show respect, not to withhold it. For such occasions one should always have special seating arrangements in the temple and also for the Prasadam service. This is the Vedic Culture for any visitor, what to speak of receiving someone worshipable. If you have a Board meeting you can invite the guest to come and listen to all the plans of the temple and to get to know all the responsible devotees who are there in your community. The more you trust, the more you will be trusted. In case you feel that the relationship with some particular Sannyasi is a disturbance to your community, it is necessary and urgent to discuss that matter with your spiritual master or with the spiritual master of the devotees in your community. To participate in politics against any active preacher is a very dangerous Vaisnava aparadha and both the Temple President as well as the Sannyasi can easily fall into this mistake, if they are not careful.

In the same way, if a Sannyasi feels that the local Temple President is disqualified for his service, he must be very sensitive. It is easy to kick someone out, but to improve someone is difficult and the real victory, Srila Prabhupada taught us. But sometimes there is a limit. What is that limit? When the devotees in a community suffer due to the wrongdoing of a

Temple President, such a situation needs to be studied by all senior devotees involved and connected to the project. How the temple was founded is also to be considered, as well as who did the service to get it where it is now. But it is beyond discussion. Noone has the right to make other devotees unhappy by his own deviations. Temple Presidents and Sannyasis are supposed to be great examples. It is the most difficult job. It is service meant only for those who want to become pure devotees in this lifetime.

Since even the best of us still have a long way to go, many improvements can and should be underway. We should not feel discouraged by the fact that someone sees our mistakes. We will need the help of the Sannyasis, the Temple President, the senior devotees and in short- of all Vaisnavas.

Since we preach simple living and high thinking, how can we explain that the spiritual master or other senior preachers are presented in a mood of reverential worship in our programs? The reason we worship someone is due to his connection with divinity. To help the people to focus their attention on a Vaisnava, on a holy place, a holy book etc., we present them with an elevated and decorated seat, offer a flower garland etc. This is not for us. But if the beauty and opulence is not given to God with great attention, then everyone will want to have these things for themselves. After the ceremonial part of worship, we should also give the example of simplicity. There are no hard rules for that- we have to judge a tree by his fruits.

One of my God brothers was able to enthuse many Africans to chant the holy name. They honored him like a Chief of their tribe by carrying him in a palanquin and dressing him in their most respected dress. He accepted this in order to conquer their hearts for Krishna. So we should not be ready to quickly dismiss some preacher, just because he may use some ways which are new or look strange to us. We have to give Vaisnavas always at least the benefit of the doubt. Only when we are firmly convinced that they are going against our spiritual master's teachings will we disassociate ourselves from them.

It is highly recommended for Householders living in your community to invite the visiting Sannyasi to their home. That should be taught. Every Vaisnava should be personally eager to worship seniors by cooking for and hearing from them. Without this our children will not know what is right or wrong and will worship Superman instead.

The Temple President and devotees from other temples

It is very common and natural that devotees visit each others' programs. Actually that gives new life to everyone. But it can also be a problem. Therefore we should try the following guidelines in this respect.

1. Every devotee visiting should be first approved to stay over night with the respected appointed authority.
2. Devotees should only visit other temples with the desire to help to improve the temple.
3. Devotees can be received for one or two nights free of charge. After that, they should pay a daily rate set by the temple Board. Temple Presidents of other temples should stay for free and be asked to deliver lectures.
4. Devotees should be eager to help the temple they are visiting in some way.
5. If any discontent is revealed to a visitor by some resident devotee, he should carefully avoid taking sides, but rather humbly inform the local authorities about that devotee's feelings. In the past some devotees visited temples and tried to take devotees away from that temple to their project, encouraging discontent secretly and thus causing great disturbances. This is an offense to the community. Only after the agreement of two leaders should one devotee go to another project or exchange service with some other devotee.
6. Never forget that your critic is your real friend and that those who flatter you are actually not good for you. Therefore if a visiting devotee dares to comment on something he considers could be improved, then we should at least carefully consider whether Krishna is sending a message through him to improve our service. That is practical humility.
7. Make sure that visiting devotees do not keep valuables lying around to avoid the embarrassment of any theft of their goods.
8. Always lock away all valuables. It is a great disturbance when anything disappears in an Ashram.
9. Try to help visiting devotees in whatever they may need locally, but do not allow yourself to be exploited by them. If they ask to much, do not hesitate to tell them your limits. We should always keep happy relationships and even in the presence of conflict maintain our happy and peaceful mood. There are so few devotees in the world. Let us try to get their mercy and make them happy, but at least not have conflicts with them. Those who misbehave will appreciate that you corrected them in a loving and understanding way.
10. Be careful with your telephone. All long-distance calls must be carefully monitored and written into a book. Noone likes to pay others' phonecalls. Local calls may be exempted, but actually noone should give expenses of any kind to the deity, who is the owner of everything in the temple.

The Temple President and other Temple Presidents or leading devotees

It is very important to show respect to other leaders in this tradition. We will see that real devotees always try to show the superiority of other Vaisnavas. They are never envious of others qualities. On the other hand those who are still unfortunate will try to show their own "superiority". Always have special seating arrangement for older devotees, and other leaders. Teach your temple members to offer seats to senior devotees spontaneously. Keep

contact with other presidents. It keeps us on the ground to learn from others and to get help from our friends and brothers. The greatest illness is the thought that we have got nothing to learn from anyone. That will make our temple unattractive for intelligent devotees.

Let visiting Presidents feel how happy you are that they grace your temple. Invite them to offer new ideas to your service. Try to cooperate with their needs. Charity is a great quality. We should always, within the frame of our possibilities, help other temples. This mentality will only bring blessings. Srila Prabhupada told us on numerous occasions. "World first, your temple or zone second".

The Temple President and other preaching programs in his city related to his spiritual master

If in the same city of your temple there are further projects of other god brothers, that is very wonderful.

1. Have regular meetings minimum once per month to discuss how to preach better in the city and resolving any little conflicts which may arise.
2. Remember that a temple should be in every part of town and that we need unlimited preachers.
3. Never talk bad about the other temple to the congregation. If any problem cannot be resolved, please refer the situation to the spiritual master.

The Temple President and other preaching programs in his city related to other spiritual masters

The principle of Unity in Diversity is the backbone for a growing Society full of Krishna Consciousness. A group may at some point grow so much that no one leader or Guru can adequately take care of all its individual needs. Thus the spiritual tree of Lord Chaitanya has provided us with its branches stretching mercifully around the world to counteract the passion and ignorance which keeps souls tied to Maya. Thus it may easily happen that in one city many different spiritual masters start their missionary work, such as in Mayapur where so many temples stand side by side

Obviously, relationships are something very personal and also depend on how the different spiritual masters of different missions relate to each other. Nevertheless we should not forget that the majority of friends and members of our congregations are not highly prepared to distinguish between one mission or another. There should not be any unfair competition between Vaisnavas. That will create the offense of Vaisnava aparadha which can make us even lose our spiritual life.

Actually the only acceptable competition should be to try to be more loving, humble and service oriented. If any soul is destined to find his spiritual

master in your mission it will definitely happen, and you can do best by representing your spiritual master's dignity through your own qualities.

When you meet with members or friends of the other missions who are not antagonistic to you, be very comforting and treat them as Vaisnava guests. If they exhibit unfavorable attitudes, understand that they may have been misguided and are innocent at heart. Therefore still exhibit your natural Vaisnava humility, and pray to Krishna to enlighten them.

The World Vaisnava Association has been started among other reasons to help cause association and communication amongst different Acaryas and their missions. Those who do not accept the validity of other Vaisnava preachers very obviously disqualify themselves, and such narrow-minded, sectarian view points are better keep at a safe distance. Srila Sridhar Maharaja instructed us that if someone declares: "I have it... I have realized it all. My Guru is the only real one" etc. We should rather keep a distance from that camp. This is the material world and there will always be those who misuse even the highest mercy.

Recently I read in a paper the advertisement of an esoteric Ghost Guru promising to be the expected Avatar. In Germany also I saw that some so called spiritual group is offering seminars for becoming an Avatar in six weeks. Sometimes people with such a mentality even sneak into the Vaisnava community and try to reap some mundane results. We should be very careful to respect all those who try to spread the holy names around in this world though, regardless of what personal realization they may or may not have, unless they openly subscribe to the practice of Vaisnava aparadha or teach things which severely contradict our siddhanta.

The Temple President and the national council

It is wonderful to have many temples in one country and it will require certain cooperation between temples to try to organize programs which go beyond the capacity of one single temple. Also there are considerations of national concern such as book production, festivals, accounting and national permits of public relations.

This is an excellent opportunity to share and associate with the other devotees. We should always remember ourselves to be servants of the other Vaisnavas. The national council also represents your spiritual masters wishes. We should try to relieve our spiritual master from too many managerial responsibilities as much as possible. But this is only possible if we do things properly. Always keep the spiritual master informed on the changes you are making. Unless he is pleased, how can we make any progress. One should be careful not to think himself independent from the blessings of the Guru or the other leading preachers.

Every temple should present to the national council an inventory of the property of his temple. Decisions made by the national council should be considered law, unless they are revoked by the spiritual master.

The Temple President as an inspiration for future Temple Presidents

We should train others to become excellent leaders. That is easily done if we let other good devotees share in our decision making. They should be members of the Vaisnava council and all important topics, including financial ones should be discussed there. Try to give opportunity to future leaders to go through many types of services, so that they can gain personal experiences in the various fields of responsibility.

Let them study this book. Every temple meeting is a nectarine study on how to make everyone happy in the community and how to deal with all kinds of impediments as well.

Be proud if your temple members become so enthusiastic that they also desire to expand the mission taking personal responsibility.

The Temple President as the servant and not the master

It cannot be repeated often enough. Temple President means servant of the community. Both those who live in the Ashram as well as the external devotees and the general population are to be served by the Temple President. Otherwise what other purpose could it have to take a leading responsibility in the community of God's servants. That must be felt by everyone. Thus everyone will like the Temple President and be enthused to participate in devotional service, helping the temple. A temple is not an elitists breeding ground. Whatever is special in the Vaisnavas will be seen in their service mood, their kindness and their all forgiving attitude.

Srila Prabhupada served his young disciples in every aspect of life. What better example could their be? His love and tolerance changed our lives. He even cooked and served us Prasadam. Always aspire to be like the pure devotee and you will be guided to act properly. Sometimes it is necessary to take the position of the authority in order to teach others the right path. That is love. Like a father has to chastise his child sometimes, the Temple President will be strict against abuse of Krishna property. At the same time it is his responsibility to not lose his temper and to protect the fragile plant of the devotion of the involved devotees and friends. It is sometimes good to let other devotees do the correcting while the Temple President rather keeps the enthusiasm protected. We should be careful not to chastise anyone in public. That will burn their spiritual enthusiasm. Srila Prabhupada once told to a devotee who had made the mistake of embarrassing another public: "You have killed that devotees chance to come back."

We should be so extremely careful not to turn anyone away from the devotional path. The wife of one Temple President dreamed that Srila Prabhupada asked her why she was making abortions. She insisted that she had not had any abortion. But Srila Prabhupada insisted, saying: "Why do you commit so many abortions?" In desperation she repeated to him that she had never had an abortion. Then Srila Prabhupada told her: "Then what about all these girls you are driving away from the temple?" As a matter of fact, she was very jealous and was mistreating any visiting girl, because she was afraid that her husband the Temple President would be attracted to them. Just imagine; a visitor to the temple who has the opportunity to take his spiritual birth. It is his chance to leave the circle of birth and death. And you are the one who could help her delivery. But it is neither easy nor automatic. Your mercy will be required.

We often hear the stories of enthusiastic preachers out on Samkirtan, but when someone new dares to step into the temple, he finds only busy signals from the Vaisnavas present there. Why do we go out to preach if not to bring the souls into Sadhu Sanga? Thus we should make arrangements on all levels that our preaching is well organized on all levels. The receptionists duty is foremost in a temple. He has to be kind and sweet. A real preacher at heart. The receptionist of the temple must have the character of a professional hotel receptionist; and no one who comes to the temple or calls should feel turned down in any way.

The Temple President shares the preaching opportunities

Preaching is life. Preaching is nectar. We all have the mercy to participate in this wonderful engagement of our senses. Sometimes a Temple President dominates the preaching and the kirtans in a temple excessively. They forget that all should be trained as preachers and for that, practice is required. The older devotees whom have lives outside the temple should not be forgotten either, otherwise they will gradually become indifferent to the temple. Here are a few suggestions on how to deal with the distribution of classes and kirtans.

1. Try to make a plan for the whole month. Fill it with a variety of lectures from different, good preachers. Give titles to the classes. Cover different books and compose a little leaflet and poster of the month programs. The plan can be distributed on Hari Nam and the poster can be hung regularly in special bookstores and public places to inform the public about the cultural programs in the Hare Krishna Cultural Center.

2. People do not take us seriously until we present ourselves as such. That means the lecturer should be introduced in the poster with a full respectful title.

In addition, it is necessary that the lecturer be introduced to the audience by another devotee who will say something very nice about his service and importance in the community. It is also necessary to have a second devotee whose exclusive service is to protect the class from noise, see to it children

are not running around, and properly receive the elderly and disabled. Such persons should be taken to a sitting facility like in the cinema, without creating a disturbance to the running class. Water for the lecturer should be supplied before class. The same counts for the book, songbook and tulasi plant. The books should be placed on a respectful table higher than the speaker's legs. All this is quite important.

3. Every night many visitors repeat, but the class is quite repetitive to accommodate newcomers arriving for the first time. That is quite boring. Many times devotees and repeat visitors come to join the evening class. If possible, every temple should have two night classes in different rooms. One is the introduction class and one is the advanced class. This also gives a chance for more preachers to participate.

4. In addition, your community should offer regular weekly or monthly meetings such as:

Vaisnava matajis meeting.

Children in Krishna Consciousness. Vedic culture education. This service can also be offered to the friends and to the Indian community.

Vegetarian cooking classes.

Vaisnava theater meeting.

Vaisnava music classes. Learn Mridanga and Kartal. Form music groups to glorify Krishna.

Vaisnava artists meeting. (Harmony school of Conscious art).

Other special interest meetings which will lead people to closer contact with the Vaisnavas.

The Temple President and admission of new ashram members

Different standards have been applied to receive new members in the Ashram. It is not an easy decision to make. I myself came to the temple with the desire to stay immediately. Mercifully the devotees received me, and I am still here with them. You can understand how much sympathy I thus have for receiving someone easily. But it has also been shown to me that more discrimination is necessary to protect the new members of the Ashram from external disturbance.

Here are some recommendations:

1. Try to verify facts about the person before admitting him into the temple.
2. Have a separate guest room where newcomers will be checked out by an experienced devotee, who can decide whether that person is an actual candidate for your new Bhakta program.
3. Fill out a form with the new aspirant's personal data.
4. Try to get his mother's address and telephone.
5. Speak to someone who knows him.
6. Find out whether he is healthy or not.
7. If he is questionable and does not provide good information, ask him to visit the temple for two weeks before moving in. Don't forget that a person who just shows up to join and who has no clear idea of the philosophy is

definitely motivated by something. But everyone may get mercy in a surprising way.

8. Try to keep his identification documents with you from the beginning to discourage him from running away with some property of the temple.

9. Instruct him well regarding the basic rules of the Ashram.

In general use your own heart and be merciful to both the aspirant and the other members of the Ashram.

It is advisable that only one person in the temple make the decisions on who is admitted as a new student. If decisions about admitting new devotees are made by more than one devotee, they should never disagree with each other in front of the new devotees. It creates disturbance if devotees have any fights. For that reason disagreements should be settled peacefully in the regular meetings.

The Temple President and Prasadam distribution

Srila Prabhupada conquered so many of us by his divine Prasadam distribution. He once wrote in a letter:

There should not be any scarcity of Prasadam in the temple. In Radharani's kitchen there is no scarcity. During the whole day, there should always be nice prasadam for the visitors.

What to speak about the feasts. They should be very nice with good varieties of prasadam. We will get help from so many sides if we keep that principle alive. Prasadam should be distributed by advanced devotees who do not put the receiver in anxiety. We may naturally be reserved if someone comes only to eat and has no interest in the process at all. But even such persons often bring someone else who turn out to become a devotee. We can never lose by distributing Prasadam. Just like in Vedic times the householder would step out of his door and call out: "If anyone is hungry, please come along, the Prasadam is ready." Then if somebody did come he was received as a guest at his home.

We have also received so many indications about the benefit of Prasadam distribution. If it can be done, then it is nice to do it. It is modern practice to charge for the Sunday feast Prasadam; However, this is not in line with the above principles, even if the reason is to bring only the more serious people to the program. It is, of course, valid to conduct programs in rented halls or Hotels and to charge a fee for participation in order to make it exclusive and to cover the costs, but in a temple itself, charging does not fit well.

The Temple President and his service to the Deity

The supreme lord is the real owner of everything. All residents of the temple are his own property. We aspire to become divine slaves of the Lord's wonderful wishes. Thus we are admitted into the temple congregation by his divine mercy, regardless of what our service may be. We learn from our spiritual master how to adopt the mentality of a

surrendered servant who makes sure that he contributes to the lord's Ashrams substantially above the energy he extracts from the community as a natural side effect of eating, sleeping, using electricity, telephone, etc. Before understanding life in this way, we used to see everything in the consumer mentality. We hardly ever asked: "What do I have to do to make myself useful to Krishna and to the other Ashram members?" Or simply, "How do I make myself useful as a member of the human race and the world that surrounds me?"

Through the acceptance that the deity is actually an incarnation of God, mercifully appearing in this world to bless us all and to receive our devotional service, our spiritual vision becomes a reality. Thus egoism becomes an actual enemy to our own understanding. The deity is every person's well-wisher. Thus the Temple President is training himself and all the members of the Ashram to be real pleasant members of the supreme Lord's local servant group. Cleanliness, punctuality in the offerings and pujas, excellence on all levels, loving relationships between the members and true compassion with all souls, are the natural results from this effort. It is easy to enthruse others to do something for the supreme Personality of Godhead, especially when you yourself are inspired to work in this way. Harmony within the community becomes a reality by such a transcendental central focus.

We should try to follow the standards of Srila Prabhupadas deity worship in accordance with time, place and circumstance. Installed deities have to be taken care of very carefully. It all depends on real devotion, not a show of opulence and superficial dealings with the Vaisnavas, which is a Kanishta Adhikary mentality. If the temple is poor and cannot be decorated that nicely there is no harm, but a devotional standard must be maintained. Sravanam and Kirtananam are the substance of any Vaisnava Community. In many preaching centers and Grihasta houses where the deity, also known as murti, has not been installed yet, we should not diminish the supreme Lord presence there. For the sake of preaching it may be kept so simple that all the food eaten in this place is definitely offered to the Lord and regular morning Artik and Class programs are held. Other programs can vary due to time and preaching conditions.

Murti level of Worship can go on until it reaches full Deity service standards like explained in the Arcana Kana and other books on that subject. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is very merciful and even more merciful is Lord Nityananda. They are often found to give mercy in their murti form to many Vaisnavas. Sri Sri Radha Krishna and other deities like NARASINGHA Bhagavan, Jagannath Swami and others are not recommended for worship as murtis. They should be properly installed in temples or where there is the capacity to do the full program of Deity worship. The same goes for the worship of Salagram Silas. Sri Giriraj Maharaj, the Lord in his Govardhana

Sila incarnation is also extremely merciful to accept such service in a simple way, even though he is a full deity without being installed.

The more we do to please Krishna the better everything becomes, and in this age the Samkirtan Yajna is what pleases the Lord the most. Srila Prabhupada once said: "Without the deities my movement would not have spread." Deities are those who make us realize that we have to follow Sadhana Bhakti and the rules and regulations that go along with preaching and other devotional activities.

No one shall worship any deity without getting the blessings of his spiritual master. Even though the markets in India are full of Murti forms for sale, it is inappropriate to independently buy and worship a deity without the consent of our spiritual guardians. As many persons as possible should be enthused to participate in the Worship of the deity. Those who have received second initiation in the community, both living in the temple as well as those outside, should be encouraged to sometimes make Aratik, make dresses for the deity, and help the Chief pujari in many ways to improve the worship and thus increase their own spiritual feelings for Krishna. This is a unique opportunity for a conditioned soul to start his relationship with his eternal Lord by serving his Arca Avatar.

The Temple President and his relationship to Householders in his Congregation

The Temple President is very important for every member of the congregation. Householders need his support and he also needs their friendship and help. There should be no competition between Brahmacharis and Grihastas. Both are equally important in the Vaisnava family. It is natural that the Temple President will spend his time first with those who give substantial help to him to maintain the community. But it is a danger to forget the Grihastas. They should be educated to have paternal feelings towards the newcomers and Brahmacharis. Actually it is the duty of the Grihastas to maintain the other Ashramas. Due to lack of good Grihastas this condition is not fulfilled at the present moment, but at least it should develop in this direction.

The Temple President should organize several meetings always trying to include those who live outside the temple. If he can manage that, he will get lots of help. Every devotee wants some personal attention, but often those who live outside compare themselves with those who live in the temple or amongst each other, and the atmosphere can become somewhat filled with envy and contempt towards others. That especially is the danger amongst god brothers. Outstanding or older devotee usually are not so easily affected by our natural envy. But in general it is common for Householders and also those who are unmarried with too much attachment to money, name and fame etc., to have a contaminated attitude towards others. Only

love and trust in a Vaisnava is the medicine against this illness. We have to regard the person who takes responsibility in our community with a charitable heart. Do not expect him to be perfect. Just consider his purity in purpose. That of course works in both ways. Love means to be able to forgive others' mistakes as well. There will always be the one or the other, which is rather a disturbance to the community, and we have to try to avoid such company. But that is unfortunate, as the more you try to conquer every persons heart, the more you are appreciated by the community, even if in some particular cases you might fail to achieve the desired success.

The Temple President and aspirants from within the Temple for Marriage

It is a fact that many of our Brahmacharis and Matajis will end up getting married. The spiritual master and also the Temple President are practically like fathers to protect those souls in every respect, including marriage. Of course, it is unhappy to see someone leaving intensive devotional service to follow his desire for companionship. But it is a reality and a good Grihasta will be better than a frustrated Sannyasi in danger of falling down. Most new devotees have not yet worked out their own family situation. That is one of the reasons why our temples are frequently disturbed. The temple and Guru have to come in where the parents and western culture have failed. Thus it is actually very surprising that in a temple such a diversified group can live together rather peacefully, when we see that in the material world not even the family can stay together happily.

For engagements and marriages there must be strict rules so that those in the temples do not get disturbed by romantic stories. Last but not least devotees have come here to be 'fixed up' in renunciation and devotional service. Renunciates will undergo tests in order to stand against all difficulties. Mercy with those who cannot maintain a full life of renunciation is one of those tests to be passed.

1. Those who aspire to get married to a Devotee should first approach the spiritual master or his representative to request the hand of the respective person. They will interview the requested person to see whether he is also interested and they will give general advice and guidelines to both. Only if some positive arrangement can be achieved will the Temple President announce the new compromise to the devotees. In accordance with the age of the respective persons, there will be a term prefixed on how long the engagement will last and when the actual marriage will be celebrated. This can vary from six month to five years.
2. It is understood that both parties have a right to withdraw from this engagement at any time.
3. Engagement does not mean loose association. It means respectful supervised "getting to know each other". This will take place by eating together and thus talking privately but within the eyesight of others. There

is no reason to increase that because there is a lot of time we spend in eating and so many other services have to be done.

4. In some cases the Temple President may provide special collection arrangements for the future Householder in order for him to prepare financially for his upcoming responsibility.

5. Marriage with a mataji older than the devotee is not recommended. Perfect distance is 5 to 10 years. Women generally mature earlier than men, and it is a fact that they will have a hard time respecting a younger man. Since marriage success is based on the complementary interaction of man and wife, it is very important that there be no competition.

6. Marriage should be conducted at big festivals and in holy celebration. Usually even non devotee parents come and enjoy a Vedic sacrifice. Almost all fathers of daughters are very happy to see their girl getting a good husband.

7. Unfortunate connections in marriage are a real disgrace. We should carefully guard ourselves against that. Divorce is not accepted in the Vaisnava family. If someone proceeds in such an unhappy and unlawful way anyway, he should not receive any support from the community. Lastly, as a matter of mercy, he may still be accepted as a member, but with the reservation over the situation.

8. To counsel marriages is quite common for a preacher, since many people have faith in him and trust him with their problems. Generally it is only useful to advise couples if they come ready to accept the advice jointly, which the preacher may give. Otherwise there is a chance of getting entangled in their petty disagreements.

9. If the engagement becomes a disturbance to the temple, due to disobedience of the couple, the Temple President will propose a solution. The temple can never become a place of sense gratification. Only in very exceptional cases may Grihastas live in the temple after getting married. Generally, marriage means to live on one's own expense, separate from the Ashram. In case he does live on the premises of a Vaisnava farm or similar, it is the duty of the Grihasta to provide substantial help to the community and not be a burden.

The Temple President and competition

There is a wonderful element in the spiritual world: The competition Vaisnavas undertake as to who is going to do the nicest service for Krishna. Such Vaikuntha competition does not make anyone unhappy. The Winner is very humble and the others feel inspired by his example.

Such competition in a temple regarding book distribution or making the nicest dress for the deities is not bad. But we have to be careful not to be carried away. What to speak of becoming proud. We should always stress that any success will be credited exclusively to our Gurudeva. It is not ourselves who are doing anything. By his mercy he lets us participate in the wonderful service of his Gurudeva. If competition makes someone unhappy

we should stop it. We have no interest in Hypocrisy. Once Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu threw some writing in the Ganges because another writer had become unhappy after realizing that Mahaprabhus writing was much better than his. We do not want to be better than others, except that we want to be better servants of others. To make them happier, then they make us happy. Do you get the point? It should not possible for Vaisnavas to entertain any activities which will make their Vaisnava friends depressed. Book distribution, nevertheless, is a tool which should be carefully guarded to increase the good public image of the devotees. We should try to distribute as many books as possible, but without forgetting what has just been explained.

The Temple President as Siksa Guru and dasa anudasa

Srila Guru Maharaj wrote, "Every Vaisnava is in one way or another some Siksa Guru." What to speak of the Temple President who is instructing devotees every day on how to leave maya and how not to become maya's victim again. He is a servant of his Guru and shall be very careful not to contradict his Guru. He will avoid confusing others and avoid any offense. But he has also a direct connection with the local diksa Guru{s}. Thus any difficulty can be discussed, and a joint decision taken.

Being a Siksa Guru is such a high responsibility. The full impact of which is sometimes ignored by the very Temple President and sometimes by the other devotees in the community. But actually it shall be a true holy, auspicious reality. The Temple President has to give an excellent example to be able to serve properly.

Devotees shall be attached to the Temple President and ready to work with him for their spiritual masters. But if the spiritual master needs help in another place, the Temple President shall not hesitate to make any sacrifice to fulfill the wish of his Guru. That is the way to be blessed always. By serving the devotees the Temple President makes Krishna and his Guru so happy, because he is doing, what they would like to do. Guru tattva is the underlying principle of all Vaisnava relationships.

The Temple President without support from the members of his temple

On the contrary, if the Temple President has no support from the devotees in his temple, it should be taken by him and others as a big warning signal. What great mistake or offense is he committing? Is he unkind, selfish or a bad example? Is he not pleasing to our Gurudeva? Is he still correctable or has he disqualified for this service. These are very serious questions, and actually only the spiritual master can deal with them properly. But in the meetings of the Vaisnava council every member can tell the Temple President humbly what he thinks about his activities.

This may be painful sometimes, but at the same time it is a merciful pre-warning to the Temple President if he is not pleasing to the devotees. To remove a Temple President is a very unhappy thing. But if all the other Vaisnavas, or at least the majority is unhappy with him, it is about time for him to find some service where he will be more successful and happy. We have to respect the feelings of everyone. That is the real art of leadership. He lets all the members feel that their contribution on every level is welcome.

It is out of the question, then, for the community to want to remove the Temple President. Sometimes, of course, there are ambitions and politics, rumors and even lies. We have to guard against such evil influences. For that reason that which has not been brought to light in the Vaisnava council should not be given attention to, and those who like to talk behind another's back should be mercifully corrected. This is real Sadhu Sanga. Discussing problems and solving them to Krishna's satisfaction.

The Temple President and the health and sickness of the devotees

This topic is quite complicated. It requires a lot of common sense to know the right path. Here are some guidelines which undoubtedly have to be adjusted according to the time, place and circumstance.

Begging monks have no health insurance. They depend on Krishna's mercy. But they are not exploiters of others since they do the greatest welfare activities of all. It is good if government or health officials do service to the Brahmins and Vaisnava community. Thus it is not a real problem to depend on the mercy of others, since really we all depend on Krishna's mercy. Health insurance may be recommended to Grihastas who have children and spend the larger part of their time doing business, and even more so if they own property and thus are at risk of it being taken away if some medical bill is too high to be paid by his savings.

In general medical services have a very bad record. If the treatment is free or through the connection of a medical friend, at least we can trust that no unnecessary treatment will be applied to us for the reason of greed. Natural healing methods anyway are the best in most cases. Living and eating healthfully and knowing the secrets of basic natural cures should be a natural part of a devotee's life. Fasting is one of the best cures for most diseases. Unfortunately sometimes devotees do not take care of their diet. Every temple should try to buy only sea salt and sugar in the least refined way possible. The produce should be as natural as possible as should the other integral foods. Do not serve fried things everyday. That is very unhealthy. Avoid buying processed foods altogether. Offer to Krishna what is natural and prepared with love by his devotees. Simple discipline brings very good results.

Devotees should cultivate medical people in their congregation. Unless a doctor is a well known friend, he is simply dangerous. Hospitals are the most dangerous places from every point of view.

When a devotee becomes sick we should try to give him relief and love, since at the time of need, everyone is more sensitive. Please do the needful without being emotionally carried away. We do not want to spend Krishna's Laksmi on our treatments. Separate solutions should be searched out if a devotee should need hospitalization. Make sure you know the local charity hospitals. Devotees should unit and also take into consideration the degree of service that particular member has rendered. This means that a new devotees parents can also help in the case of some emergency. In the event of some emergency some temple funds are used to help out, by the decision of the Temple President or the Vaisnava council, that should be repaid at once.

Always keep some medical first aid articles in the temple. This should include herbal teas for minor dysfunctions and a Aloe plant for treatments. Find a dentist who gives treatment charging only for his materials. In Berlin, when I was the administrator of the temple, I used to call the doctors with the most titles I could find in the yellow pages and ask them over the Phone: "I am from a Yoga ashram. We have a visiting monk who is not insured with us, who has a terrible tooth pain. Could you be so kind as to have a look at him?" In 90% of the calls I got positive results, and some of them went as far as making complicated teeth treatments totally free for some devotees. Of course the devotees gave them some books, and Krishna gave them lots of blessing.

The Temple President and cultivating the Indian community

If there is an Indian community in your city, you have another sacred duty to fulfill. The Indians are so happy if they meet devotees outside of India. Srila Prabhupada taught us how to deal with the Indian community. I myself had experience with the Hindu Community in Panama for many years. Here are some guidelines which you can try in your city:

1. Try to get address lists of all the families. Note down their place of origin and possible family ties amongst them. What are their professions? Number, age and names of their children. The more you know about them, and the more personal you are with them, the more they will be inclined toward devotional service.
2. Send invitations to them for at least major festivals like Janmastami.
3. Visit them in their homes if possible,
4. Offer educational programs for their children on Vedic culture.
5. Do not ask them for money unless there is a very nice relationship already. They are generally well organized people and they will want to see stable leadership and well-planned projects. Then there is almost nothing they would not help with.

6. Try to offer services to their community. They rarely take initiation, but are almost instant friends. It is advisable to have one or more devotees take exclusive charge of the Indian community. If you have a membership program please do not make false promises in order to collect funds. That will later create the opposite effect. Just by preaching to and serving them, they will help immensely.

7. Try to get them engaged in theatre performances, drama, music or similar presentations in the Temple.

8. Try to organize Holiday camps for their children.

In short there is much to be done and all this is great mercy for us. Humility is really the greatest test for us. With humility there is no service which can not be done.

The Temple President and the Harinam program

Lord Chaitanya started the Samkirtan movement. Srila Prabhupada started his preaching in America by chanting in the streets and in the parks. Let us try to take every good opportunity to take the holy Name to the people.

1. When you go on Samkirtan with the devotees try to take the following items:

Mridungas and Kartals. For every Mridunga there should be 5 to 6 pairs of Kartals.

A Banner with the Mahamantra and a banner with the address of the temple.

A table with books and devotional paraphernalia which is situated at least 20 meters away from the Harinam to give information and literature to the people.

One devotee should go in civil cloth to be able to control any complicated situation with the police or with drunks. The others should not even pay attention to any problem. He poses as an onlooker and can also ask questions to inspire the exchange between preacher and people.

There can be flags and other instruments as well. Try to get a little "Mouse" amplifier. They cost 250 US\$ and are extremely useful, due to their power and due to their rechargeable capacity to deliver wireless service for up to four hours.

Try to go where many people are. Public functions may serve as a great forum.

Try not to disturb anyone with the Harinam. If there is intolerance, leave after a short Kirtan and lecture invitation and move on to the next place.

Lord Chaitanya and Lord Nityananda bless every Harinam party.

Once a week try to have one big Harinam with all the friends of the movement. Otherwise small Harinama groups are also very nice. I started my preaching with one person singing and one person distributing pamphlets. Every half hour we would change.

We are getting wonderfully purified by singing the holy name for all.

Big Festivals in Halls or Hotels

A very good preaching tool is to organize Programs in major civic centers or famous Hotels.

It requires a very professional approach in order to be successful. Here are some suggestions for such an attempt.

1. Calculate your full expense including rent, prasadam and advertisement. Find out how you are going to finance that in case you will not get the desired result and not enough tickets are sold.
 2. Make contact with the newspaper at least 2 weeks before the program and have them include the announcement in their culture section. Obtain full information about the advertisement cost in the different papers.
 3. Different programs can be presented in a variety of ways. My own opinion is that the most attractive presentation is to focus on the presence of the Spiritual master or the Sannyasi or older devotee who is going to give the main lecture. You have to focus on that person. All other programs like music, theater and prasadam are quite secondary. People want to meet a unique person. That is the most important thing. Music and entertainment can be gotten in all kinds of variety on TV. But only here can they have personal contact with a spiritual personality. The organization of it all should be very nice.
 4. Make sure you put out the posters at least two weeks before. Search out many favorable shops where the owner or manager will keep the poster up until the program. Posters are not so effective in the streets . Leaflets on Hari Nam are only effective in the close vicinity of the hall on the day of the program.
 5. The devotees have to be in the place of the program at least two hours before the program begins. In the past devotees have organized that badly. Every time they arrive for such a program in the last minute, they discover something is still missing. That is a great disturbance. If you do anything, do it perfectly. Don't become unfocused and create a bad impression. Have the program announced by a well dressed and articulate person. Plan the first hour with light music, melodious Bhajans or with a movie. Most people in this age arrive an hour late. Thus the main class should not be the beginning.
 6. Prasadam should be well packed to give a package to every visitor.
 7. The book table should be very big and nice. From the beginning to the end the book table and the receptionist must be on the spot. In addition one devotee should take guests to specially reserved seats. You should organize as if the President of the country with his ministers were to attend, then it will come out all right.
 8. Clean up the place after so as not to leave a bad impression. Discipline is the most importance when working together with Non devotees in anything like Sound or rent managers of the Hall.
- Try to get such programs sponsored by the congregation. In this case you do not risk any loss for your temple. But anyway, preaching always has some price and as long as the funds are available there is no problem.

9. It is also nice to have a three day sequence of lectures and try to recruit new friends to connect with the movement by selling Yoga courses or offering pre-initiation to the new friends. Consult the Manual for pre-initiation for more details.

The Temple President and delegating authority

To do everything yourself may be a great sacrifice, but it also shows your incapacity to delegate services to others. You will not be very popular with intelligent devotees. It is necessary to monitor simultaneously all the services which the community is trying to perform. If you watch that carefully you will hardly have time to do many services yourself. More and more, you will depend on others.

Every temple must have a big Board in the office. On this you have the name of all the devotees internal as well as the external members. In addition to this you have for every service of the temple as many stickers as the number of devotees required to do that service. In the temple meeting you will choose for every service the devotee who likes to accept that responsibility. This will show you, as soon as one devotee leaves your community, for which services you have to choose a new servant. This Board is of vital importance. It will also protect you from forgetting the devotees who live outside and do not come all the time. They also need to be engaged and that is your responsibility.

All devotees can go to see the Board and be informed about the services of everyone. Those who have no responsibility will feel embarrassed and possibly request to be given more service. Also this will help you not to forget what things have been organized and decided on. We can thus be more complete and systematic in our preaching. Delegating services means more service for you. Srila Prabhupada used to call that lazy intelligence. There are two stories I like to tell in this regard.

One demoniac politician had once said that there are 4 types of people. The active fool, the passive fool, the active intelligent and the lazy intelligent. When Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati heard that he commented: Yes the Karmi is the active fool. He works hard but all goes in vain finally. The Jnani is the passive fool. He doesn't want to work, considering the futility of material engagement, but he misses the opportunity to engage in loving devotional service. The devotee is the active intelligent, he works hard for Krishna, but aspires only for the eternal blessings. Krishna himself is the lazy intelligent. He plays his flute in Goloka and has the whole world moving under the rules set by Him.

Serving Krishna is so wonderful. We can try to engage as many persons as possible in his service, and it is an always increasing bliss, even if we cannot do much ourselves. We can even rejoice in the services done by other devotees.

Another story was told to me by Srila Sridhar Maharaj. Once a German submarine was cornered by French destroyers and escaped to the USA shore before the USA had entered the world war. The US government told the captain he had 24 hours to get out of the harbor. The captain sent a message to his chief in Germany asking what to do. The answer was: You are the chief of the situation there. You have to decide what is the best thing to do. So he sent his crew to seek political asylum, and once alone with the Submarine, blew it up in the ocean to avoid being captured by the French. In a similar way, many times, we have to make on the spot decisions, without a chance to consult with anyone. That is no problem. Krishna will inspire his trusted man to do the needful.

The Temple President and The SEVA

The Seva, Vrinda, BBT and other transcendental book divisions who have been created to spread the transcendental Vedic knowledge all over the world are like lifelines for the temples and preaching centers. Without them we would never have had so many different publications for preaching. They must be managed perfectly transparently in order to inspire the Temple President to distribute as much as they can.

Srila Prabhupada worked so hard to have all his books available for the world. Now we also have all the books of Srila Sridhar Maharaj in Spanish and English and more nectar is coming all the time from Srila B.P. Puri Maharaj and other Vaisnava Acaryas. This is a new moment in history. We should be very thankful for that. In the past there were no books of any acarya. Let us spread this to every town and village. We have created the Seva in every country to serve the local preaching needs and to guard the original idea of Srila Prabhupada to benefit the local distributing temple as well as to increase the new publications. I was responsible for Srila Prabhupadas BBT from 1974 until 1979 managing the Scandinavian division and the Portuguese division. This was a very nice service. If we do not follow that idea strictly we will have problems. It was Srila Prabhupadas idea that 50% of the temple energy should circle around the items purchased from the BBT. That was not always possible, but it means that preaching should be our main activity.

Sometimes the SEVA gives credit to a temple to help them start their activities. This is a great responsibility, and it is extremely bad not to pay back the cost of those items. Even worse is to invest such funds in other non-preaching related items or to simply squander the Laksmi by eating it. We are supposed to achieve our success with the sweat of our brow, not with the energy previously contributed by others. Financial responsibility is substantial for managing preachers. It is better to be small, but not have bad debts. For that we need to keep our bookkeeping perfectly. If we learn that lesson today, we will save ourselves much trouble in the future.

Also we should always keep all the books the SEVA offers on permanent exhibition for the public, nicely presented with the prices and also keep stock of them in our warehouse. Whatever is there in the Seva or ISEV or BBT catalogue should be available in every temple including tapes and posters. This alone will increase the distribution, but it requires good control, because there are so many items. It is preaching. It is work to help others, not to make money.

No devotee should ever go out without taking some books and cassettes with lectures of his spiritual master. Otherwise, how people will know about your nectar. Again, that takes discipline and not laziness. How great do you feel after some conditioned soul received a Bhagavat Gita from you. That is the spirit we have to create amongst our members, both those who go on Samkirtan every day, as well as all the others. Only preaching will make us happy and others as well.

The Temple President should keep regular contact with the administrator of the SEVA and try to enthuse him in his service. Not that you don't talk to him for months because you owe Laksmi to him, and thus your temple becomes disconnected from distributing mercy.

On the size of Temples

The small temples are more personal. It is sweeter when everyone knows and cares for each other. Of course it is not bad to see big temples, especially if they have grown big due to the purity of some particular leader. As long as love and trust are the forefront of a community everything is wonderful. Still the tendency of big temples is to become complicated. People in this age have a strong tendency to be very sinful. The small loving environment of a temple is a great protection against that tendency. We have seen big Vaisnava communities often becoming so impersonal that the sinful seeds within some members could easily flourish again.

It is better that after a temple has 10 to 20 internal members, that more temples should be opened. It will be an opportunity for new good Vaisnavas to increase their service.

According to Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur there are three types of preaching centers:

1. Nama Hata Sangas: That is a center where at least once a month a spiritual program is held.
2. Nama Hata Khendra: Here every day devotees meet to preach.
3. Nama Hata Mandir: Here we have the chance to take shelter in every way. Residence facilities and two spiritual programs are essential opulences of a Mandir.

It is wonderful to have another center in the countryside outside the city. That is so important for the children and the matajis. Many people can

become attracted to Ashram life in the countryside. Such a center really needs a city support center. Therefore it is nice if the two Temple Presidents work together very closely. There are no hard and fast rules on the temple sizes but we should try to open as many nice possibilities as we can.

The Temple President and his relationship with the opposite Sex

It is essential that the Temple President will not associate with a member of the opposite sex alone, except with his wife. The same rule stands for everyone, but a Temple President has to preach to so many women also, and therefore should take care that he is always in the company of some other person. His integrity is the life of the community and also we know that the Srimad Bhagavatam has prohibited for any male to be alone with the member of the opposite sex. Better safe than sorry.

Those who claim the need to see him for something very personal shall bring another person in their confidence. Otherwise as a last recourse, they may converse outside the room in the public eye, but out of reach of others ears. It is not a lack of trust or an antiquated vision which makes me push this point so much. It is for the well-being of all, because Maya is very powerful, and we should not give her any unnecessary chance. Also he is setting the example for the whole community. By not following this rule many have suffered in the past. No need to collect more proof in order to validate the Shastras.

Mataji Temple Presidents

How wonderful is it to see that some Matajis are becoming responsible preachers and Temple Presidents. It is all Srila Prabhupadas mercy. Already they have proven that they can do very well, and because of that new leading preachers are giving chances to more souls to take shelter of Krishna. Previously, when I joined Srila Prabhupadas movement, the matajis were living in the same building with the men, and generally the facilities were very inadequate. Naturally very few Matajis joined since there was simply no more space. This was changed when we opened the first temples led by Matajis. Soon after they conducted all the normal activities of a temple and gave nice support to the mission of their spiritual masters. Hopefully in the future every city will have a temple run by Matajis to increase the preaching. When male aspirants come, they can be sent to the male temple to be trained. This system is better and less agitated. If the temple has his own Mataji ashram as is the case on some farms, there is the need of a Mataji leader for that Ashram who will respond to the Temple President.

Aspects of administrative Considerations

The Temple President and his bookkeeping

A nonprofit institution or foundation is a delicate instrument created by laws intended to help those who help others in some way. Many hidden motives exist behind mundane non profit organizations. Vaisnavas are non profit at heart, because all their profit goes to Krishna, and Krishna does not take anything with him. Every penny Krishna has is invested in this world to benefit others. Still, since there is no understanding of true Brahminical culture in this world right now, Vaisnavas have to prove their integrity by following the guidelines of the Non profit cultural, educational and charitable outline set by their local government. In all cases, there has to be excellent bookkeeping of all income and expenses. It is generally a fact that many donations coming to the temples are generated by individual donors who do not always want to appear as donors, due to their own tax situation. Therefore it is necessary to keep a very strict internal daily report form to keep on top of the actual financial situation of the community.

This form should also be presented to the Vaisnava Board at the time of their meetings. A qualified accountant has to keep the official books for the government. Devotees must cooperate with him by supplying the requested documentation in order for him to be able to present everything correctly. We do not wish the most minimal disturbance from the government. There will be no complication if our books are kept well balanced. Otherwise we live in anxiety.

Since our properties are registered under non profit organizations it is actually dangerous not to keep everything "up to date". We should always keep our society accounting as if we were up for an inspection by the government. Actually, as a minority preaching institution, there is always a chance to be investigated.

In Colombia, our accountant has prepared a 30 page guideline on how to protect and run our temples and little temple owned businesses. Since the Temple President guide is of an over all character we are not including it here. Every country has slight variations in this connection.

No bookkeeping means that you have no idea what is going on. Unless you keep true accounting, you cannot tell the difference between your costs and your profits. Most likely, you are going to ruin the temple by running up a big, bad debt. That is a great offense. Material management of a transcendental service is spiritual management. Do not hesitate to become a first class manager of the temple. That is Yukta Vairagya= real renunciation. Hardly anyone likes to write down numbers every day, but it is a service that cannot be neglected. Also, please do not forget:

1. Those who touch the Laksmi do not not keep the books; in otherwords, whomever keeps the books should not handle the Laksmi. There is no way to control a person who does the two services at the same time. There is no greater pain in a community than when their administrator's honesty is in question. Krishna's property has to be protected without fail against any struggle over devotional service. Checks and balances between the treasurer and the one who keeps all the paperwork is essential. Neither of the two should be the president unless there are no other devotees to do that job. Presidents have no time for such simple engagement. They preach and make decisions. In the material world, directors of culture or business affairs will not sit in the treasury or in the bookkeeping department. Sometimes a Temple President wants to do it all, has no time to do it well, and soon runs into the most uncomfortable situation of being mistrusted due to not presenting things transparently, which is impossible if you do not follow these instructions.

The Temple President and his financial planning

The following description is very basic. To start a temple we shall try to properly understand the financial responsibility coming towards us. Every time a temple has financial trouble, the solution can be found by following this simple system.

1. Make a list of all the unavoidable monthly expenses, such us rent or mortgage payment, electric bill, water bill, telephone bill, bhoga expense, transportation costs, car maintenance, general expenses, emergency saving etc.,
2. Now you divide the total of those expenses into the 26 production days of the month, leaving the Sundays free for the Sunday feast and some free time for the devotees.
3. Now you make a meeting with all the contributing Vaisnavas of the temple and make them conscious of how much profit income has to be produced to keep the temple above waters and what is needed to expanded the service facility.
4. Try to get commitments from each and every member to produce his minimum share to cover the basic expenses. Do not ignore the fact that people often promise easily but forget or ignore the necessary hard work. Therefore you have to inspire commitments higher than the actually needed amounts. Thus, if some devotees fail to collect enough, at least the basic expenses will be covered by the excess produced by the others.
5. Let the same members be aware of the advancement of the program. Every project has to be growing, progressively. Whatever has been accomplished last month, let us try to increase it by 100%. In this way you will go up, but never down. Without meeting and making all devotees aware of the quotas required to be collected by all to cover the basic expenses it can easily happen that you start falling behind. That should NEVER happen.

6. Other goals, like the amount of literature distributed or donations collected, shall also be planned in the same way, to get every devotee involved and aware of the transcendental projection.

The Temple President and his devotee register

It is necessary to keep full information in every temple on every member both internal as well as external. Most important of course are the records of those who live in the Ashram. We shall have a form which gives us much information about that person. The same form informs him about the basic rules of the Ashram and is signed by him. We will keep record of past members as well. We can always try to bring them back if we have the addresses of his family, for example. It is important to know a persons talents, education and other connections they may help in the preaching. You also want to know if they have any medical history.

You should always try to get their parents address in case any emergency arises and in order to check back on the information given by some doubtful person. We should not simply believe everything people tell us about themselves. Verify if you have any doubt. Person with a police record, for example, have to be studied in order to avoid any trouble for the temple from excepting them.

In the case of minors, we can only accept them only if both parents have consented in a notarized, written declaration that they carry full responsibility for and agree with the stay of their child(ren) in the temple. Those who are minors but have no connection with their parents; ie, orphans, street children, etc., still have to have some legal permission. Otherwise we shall have problems in the future and there is no reason why the resident devotees should suffer. This can not be over emphasized. Devotees sometimes out of sentimentality accept anyone who shows up without thinking of the dangers which could occur. Every form shall be accompanied by a Photo of the person, since it is easy to forget those who only stay a short while.

Please do not forget that the Ashram is a place for spiritual upliftment and that only a minority will stay for the life long Ashram life. Thus all the people who pass through our community or take connection with our spiritual master have permanent importance and shall not be forgotten. This is how Srila Prabhupada spread Krishna consciousness.

Every person is a jewel, even if a little rough in the beginning. Keep all their information carefully on file. Even if devotees come from another temple to stay with you a while, make sure you make a page for him. Out of sight, out of mind. All the devotees actually active and connected to your temple should in addition be posted on the organization chart with their respective

responsibilities. This will increase the efficiency of all your departments of service.

The Temple President and the emergency fund

Every temple needs some emergency fund, such as a minimum of two times the rent they pay. Basically temple economy has many little secrets like Samkirtan meetings, good treasurers, good bookkeepers and asking donations from the congregation. For example I always advise the devotees that they should not pay more in rent or mortgage for their temple than what they can produce in one week of normal work. Otherwise it becomes a burden to maintain a temple. It is better to have a small place without financial chaos than a huge temple with everyone lamenting under the financial pressure. But extra Laksmi means the temple must be well managed. Debts and lack of books or Samkirtan articles means a very badly managed temple. We have to maintain always ahead of reality, not behind. First work, then Samadhi was Srila Prabhupadas recommendation.

The Temple President and his fund raising

Getting Laksmi for Narayana. Laksmi is in the hands of many little Ravana's to spend only for Sense gratification. The riches of this world are only used to separate us further from God, away from simple living and high thinking. We have the opportunity to help others to serve the transcendental plans of our spiritual master and Lord Chaitanya. Fundraising for Krishna is not a material occupation. Every penny given by a person will increase his sukriti. Devotional service will save people from the worst danger which is to be separated from the path of self realization. Just like every family has to be maintained, every Ashram needs to be financially sound. So many different services to the deities and to the public have to be financed. This is the duty of the Vaisnava community. Brahmins and Vaisnavas should actually be maintained from the donations given by Vaisyas and Ksatriyas so that they can spend their energy on preaching.

To organize Prasadam festivals, devotee maintenance, book distribution, Hari nama parties, temple construction, Nama Hatta Programs, traveling preaching, temple vehicles, deity worship, etc. is quite a responsibility and takes a lot of Laksmi. Therefore the Temple President has to inspire the devotees in the community to participate in the sacrifice to get this Laksmi. Different ideas have been produced since Srila Prabhupada started his movement:

Transcendental book distribution on Buses, in trains, on the streets, in parking lots, door to door, etc.

Transcendental musical records or Tapes (CDs) in the same places.

Selling of different business paraphernalia by devotees to give help to the program.

Life membership programs.

Yoga Correspondence courses

Preaching tables with different transcendental articles of the SEVA etc.

Vegetarian Prasadam restaurants.

Health food stores.

Bakeries.

Boutiques.

Simple donation requests to the public.

Farming of Food without poisons and selling to the public.

Producing and , or selling of Packed Food products in public places and transports.

Incense sales and fabrication.

Donations of the congregation.

All these programs require good organization and training.

Srila Prabhupada liked that his temples depend on the distribution of transcendental literature and related items. It has shown through the years that other programs have been helpful and necessary to increase and maintain the missions. It is a fact that book distribution in a small town for example will meet its limits. Also, since the devotees are here to stay, it is very good to develop restaurants and other business which will be respected by the public. Very often we are asked, "How do you maintain your mission? " Srila Prabhupada himself started several Govinda

Restaurants and a factory to produce and distribute incense and essential oils. It is important for a growing mission to develop sources of income for the external members as well, since many have to abandon their professions due to the incompatibility with the philosophy of the devotees. Devotees, specially Brahmins, are not recommended to work under the authority of a non devotee boss. Sometimes that cannot be avoided due to practical considerations, but it is desirable to create our own working environments such as franchises of specific articles etc. We should always remember that only if we really make Krishna the enjoyer of our work can we justify calling it devotional service. Otherwise it will just be fruitive work. That is the problem in many circumstances. Devotees invent systems of work for Krishna but those with a fruitive mentality copy their system and use it only for their own private purposes. What can be done? This is a so called free market economy and to this type of sufferings we are also subjected.

But to get everything organized in the best way, we need good enthusiasm and strong preaching on a daily basis. Do not forget, for example, that in the non devotional world sale groups often times hold daily, short sales seminars for inspiration and to share experience. If you neglect the intensive attendance to the different systems, you will face slow down immediately, up to the total stop of any attempt. People need to be reminded of their goals and motivations. Therefore some little service competition is rather helpful, as long as it does develop into a big ego trip. Also never forget that real enthusiasm is reflected in the time we invest in our work. As aspiring Vaisnavas we spend so much time on chanting, lectures and Bhajans, time we can win by sleeping less. Every independent

businessman, especially when he starts his own company from nothing, will be found working between 12 and 16 hours daily. Otherwise he will not succeed. I think devotees should work for Krishna as least as hard as others work for Maya. Then they never will meet defeat. In our Samkirtan years we spent, motivated by our own enthusiasm alone, a minimum ten to twelve hours daily. At times on marathon weekends going easily from seven in the morning until eleven at night. Sometimes we see temples having financial troubles at the same time we see that the devotees wasting lots of time. Either only a few work to bring in some income, or they are very slow and work very little. Good management means to keep all devotees identified with the plans of service and not to increase the expenses beyond the tangible income.

If devotees ever fight about financial issues, it is really sad. Money can be the cause for so much suffering. We have come to this movement to get away from this suffering. Therefore devotees must be extremely careful and exemplary in their financial dealings so that there can never be a difficulty in this connection.

The Temple President and the organization of necessary Meetings

Meeting with others and discussing the development of the different projects is the life and soul of a community. It may sometimes seem bothersome to get others to meet and maybe more practical to just make the decision yourself, but in general, the most healthy and wonderful thing to meet with your beloved Vaisnavas to discuss this one topic of our life.: HOW TO SERVE KRISHNA AND THE VAISNAVAS BETTER IN OUR LIFE AND COMMUNITY.

I have had the sweetest moments of my life in the company of brothers and sisters studying how to improve the temples. And be sure that you will not always have the best idea. Four eyes see more than two.

It is true, such meetings will decrease your false ego (Do you mind?).

It is an art to listen to others, and it is more difficult to convince others than to simply impose your concepts on them. But if you want to train new leaders and win their Vaisnavas hearts, you should't mind including all those helpful and dedicated servants in the respective meetings. I have often included members in discussions who had not yet an outstanding service record but some capacity in a special field. People love to be trusted. There is nothing worse then to give someone the feeling that you do not care about what he thinks.

No body shall feel excluded. Of course, we do keep some subjects private from newcomers, which go beyond their understanding of the philosophy, but in general I have had the experience that people respond very nicely to trust and subsequently increase their active participation. Those who live outside the temples often feel excluded, and sometimes, despite their capacity, due to their being entangled in family affairs, do not give much time and energy to the temple. But if you push your false ego aside, call them and humbly request them to come to your meetings, you can re inject

new life and happiness into their daily boredom. Meetings are the best medicine against our potential Megalomania. Outside of the meetings, which are conducted in a rather democratical fashion, the respective department in charge has the full authority, but in the meetings it is necessary to listen to all and to request further commitment from all sides. A leader without support from the devotees he tries to serve is like a pujari without a deity.

Here are some of the meetings which every average temple shall hold regularly.

Vaisnava Board of general temple affairs (weekly).

Vaisnava city meetings if several projects exist in the same city (monthly).

Vaisnava Board meeting of national character. (Twice or thrice a year).

Vaisnava Parents meeting. (Monthly).

Vaisnava Children education (Weekly).

Vaisnava Mataji meetings. (Weekly or fortnightly).

Vaisnava pujari meeting to plan dresses, crowns, festivals etc. (Four times a year).

Vaisnava business reunion.(As desired).

Vaisnava Maha Samkirtan and Hari nam meeting (Weekly).

Istagosthis (weekly).

The need for other meetings can arise but for whatever reason we meet there are some golden rules we shall not forget:

1. We shall never fight in such meetings or disrespect each other, even if we are angry with another. We shall preserve polite and humble Vaisnava etiquette.

2. Never expect anything from anyone which they cannot or do not want to do.

3. Refer to Vaisnava etiquette if there is any question on conduct.

4. Refer to the Testament of Swami B. A. Paramadvaiti if the meeting deals with subjects of the vital continuation of our spiritual school.

5. Refer to the Search for Purity by Swami B. A. Paramadvaiti whenever the topic of unity in diversity or inter-missionary conflicts arises.

6. Be happy that there is any Vaisnava in the world who is ready to meet with YOU to discuss devotional service.

7. We always follow the six principles of surrender in our transcendental plans.

8. We should never forget that all difficulties are blessings in disguise who come to make sure that we will advance spiritually. By passing this difficulty we will grow spiritually and so will the mission of Lord Chaitanya.

9. There are always many ways to serve Krishna. You should not think that your way must be the best way. Always respect others and their ideas.

Those who are leaders by nature are often over-convinced of their way. But Krishna may like all the ways his devotees want to serve him.

If the meetings are not well attended, which would be quite natural for the age of KALI, you should still go on making your meetings. Gradually you will see that the service will be recognized. If people never come, ask them

if it is your fault that they do not like to meet with you to discuss transcendental service improvement with you, or if they do not understand the importance of such meetings.

By attending such meetings the devotees will grow in maturity. You will help them to become leaders and thus our mission will have many new qualified preachers.

Make sure a book of decisions is kept at every meeting and that those interested can read the resolutions.

The Temple President and Love and Trust in Administration

We always searching for those who will not cheat us. Every potential new devotee is screened from that point of view, and he will naturally also screen the potential authority in order to decide whether he wants to give his life to work for Krishna in this connection. We need to trust others in order to win their heart. No risk–no gain. But we should be conscious to let new devotees prove themselves. For example if a person gets a little credit and works successfully creating some income for the ashram, then next time, we can increase his credit a little more. But under no circumstance should we give somebody so much credit that he can hurt the ashram in a larger way than he has already contributed. In other words, take little risks with new devotees and bigger risks with those who have already contributed a lot. Be aware though, some crooks win you trust on a small level and then they exploit you completely when you've trust too much. We are responsible to protect Krishna's property, but at the same time we shall try to make others feel like they are members of a family.

It is also necessary to keep all the valuables of the temple under lock. It is unhappy to have many locks in a temple, but it is necessary because many devotees do not understand the reality of managing an ashram. For example many programs have failed to develop because devotees have eaten up all the special prasadam products of some restaurant or a temple store. They do not realize that the lack of sales cannot cover the cost of costly items. They even become angry if the Temple President restricts their abuse. The temple storage room and all merchandises must be under lock and with a controlled cardex, otherwise there is no way to know whether the controllers are honest or thieves. A Bengali proverb goes: To much devotion is a sign of a thief. It is for our love of the devotees in our Ashram to administrate in such a way that no mistrust arises in the community. Never forget that opportunity makes the thief. We need to protect new devotees from such opportunity. It distracts a new devotee from the essence if he sees that the temple is not well managed, what to speak of it being easy to steal something from Krishna temple. So many devotees come from poor conditions and often once they see an economic alternative they forget the spiritual ideals they started to follow. The Temple President is the person who should be trusted as well as the other responsible devotees. The new devotees should learn to accept their rules as a great benefit, even if some discipline is introduced or some austerity. Devotees

should trust their seniors, and in reverse the new devotees should be trained quickly to share the responsibility of protecting the purity and the preaching of the mission of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

The Temple President and his contacts

Every Temple President cultivates many contacts during his preaching and managing time. They usually get lost during any change in the administration. The next Temple President starts at point zero. This must be avoided.

The valuable time of the preachers will be lost if every time you need something in the Temple new contacts have to be established.

The Business contacts book

This book should contain all the addresses and data regarding purchases and other practical affairs. Don't be hasty. We need all the details including special information on discounts, special friends who led us to know that person etc.

The information should contain:

Name of Person.

Who established this contact and when.

Services offered and price policy.

Special information.

What is his interest in the temple and spiritual life are.

Prices which are favorable at that place.

The Preaching connections book

What is the service they like to do.

Who connected them to the Temple.

Are they interested in purchasing, books, tapes, or attending yoga course, etc.

Are they interested in spiritual programs for their children, spiritual retreats, etc.

Do they like to receive devotees in their home.

Do they like to make Nama Hatta programs.

What is their initiation status.

The donation book

Every donation which helps to build up the community shall be reported in the temples donation book. This will encourage more donations. Also you can write into this book items necessary for the temple so that potential donors can look at requirements for the community.

This book will also help us keep aware of the selfless helpers of the present and past. If some previous friends lost interest or had any unhappy

experience, it will come to our attention, and we can try to go and help them again. We can also note down in this book the total collections of the internal members with the weekly total of all of them. Since those who live in the temple are helping as a matter of duty it will not look good to report their collections individually as donations. But collectively it is nice to see how every week the temple grows by the sacrifice of the devotees. We should show this book to any friend who likes to see it. It will tell the story of sacrifice and shall also contain special physical efforts done by devotees for the mission.

The visitors book

Every temple should keep a visitors book similar to what you find in many museums and other respectable places. This will help us to keep the records and the addresses of our friends. It will also invite commentary. The receptionist should try to get visitors to give all the requested information like telephone, etc.

Such books should be nicely bound and kept on file after they are full.

The Temple President and his daily bookkeeping

An internal record of all the financial movements of the temple should be kept. Srila Prabhupada was very clear in this connection. All donations shall be deposited in the bank and only taken out by check with the appropriate explanation and receipts.

In addition the Temple President has to look that the several departments of the temple such as a restaurant or gift store keep their accounting in the required way of the local government. In Colombia, for example, a devotee accountant has kindly compiled a comprehensive guideline for the establishment of devotee owned enterprises and the respective duties the devotees have to fulfill. We shall not go into more detail here since from country to country the rules change. But every Temple President should make sure that he does not create a situation which will later be considered objectionable by the public. That would jeopardize the purpose of our preaching. It is a pleasure to keep the books of a little temple of Vaisnava programs. We are pure in purpose and have nothing to hide. We shall learn how to do this even if it gives us a little headache to become experts in accounting. It is not really difficult. Just do not limit yourself and do not be lazy about this subject. Even our Gurus had to keep books, so why should you not want to do this little service for Srimati Radharani?

The Temple President and debts

It is best if a temple functions without debts. First work and then Samadhi, Srila Prabhupada used to say.

Different types of debts may be unavoidable. Under all circumstances a temple should not fall behind their debt payment schedules, otherwise

depression will appear. Nobody likes to work for another's past negligence. Debts with the publication department are a big disturbance. Every temple has to manage in such a way that the different daily sums covering the cost of distributed materials be kept separate from the general profits so that respective payments can be made.

Not doing so will cause a great danger. If the money is out of reach it will not be eaten up by other demands. If any temple raises insufficient money and there is need for monies from the escrow account to be used to cover their bills, the Temple's emergency bells should wake up every member of the community to a "temple saving marathon". If we silently spend what is not ours and let everything slide into deeper and deeper debt, we may bring about a crisis which may even threaten the existence of an ashram.

Therefore it is better not to work with borrowed capital since that is very risky. Those devotees who are involved but do not carry the load of responsibility in their name are more likely to be lax and irresponsible. Keep the moneys separate from the beginning and save yourself from future financial headaches.

If the temple buildings and vehicles are mortgaged we should make sure we have insurance in these properties in case of some calamity. (Our temple in Miami was saved twice by a few miles from a major Hurricane. Iskcon lost several properties through fire and hurricane, traffic accidents, etc).

Do not foolishly say that you do not insure Krishna's properties because he can protect them. Devotees should never live under severe financial pressure. If voluntarily some devotee accepts the charge to make certain payments, that is wonderful. But if due to bad management the temple is putting pressure on the members to raise funds it is very undesirable. Slowly but surely wins the race.

Do not try to impress others with borrowed laurels.

Once a property of Krishna has been fully paid, do not put a lean against it again. Mortgaging Krishna's property is wrong. The deity has to be protected from financial speculation of temple managers. Raise new funds if you want to further expand.

Whatever money the temple owes should be posted in the temple office on the bulletin Board to be taken care of at once. Manage your temples nicely, that will bring happiness to you and to all the temple members.

The Temple President and the inventory of the Temple

Every temple must keep a book listing all the deities properties. These items are sacred and should be marked, if practical, as property of the deity. If an item is taken into the temple for temporary use, it should also be specified in this book that this item is only lent for the purpose of the deity by a particular person and that he may decide to take with him again. This will serve to protect the temple from the horrible situation when some Temple President has purchased items for the temple either from his own money or in joint effort with other devotees as a donation, but then at the time of his withdrawal from the Temple President service he starts claiming

that certain items actually belong to him, etc. This is a great disturbance to the preaching and to the donation mood of the congregation. Therefore there is no harm in keeping record that a Grihasta president is the owner of something which is also being used for Krishna for the time being. But if this is not specified in the Inventory book or recognized by the Vaisnava Board, it will cause problems if later he wants to claim the proprietorship for such an item. Therefore, in general, whatever is not recorded as such in the Inventory book shall be accepted as deity property without further discussion. It takes good organization to avoid unnecessary conflicts.

The Temple President and the temple profits

The profits of the temple are the life of expanding the preaching work in the city and elsewhere. These hard earned Laksmis are actually the mercy of the Lord and his devotees. Every penny shall be reported nicely and the Vaisnava Board will decide which preaching projects deserve priority in the development. Donations given for a special purpose should be used exclusively for that purpose and the donation book shall report the origin, donor and purpose of the Laksmi.

Temple profits are the offerings of the Vaisnavas for the service of their lord as well as the donations of those who were inspired by the Vaisnavas. We shall never fall in the illusion that we, the managers, are owners of these Laksmis or that it is to our credit that such Laksmis exist. We are just favored by the Spiritual master and the Vaisnava community to be trusted to faithfully manage the funds of our Lord. There must always be a checking system, established strictly by the very Temple President, that assures that every penny is spent as was planned. If this is not done properly very soon criticism will appear, questioning the honesty of the local managers. That is the worse that can happen to a temple. It pains my heart and it disturbs our Gurus mission because the people will loose faith in the Vaisnavas. Therefore consider this one of your most important services as a Temple President to inspire love and trust and to manage excellently.

The Temple President and his management of Bank accounts

If the temple is owned by the registered non profit society and has a bank account in the name of that society it is very important to keep the account with all the in and outgoing transactions in perfect condition, because the yearly balances of the society before the government will be based on the movement of such accounts. Other bank accounts have to be authorized by the Vaisnava Board to facilitate other departments such as the Temple restaurant, bakery etc.

Krishna's Laksmi shall always be kept with at least two trusted signers. In the Vaisnava Board meetings the accounts of Krishna and their balances should be reported. A meeting without knowledge of the financial situation is quite meaningless.

All accounts must be studied carefully in coordination with the Vaisnava Board, that they do not conflict with any law and assurance must be given that no private interests interfere with Krishna's Laksmi.

Always get the advice of a trusted devotee accountant to make sure you are doing everything within the law and nothing in the wrong way.

The Temple President and book distribution

Book distribution is the life and soul of a preaching temple. Preaching is life. Without preaching a temple is practically useless. Without serious book distribution a temple has really no mercy distribution. And if the mercy is not distributed, how do you expect the mercy to come down .

Srila Prabhupada promised us he would come and stay in the temple where the largest quantity of books were distributed. That created a revolution in book distribution. Every Temple wanted Srila Prabhupada to stay there. And Srila Prabhupada published so many books. Without an intensive distribution system it would not have been possible to pay for the publishing of so many titles.

There are many ways that books can be distributed. Here is a short list of the main distribution places and systems used by the devotees.

Street distribution by walking from one person to the other and trying to attract them to buy one or more books.

Distribution in public transport facility by giving a speech to a group of passengers.

Door to door visits with books.

Hari Nam parties and their preaching as well as their book tables.

Parking lots to approach people as they park or want to drive away.

Stores and offices with personal conversations.

Airports and public transportation terminals.

Life membership programs to register new members and thus give books to them.

Yoga course sales to sign up members to read the books systematically.

Astrology charts to give to people joined with Vedic literature.

Full tables on public grounds or in fairs where the full amount of publications are exhibited.

Prasadam distribution jointly with book tables to attract attention to the literature.

Wholesale distribution of books to bookstores or other favorable stores.

Distribution to libraries and universities Vedic literature to introduce as class reading material.

Actually all these systems work if somebody with personal enthusiasm represents the spiritual master. The Temple President can carefully enthuse the devotees to compete in book distribution but he has to alert them not to become proud and number conscious, instead of being real, loving, compassionate preachers.

The temple can post the book distribution achievements on the temple bulletin Board and ecstatic book distributors, as well as other outstanding

servants, shall be given an honored mention in the Istagosthis. In Srila Prabhupadas times we had a Samkirtan newsletter which kept the competition also on a world wide level. This system got carried away sometimes, even though it gave the leading book distributors the chance to know about each others existence and also published nectarine preaching experiences. At least on a national level there is nothing wrong in reporting the distribution, but again, and again, we should not forget the danger of becoming proud, which would be the worst to happen to any one of us. Already we have this horrible proud nature. Unless we become humble and kindhearted we will surely fail on this path of pure devotion.

The Samkirtan leader shall hold regular Sankirtan meetings and at least once a week every devotee in the temple shall go on Samkirtan. The Samkirtan meetings shall be at least once per week and shall give the best distributors the chance to share their enthusiasm and experience with the others. On traveling Samkirtan we can repeat such meetings every day before going out. In the temples the Samkirtan office shall vibrate enthusiasm and good attention to the Samkirtan devotees every day. The Temple President shall see that all the material is ready for the distributors. Whenever there is a change in prices or articles for Samkirtan the devotee is faced with an obstacle of adopting to a new situation. That requires a special injection from the Temple President into the group. Best thing is being able to see the Temple President going out himself and creating an atmosphere of success in the new situation.

We have to utilize the saying, " Utility is the principle" in order to define which Samkirtan system is the best for each and every individual devotees. It is good to use different systems, but it is also true that if the devotees concentrate on one system in a group, the enthusiasm grows. But the preaching has to be developed on all levels, and not all devotees are suited for the same condition.

Every person's preaching is his lifeline. There is no greater happiness than seeing new devotees who have come due to our little preaching service. Every devotee should desire to help the Samkirtan. The cooks are helping the preachers as are the pujaris. But they should also feel that way. We are helping the preaching in our specific duty. And if they get any chance to also sell a book, they should not let such an opportunity escape.

Devotees shall go to preach well dressed. Either they dress as Vaisnava gentleman or they dress like a suit and tie person. Hippie presentation is not what Srila Prabhupada aspired for. Well dressed, you are already accepted by the general people as a respectable person. If we create repulsion by the way we present ourselves, the purpose of preaching is not served.

Make sure that in the very entrance of your temples all the publications of your mission are beautifully exhibited with a person available who can sell any book or tape desired by the visitor ON THE SPOT. The entrance to a temple or preaching center shall give full information about the purpose, literature and projects of this respective Vaisnava center. Out of sight- out

of mind. If you do not exhibit, even the devotees forget what preaching nectar is available.

Every devotee shall always carry with him at least some book and lecture tape of his spiritual master. There is no reason not to. You can glorify Krishna and your Guru in an excellent way by leaving some of his writings or his spoken word in the hands of those whom you would like to benefit. There is another problem. Devotees are often careless. They put books in their bags with shoes or food and ruin the appearance. It takes the responsibility and awareness of an excellent salesperson to go out well prepared, fulfilling what is required. How can a no nonsense salesman give a first class presentation while the Vaisnavas cannot organize themselves in order to present their nectar to the world? It takes many many discussions in the meetings and istagosthis in order to improve the situation. But we shall not stop at any time. This is the Samkirtan Yajna, and we have nothing else to do, than to preach nicely. That is all.

Whoever can find out a newer or better way of distributing transcendental literature and especially Yoga Courses, will do a great service to the preaching and we want to learn from him. Samkirtan Yajna ki jaya. Our Gurudevas were all Book distributors and book publishers. This is a tradition of preachers, I beg you to keep this spirit alive in our temple

The Temple President and Preaching opportunities in the media

It is very valuable to know the press and to cultivate friendly connections. Every newspaper has a cultural page and will publish a little caption, just because you went by and gave the editor a pack of incense and told him about the drama you are presenting or the visit of your spiritual master, etc. There is no limit to this preaching field. Every Radio, Magazine and TV station, especially Cable TV, has special forums to present cultural subjects. We have to be experts at conquering so that all doors open by themselves after we cultivate our friendships. No doubt this is a field of hard work, but you can be successful as reporters are just as unhappy as everyone else, and will appreciate your friendship since the rest of their lives and businesses pivot around the selling of advertisement for material objects, which does not make anyone happy.

To favor our preaching we should find out all the important dates in the year to see where functions are held in which the devotees can participate and preach their Hari Nam, etc. For example there are many peace marches, theater and song festivals. Devotees shall be there, presenting something very nice. Krishna consciousness is the culture of this iron age and the press has all the connections. We shall always try to be present in the different exchanges of opinions with our wonderful philosophy. If any news agency attacks devotees, as happens very often by negative writings on new cults along with our Vaisnavas photographs, we shall take the opportunity to write disclaimers and to preach our teachings. Srila Prabhupada used to say, "All propaganda is good propaganda in the long run". We want to defend the dignity of our spiritual school, but even if any devotee is

responsible for some mistake, we shall always defend the purity of the Vaisnava line.

But be cautious with the press. Never create enemies. They often play friendly, try to get someone to say something and then distort it to make a slanderous good selling headline. But what can be done. We are trying to sincerely glorify Krishna. If any adverse propaganda appears, it is not happy. Let the expert devotees deal with the press and other public relationship matters. Even the receptionist of the temple should be prepared to guide news man to the leader. And if you have some kind of a press report on our activities it will be helpful, because they sometimes come with little time and want to get concise information.

If you have friends in the press that can also help if any type of emergency appears.

The Temple President and Business opportunities in the city to combine preaching and Grihasta opportunities

The Temple President shall try to conduct meetings with devotees in the community to study how to help each other and how to cooperate in different fields.

Our devotees need a secure future. Even though it is a fact that karma misra bhaktas get confused when they see how devotees earn their Laksmi and sometimes imitate their activities for their fruitive purposes, it is important to create a system which allows devotees with their families to earn a solid income. A financially stable Grihasta community will give stability to the preaching. No doubt the degree of envy and greed in this age make it very difficult to work together. Devotees are experts in food production. It is a good way to establish franchise systems. Devotees can produce food items, for example, allowing other devotees with a little capital to establish outlets. This can be combined with little lecture halls or at least a bookstall on transcendental literature. The devotees can also import or produce items which give a chance for others to open a little boutique.

Often devotees try to work together in manual jobs or in relationships where one devotee is like the owner of the company and the others are his paid employees. My own experience with this is very bad, even though some very expert devotee managers may be able to pull off such a relationship for a while. Usually the saying " familiarity breeds contempt", proves to be truth and such relationships very easy break in disgust. Very unhappy situations arise. Therefore it is better that in commercial relationships, at least to a degree, everyone is his own boss, keeping his own accounting and responsibility before the government and learning to handle his own capital responsibly. Those who are unable to do so are better of working for a non devotee and keeping their friendship with the devotees. International business opportunities shall be shared amongst the devotees through the Internet in the framework of the World Vaisnava Association. Actually the Vaisnava community is very young and small and

has not yet discovered the incredible potential it has by working together, also in practical fields. New ideas will appear and very important fields of Vaisnava service will develop.

Education, Health Care, Retreats, and many other social services will naturally become part of the Vaisnava ways of executing Brahminical services and establishing their own situation.

Publications in the Vaisnava communities are also very important in order to exchange ideas and to establish contacts.

The Temple President and his manpower

The help of others is essential for actually creating a Vaisnava family. All volunteers are the in the life of a preacher because they help him to serve his spiritual master in a better way. Therefore we should enthuse and also correct those under our care. Above all we shall always try to reach peoples' heart and not make them feel bad, even if some mistake has to be corrected. What is the use of a good instruction if the person gets discouraged from it.

Sometimes we have to wait for appropriate moments to make someone else understand a particular situation. This is the real task for loving leadership. No person is obliged to help us. And we shall learn from others, as they may very well be more advanced than we are ourselves in their service attitude. To discourage one single external Mataji in her service is an offense which will disturb our advancement. Maya always tries to separate the devotees from each other but real advanced devotees always try to counteract that influence, bringing all devotees closer to each other regardless of their false ego disturbances.

Listen to what people have to say. Be an expert in inspiring others to reveal their heart to you. Only then will it be natural for them to accept some service under your guidance and to try to execute that service expertly. Always be there for your devotee brothers, sisters and friends. Without a loving Vaisnava how can we tolerate this life? Older devotees, especially those living outside, should feel that you want them to be part of the family as a paternal friend of all. If you feel that they are giving more trouble than help to your program, then take them with you on a walk and reveal to them your feelings and plans, and how you feel, that they are not sensitive to the temple realities. If there is no heart to heart contact you may lose them from the congregation. This is a challenge, but that is what makes a very good Temple President. Actually the Temple President is the most important devotee in as much as he keeps the programs going, resting all the responsibilities on his shoulders. What mercy will come to him if he gets the blessings of almost all the congregation. Granted that it is not an easy task. Our new members have the tendency to accept our words without much criticism, but older members naturally have a different and sometimes even better idea, and that possibility must be accommodated if we wish to stay together.

The Temple President and his purchases

Whomever has the power or utilizes the funds collected or donated for Krishna by the devotees carries a great responsibility. Shopping with Krishna's Laksmi is a holy duty and one should follow many carefully studied guidelines.

Srila Prabhupada told us that money should not sit idly in Bank accounts. This will attract the influence of Kali Yuga. But to spend Laksmi carefully is actually hard work. When someone has earned money with severely hard labor he will value every penny with the sweat he spent to get it.

Unfortunately, sometimes, devotees of careless nature do not value sufficiently the chance they have to serve Laksmidevi by fulfilling Krishna's desires. The following points should be avoided by all devotees.

- a) Don't buy anything without knowing the real market value.
 - b) Don't buy before comparing prices with other outlets.
 - c) Don't take quality or quantity for granted. Always check on it.
 - d) Always try to get the wholesale price, cash discounts, etc.
 - e) Don't deprive the salesman of his fortune to give a special discount for Krishna. Just beg humbly and enthusiastically for your Guru. You will be surprised how many wonderful preaching opportunities will come from that, and how many people love to give extra facilities to the devotees and their service.
 - f) Don't buy too much of anything that can spoil.
 - g) Don't buy too small of a quantity so that it becomes a waste of time buying the same thing all the time.
 - h) Make sure all your good buying contacts, good advisers, special discounts are noted in the temple purchase guide. Tomorrow somebody else is going to do the shopping. If you did not write it down nicely, with all necessary details, you will be responsible for wasting the time of other devotees.
 - i) Always try to give out literature while you are shopping and see if there are any barter opportunities to save Laksmi.
- In the construction of the temple of Sri Sri Gouranga Radha Vrajesvara at least 30% of all the building materials and tools were traded with paintings.
- j) While shopping please do so humbly. You are giving them the opportunity to contribute some of their energy to the work of Krishna. Even when buying a building you may save a lot if you humbly and aggressively make the seller aware of this point.
 - k) Make sure your purchase decisions always meet the approval of the other devotees, above all the Vaisnava Council of the temple. Better check with them, before committing a mistake that cannot be rectified.
 - l) The treasury and the accounting system have to be well understood by all those who spend Krishna's Laksmi. It is a grave offense if the purchaser even falls under the suspicion of mishandling his service in any way. Anyone who touches Krishna's Laksmi should not be in the slightest way reluctant to be checked upon, or to give clear reports, etc.,
 - m) Big expenditures should preferably be made by check .

n) Even so called big devotees have fallen prey to the allurements of money, all the way up to practically robbing the Guru and the deities. Very good devotees should do the shopping and even they should feel 108% accountable to Sri Krishna's Household in charge, who is none less than Srimati Radharani and her servants.

o) Devotees should not buy unnecessary luxury items and much less fall prey to the nonsense of brand names and false values. Exclusively for preaching, we may prefer the best quality of an item, but we should carefully keep our distance from those items which will make us look like a person who enjoys them under the pretense of a monk's life. Cotton or jute is the best dress material we can recommend. Silk is very costly and unnecessary.

The Temple President and his private finances if he is a Grihastha

First of all, let us offer our obeisances to all those Grihastas and their good wives who have decided to actively support the preaching work of their spiritual master, even after entering in the family ashram. No doubt, it is increasingly difficult to actually do that in proportion as the family obligations grow. Even for the children of a Grihastha president there are many sacrifices to accept.

Since the Grihastas are often senior and experienced devotees, it is a great boon for all if they can somehow or other manage to keep themselves in the front-line of preaching. In order for them to also develop their family nicely, and to carefully guard their service and relationships with other devotees, we will try to give guidelines which shall ensure lasting success in this laudable service.

Grihastha and family duties and pleasures: All that is part of the Pravritti marg of devotional service. A married man has to worry practically every day, until he enters into Sannyas life, how to make enough money to maintain a wife and children. That is often a very difficult job to accomplish. As a Temple President the Grihastha has to inform the Vaisnava Council of his temple exactly how he wishes to operate in this connection.

Many varieties exist. Taking regular hours or days off the Temple President duties to collect for those expenses is one. If he has some capital he can separately manage some business to maintain himself. He can also manage one of the temple businesses like a shop or a restaurant and receive a fixed and approved percentage of the profits as a benefit for his private needs. We have also seen cases where a small maintenance allowance was granted to Temple Presidents who were so busy working for the growing community that they had no time spare for any other engagement. That maintenance allowance would be justified if he is actually producing, though his personal encouragement of others, income to the temple and his own maintenance money is of such an insignificant proportion to his service that the Vaisnava Council happily approves of it.

That is the key to success. The devotees should all be very happy with that arrangement, otherwise how can they surrender to such a Temple President

if undercurrents of disapproval of his financial dealings permeate the temple. Nobody should take it for granted that others will submit to him. The Vaisnava council is the forum where all voices of active members of the community will be heard. The Grihastha Temple President shall be extremely eager to be completely transparent in his dealings and finances and to get the blessings of the Vaisnava Council on his developments. Love and trust are the pillars of good relationships, but the leaders have to give a perfect example in financial dealings in order to inspire others and to ensure the purity and future of the Vaisnava Community service.

Since our temples often have some type of business to help cover the expenses including Membership preaching, engagements for the community such as gift shops and restaurant, it is no harm if the Temple President or their wife manage such a program and receive a commission that can cover their expenses. Otherwise some other devotee would have to stay back from Samkirtan to do that service, as managers who stick to such a service are very hard to find without financial motivation. Therefore the Temple President may be the ideal solution. This would also keep him on the temple premises all day so that he can always monitor the programs. The residence of a Grihastha Temple President is also very important. When the infrastructure of the temple supplies a good facility, where neither the devotees nor the possible children are severely disturbed as has happened in the past, than residency within the Temple has worked out quite well. Otherwise a flat next to the temple can be the perfect solution. Again, such ideas should be discussed and approved by the Vaisnava Council. It should be clearly understood and preferably put in writing, that all the assets accumulated in a Temple Presidents time in that temple or temple business are exclusively the property of the deity. Any privately accumulated asset of the Temple President shall be known and noted down in some Vaisnava Council record book. Thus approved so as not to create a disturbance to the community once that Temple President retires from that service and wanting to take with him what has been bought by him for his family asset. It is a disgrace if money becomes a reason for dispute amongst Vaisnavas, but to make sure that does not happen, we must follow these guidelines as long as time, place and circumstances permit.

The visit of devotees to the holy Dham

Every devotee cherishes the desire to visit the holy Dhama with the blessings of the senior Vaisnavas. Thus it is the tradition to organize pilgrimages to Vrindavan and Mayapur amongst the Vaisnava community. Since the appearance of Vrinda Kunja, Yamuna Kunja, Vansi Kunja and other holy places intimately connected to our mission it has become even more wonderful to visit there.

The most important features to consider in this regard are the following.

1. To visit the holy Dhama without the blessings of Sri Guru and The Vaisnavas will not reap the desired success.

2. The holy places are very powerful and we shall be careful not to commit any Dhama aparadas there.
3. If a devotee has done some exceptional service he may be able to stay in the holy Dhama for a longer period, to help the preaching programs there, and to get a life long feeling for the holy Dhama and the mood of devotional service.
4. Devotees shall never expect other devotees to cover their travel expenses. For that purpose, once a devotee has received the blessings for such a journey, he shall start making the respective arrangements to cover his travel expenses as well as some Laksmi, to cover any facility in the Dhama. We go to the Dhama to serve there, not to have an easy life at the cost of others. Any temple we visit, we shall always contribute more energy than we consume for our own maintenance.
5. Regular visits of friends of the devotees to the holy Dhama can be organized in order to preach to them. In that case they shall be prepared in advance to realize the meaning of a pilgrimage and not go as enjoyment seeking tourists. It would be offensive to bring people to the holy Dhama who could commit sinful activities.
6. The secret of any visit is to behave in such a way that the local residents of the Dhama, and the local authorities are enchanted with the wonderful attitude the pilgrim has brought. Then you will surely be able to take the blessings of the holy Dhama with you.
7. Make sure your Visa condition is and remains perfect. This is possible by making PREVIOUS arrangements with the documentation of the mission you are visiting. Tourist Visas cannot be extended in India. For long time visits you should try to get five year yoga visas or one year Entry Visas.

The percentages devotees may earn whenever necessary

Devotees are dedicated to pleasing Krishna at every moment. Ashram life in the present day and age is exclusively dedicated to organize transcendental welfare activities. All inmates are aware of that and help as much as they can. A very basic, down to earth simple lifestyle in connection with food, lodging and dress is supplied by the ashram to its full time servants. But there are many situations, where devotees have personal needs which go far beyond that benefit level. Of course, a devotee community will always try to help their members in particular to obtain health assistance and other facilities. However these conditions are without any gaurantee, and we are focusing now on the situations when a devotee needs Laksmi for private needs.

In that case he shall search out a way to work and keep for himself whatever percentage he considers necessary, with the approval of his Ashram authorities. Obviously it depends on each persons particular situation and degree of emergency. On principle, a devotee gives as much to the temple as he likes to give. The Temple President must also agree with that, since he grants residential permit to the devotee. Brahmacaris are generally without much complications in this regard, but once a person

plans to enter the Householder ashram, it is necessary for him to think of how he will finance his future. And since it is not very advisable for devotees to take a job under the authority of non-devotees, unless some first class opportunity arises, it is even more important for him to gain capital so as to be able to start his personal business venture.

We can only pray that by then the devotee is mature enough to know how to handle a business and not to forget Krishna and the Vaisnava seva. Of course, as long as he lives in the Ashram, the Temple President will guide him properly, but even after he gets married and starts his own Griha Ashram he should not forget his responsibilities with the transcendental teachings he has received.

Therefore the temple leaders shall try to facilitate as much as possible this transition period from dependent Brahmachari to the Grihastha life. Otherwise devotees have to leave all together, in order to start their own family. In the form of cooperation the Grihastha community shall try to start business ventures which facilitates new franchises for new members of the Grihastha community. If the Temple President can cooperate in this work, it will be very beneficial for his congregation. Even on the national or international level such networks would be very useful to further strengthen the Vaisnava community.

Srila Prabhupadas formula (50% for books, 50% for the temple)

Our dear spiritual master Srila Prabhupada is the incarnation of the mercy of Sri Nityananda Prabhu. His transcendental literature distribution reached higher than anyone could even have imagined. In the world of religious literature it is amazing how all over the world millions of readers in all languages got the mercy of receiving and reading the holiest books mankind has yet received. But this did not happen automatically. Srila Prabhupada lovingly pushed all of us to understand the importance of working hard for Krishna and to give the transcendental literature to everyone. On one occasion he stayed in Los Angeles for the period of two months and got the devotees there to produce 20 hard bound books of his teachings, while normally they had been producing only one book in the period of three months. He had already translated so many books ahead of their production. "Impossible is a word in a fools' dictionary." This was often quoted by Srila Prabhupada.

In the same line he guided us to keep our work as preachers organized in such a way that half of the income to the temple would go to print more books, and the other half to maintain and increase the temples. In order to further encourage the preachers he utilized 50% of the profits of the printing division for producing further titles and the other half for giving loans to the contributing temples to help them to purchase buildings for their deities.

Later, when some temples started to get solid income from other sources, they tried to go ahead with the same principle, to give half of their income to the printing division. Then in return, the temples got a lot of books, and

sometimes did not even know how to get all these books into the hands of the people.

The Transcendental Function of the Printing Division

Books are the basis. We cannot live without the Shastras in our attempt to become devotees of the lord. Guru, Sastra and Sadhu, the inter dependent nature of spiritual approval is our guiding principle. Thus it is so important to publish, read and distribute the transcendental literature. Also a regular Magazine, or newspaper is a wonderful preaching instrument. Newsletters and Audio or Video materials are all in the same line of preaching with authentic authoritative declarations. The Internet, radio and television are only newer ways of presenting the absolute teachings of the Vedas to the world. Basically the BBT or SEVA departments shall serve the purpose of giving the Shastras to the whole world and to give practical help to all those who try to spread Krishna Consciousness in different places.

It is very auspicious to help these departments, and every Ashram, temple, preaching center or active devotee shall try to have all the items that are published and produced by those departments made available to others in his preaching work. We have to work hard and be very generous.

Transcendental items are more work and sacrifice than monetary income in general. But it will be our pride to exhibit the mature work of our Acaryas and Vaisnava friends. Our movement has to give real culture to everyone. We need books for every level. For the child up to university research level. We have printed so many books that now we have to distribute it by any effective means we can find. People should read and hear the items with happiness and enthusiasm. If we neglect those details, our preaching will suffer. Every temple or devotee program should be well equipped with a table of all the items. Hari nam Samkirtan is so nice, but many people do not understand the devotees. If there is a wonderful book table, they can approach and get whatever information they may desire. Gradually these efforts will be rewarded with more devotees who have an increased understanding in devotional service.

Aspects of spiritual practice and integrity

The Temple President and his Sadhana

The Preacher must give a good example. That is basic and even Lord Krishna gives several statements to show that people will follow their good leaders. A good leader's example means very well guided devoties. Sadhana Bhakti is our protection. Many have become crazy thinking that they have transcended the need for Sadhana. Even if we are so advanced that Sadhana is not the most important thing for me; nevertheless, it must be followed in order not to misguide the young devotees. Temples with an atmosphere of sadhana generally also have enthusiastic preaching. When you take the words of the spiritual master very serious you will also take his preaching spirit to heart. Otherwise you will get lax TV devotees. They do not follow strictly and you can imagine their lax preaching as well. Some times they do gather like-minded friends, but it will not be easy to convince them to make any sacrifice for Krishna. Srila Prabhupada complained about some monkey-like disciples who do not follow all four regulative principles. what to speak about Sadhana Bhakti. The Temple President has the responsibility like a father in looking after the well-being of the new devotees. Thus he should be a strict follower of Sadhana Bhakti. If for some reason his preaching work exceeds the normal devotees hours and schedules, he may sometimes be unable to follow all the temple timings strictly. In that case at least the devotees see that he is busy preaching. His higher principle is impeding him to join all functions, but in no way will he discourage anyone with his program. A good general is found in the first line of combat, and not behind a desk while the others are out alone on Hari Nam or other sacrifices. The best leader is someone who can do all the services with great enthusiasm himself.

The Temple President and his own Study of the Scriptures

It is expected that a good devotee knows the revealed scriptures. Srila Prabhupada appreciated it very much when his disciples were able to quote the slokas in order to prove particular points. Gaudiya Kantahara was published by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta sarasvati Prabhupada to train devotees in the philosophy and to be able to quote the authoritative parts of the Vedas. To know the science of Krishna is a great need for leading preachers. Since all preachers are instructing spiritual masters of some kind, we shall take this point to be very important. We have to maintain the correct line and dignity of the school of our spiritual master. The Temple President has the responsibility to train others in the siddhanta of our school. We need to be humble and understand that knowledge of the scriptures is not the most important part of spiritual life. At the same time we have to serve the scriptures and the Vaisnavas by being firmly fixed in the conclusions of the teachings of our spiritual master. The Temple

President should hold special classes for the devotees to become enthusiastic to study.

Srila Prabhupada created in the line of his Guru different degrees like Bhakti Shastri, Bhakti Sarva Bhauma, Bhakti Vedanta and Bhakti Vaibhaba. Until now the full curriculum of these titles have not been developed. Naturally they are the titles to be obtained if someone has thorough knowledge of the scriptures given by our previous Acaryas.

In the Gaudiya Math tradition it is common to give special titles to those devotees who have shown an extreme service capacity in some area of the devotional service.

In conclusion the Temple President shall try to organize his own life in such a way that he can guide others in the study of the general and more advanced subjects.

Topics to be studied:

General introductory books like the Search for Self realization, Unknown India, The Yoga Course and the Sri Isopanishad.

All the books of Srila Prabhupada.

All the books of Srila Sridhar Maharaj

Principal Slokas

Vaisnava Etiquette

Goswami Scriptures

Vaisnava literature

Deity worship

Vaisnava songs

Children's Vaisnava publications.

The Temple President and his own Lectures

The Temple President should try to become an expert lecturer. For that purpose he must take some time to study. Otherwise his classes will become boring after a short while. He should search out ways to inspire all capable or desirous devotees to become lecturers, giving them a chance to give classes. Both variety and opportunity for spiritual advancement will inspire the community. The same counts for Kirtans. Outside lecture opportunities such as college classes, Nama Hata Programs, etc. should be taken as often as possible. Let all devotees feel how important it is to become a qualified preacher.

It is a wonderful idea to publish a little poster once a month announcing the lectures of the month with the subject and the name of the lecturer. Such posters can be posted all over town regularly and will surely improve the attendance of the temple.

It should be mentioned here that the preacher should not point out failures on the part of particular devotees in class, publicly embarrassing them. That creates unhappy situations. I have seen Temple President lose very valuable devotees because of that mistake.

* If you want to correct someone, the best way is to take a little walk with him and after winning his confidence. Reveal your mind on how you are thinking, so that he can improve his participation in the community. There are many ways of making lectures more interesting. The devotees should always be encouraged to take notes during classes. Tests on the philosophy and other subjects are to be held totally on a voluntary basis and it is not advisable to make anyone feel bad for his incapacity to study or memorize etc. Competition is only permitted if it leads to the over all happiness of all participants.

Throughout the years we have seen that competition can get easily out of proportion and shortly later you will hear statements like:

"The Samkirtan devotees are the only real servants."

"Those who are not learned are sudras."

" Only those born as Brahmins can serve the deity." etc, etc.

What is been spoken in the class and in the Istagosthis will reflect on the mood in the community.

In my early days I challenged some Sannyasi, who was denouncing Lady Vaisnavis as a group, in ugly words. When I accused him of distorting the philosophy regarding women, he cursed me right from the lecture seat that I would soon get married. Unfortunately it was he who had to later change his Ashram. This left me with a strong impression that a lecturer has a great responsibility.

If there is any competition, we should compete to become the most humble. There is no harm if some devotees try to "out serve" the other by hard effort, but again, all have to be happy. That cannot be mentioned often enough.

The Temple President as a perfectly disinterested preacher

Fruitive behavior is expected from everyone in this material world.

Therefore it is often suspected that a preacher, like the Temple President, is also motivated by material interests, and that his preaching is actually just another way of "making a living". But we know that the work of a Temple President is not possible for a fruitive worker. He would be detected very quickly. Devotees join a temple motivated by the elevated philosophy of selfless devotional service, and will demand to be guided by the personal example of the Temple President.

The Temple President is benefited by the community in some ways like food and Board, but the main benefit he gets is that he may serve the Vaisnava community. That is a wonderful sacrifice. You cannot be a renounced preacher or Temple President and at the same time make a lot of personal money, career gains or sense gratification. It is a choice. One life for Krishna. If you are successful it will benefit the temple and all members, not like egotistical successes of someone who does not care to share his accomplishments with anyone. Srila Prabhupada encouraged even his Grihasta disciples to accept such a sacrifice and to take responsibility in the preaching work. If we work for Krishna's pleasure, our Vaisnava family will

be very grateful and will respond by more and more sacrifice for the cause. Krishna accepts a devotee in accordance with his surrender. If a devotee has fruitive tendencies, but helps Krishna's projects in one way or another, he will still get so many blessings, but if he takes leadership in the life of other devotees, he shall try his very best to be exemplary, and he must be totally honest with the other devotees.

The Temple President and humility and authority

The most difficult position for a humble Vaisnava is to exercise his authority. By being humble, he wishes to make everyone happy, but sometimes the misconceptions and abuses of others oblige the Temple President to demand respect for the Siddhanta and the Temple rules. Authority is derived from our own surrender to the true authority of Guru, Sastra and Sadhus. In order to minimize the necessity to exercise our authority it is helpful to have all meetings regularly and to generally instruct all new and older devotees in the Vaisnava etiquette and in the goals of the temple. But in a temple, surprises occur almost daily. Therefore it is the duty and right of the Temple President to teach proper conduct to Residents and visitors, up to the point of requesting them to leave the temple grounds. It is the most undesirable situation to remove someone from the temple, but no one shall be allowed to disturb the preaching and the resident devotees. It is preferable for the Temple President to have another devotee take care of such situations, since it does not look very nice when a Sadhu has to become heavy.

Once I was caught up in the middle of a Janmastami festival with two thieves, who were caught loading half of the temple into a truck, while the devotees were celebrating their festival. I almost lost my self control due to being so upset over such abuse. Always maintain your calmness. The Temple President service is executed in the most efficient way in the mode of goodness. Even anger, which is most difficult to control, can be used sometimes to protect the devotees. Whatever happens, we should always try to maintain the unity in a temple, and if the devotees do not agree with the Temple President action, they can raise their constructive criticism in the next temple meeting. Especially in front of others, devotees should not disagree with their authority.

The Temple President serves by exposing the truth, not by imposing

We have to be very careful to represent the highest conclusions and be humble and sincere. But unless we can capture someones heart with our exposition, what will be the use of demanding that they accept us. We need to learn the art of teaching the highest, while actually feeling the lowest. And very often we will be challenged. These are the opportunities to show that we belong to the school of humble Vaisnavas. I have seen that devotees have the tendency to think too much of their group, temple or country, etc. It is just like the extension of their old ego. They say: "My

group is the only real one, or at least the best one. And then they get carried away so much that they can harbor ill feelings for years against others, who are really their brothers. We should be careful to train our devotees to serve their own spiritual master, but to deeply respect all other devotees as well, who serve their respective spiritual masters. And what to speak of other souls, who search after god in other spiritual traditions. The Paramatma is in everyone heart and he can save anyone who approaches him with sincerity. We can preach strongly, but should not look down on others. We hate sin, but feel compassion with the misguided sinners. It is more convincing to see that a devotee has strong faith in his Guru, but at the same time he is kind with everyone, even if they do not accept his exposition.

And the devotees will love the Temple President even more if he is very tolerant with them and knows how to convince them without exercising his power.

The Temple President and his own Sadhu Sanga

We see that the Temple President has great authority in his community. He must be careful, though, that he does not get carried away with the easy approval of his temple devotees while getting upset with god brothers or older devotees who may easily disagree with some of his actions. It is important to always have association with some senior Vaisnavas whom you fully trust, and who you can consult if others object to your courses of action. Even though the spiritual master has the last word in our problematic situations, it is very nice if we have several senior Sadhus in our life, who can get us out of trouble.

Talking with them enlarges our horizon. Such a relationship cannot be imposed. We are to find such Sadhus by being eager for their association. Our spiritual master has trust in special devotees and we should respect them also. It is the desire of the spiritual masters to administrate as little as possible in order to spend more time with their disciples and main services, such as writing, translating etc. That gave rise to the creation of the GBC institution. The governing body commission was institutionalized by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupada and by my spiritual master Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Even though such a system offers many practical conveniences, it also presented several problems. As long as the representatives of the Spiritual master follow him strictly and know how to reach the hearts of the Temple Presidents, it is very good to follow such a system.

Originally Srila Prabhupada had told us to elect a GBC out of a group of six Temple Presidents for a period of three years. One thing is for sure is that no devotee is ever expected to follow an authority if he is convinced that the senior devotee does not behave like a senior vaisnava. We have to understand that only if we are able to receive or to transmit spiritual inspiration will we be successful. That is the heart of all Vaisnava relationships.

The Temple President inspiring through Love and Enthusiasm

We will repeat again that which cannot be remembered often enough: Only love and enthusiasm gets a person into the motion of devotional service. Egotists have many other motivations, but a true devotee is only touched by the essence. The real devotee remembers all the duties he has, and discusses in a loving environment how to accomplish those plans. It is wonderful to hear the stories of other devotees who have done outstanding services in the past. Their examples inspire us. Their love can reach us by hearing of their surrender. If you trust your devotees, they will most likely respond wonderfully. Sharing important services with your members is very good. If you give the devotees the feeling that you want them to learn everything and that they can become good leaders, they will give more energy to their service. There is so much need for more leaders in Krishna Consciousness. If you feel love for your devotees, try to give them enthusiasm to build up more ashram communities in this dark world. Srila Prabhupada was able to enthuse even demons to become devotees and his love will be remembered in the future even more as his devotees are able to further distribute his books and build loving communities.

The Temple President and his faith

Our faith is a gift by Sraddha devi, She is Radharani herself, giving faith to those who aspire to serve her beloved lord. The Temple President has others under his protection. Only with her mercy can such a task be performed. Practically speaking it is an impossible mission. But what else can we do? We have received such a great gift. We cannot keep this for ourselves. To become an agent of the supreme asraya tattva, or a transparent transcendental transmission agent in Krishnas service, is the most wonderful opportunity a soul could ever have aspired for. But how can such a miracle take place in the life of such a wretch as myself. This is our positive thought. ONLY by their grace, can anything manifest. We should always see the bad disqualification within ourselves. Krishna is the only one who has "all rights reserved" in the Bhakti department. We cannot conceive of even serving Him. Now, what to speak of representing Him. If we do not follow our Gurus order, how can we claim that we are trying to serve him? "Die to live" can be applied to this case. Preaching is life and indifference is like death. But I will be condemned if I preach anything wrong, or harm anyone due to my disqualifications. Let me accept this risk anyway, in order to serve my spiritual master. Let us humbly pray to become pure in our purpose. If my own faith is weak, how can I help others? Actually it is Krishna who will help others through you. As long as you try your best and believe that your spiritual master has given you the real goal for your soul's journey out of illusion, we shall always go straight ahead. Be honest, never pretend to be someone you are not. Even though we are so new in this process, still

someone has to take the responsibility. We are trying to follow the highest ideals we have found in this life.

Another important aspect is to always know; Who are our Sadhus. They have to be actually advanced by our understanding and we should be ready to accept their help and guidance. We can also refer persons to them we cannot personally help in some situation. We have to have a spiritual master who is actually living in order to be a Temple President. Otherwise after the departure of your Guru, you must go on by yourself and be the spiritual master. But the relationship with the person who initiates devotees in your temple must be of deep love and trust, otherwise the new initiates will be cheated.

A Temple President has to be humble and firm in his conviction. Krishna will protect him as long as he does not start to commit grave offenses. That is Krishna's promise. In case there are any problems, the Temple President shall meet with his Guru or another qualified Sadhu to discuss the best way to solve such problems.

Examples:

The following reports and exhibitions are administrative guide lines for coordinating the activities of the ashram and for keeping the devotees of the community informed. They form something like a Wall newspaper. Some are to be seen by all the visitors of the temple and some are to be seen by the active members.

You will see how everything improves in your temple when all members are aware of the coordination within the temple. This is accomplished by carefully preparing nice cardboard exhibits, posting them in places where the devotees or guest have easy access to and by regularly updating them.

Donation report for permanent exhibition

Every major donation above a certain established sum shall be reported on this sheet. The donor, date and purpose of the donation shall also be explained. This will encourage further donors and show how the devotees work.

Donation requests for permanent exhibition

This is a special sheet to inform the guests about the urgent needs of the community. It also informs about planned projects such as Altar construction, book publication, etc. Friends will know what the devotees would like to accomplish and will start thinking in terms of devotional service.

The importance of exhibiting the resolutions of the Vaisnava board to the community

Every important decision of the Vaisnava Board shall be communicated to the congregation. Due to lack of communication, devotees and friends often never find out what was discussed in the meetings. Therefore, decisions are often not followed. Unless some resolution is very personal and does not affect the whole community it should be explained on this sheet with as many details as necessary.

Ashram rules for permanent exhibition

Those rules which are of permanent nature in the temples, but are often forgotten, and which are usually unknown to the new members shall be posted on the bulletin board for everyone to be informed. Even for festivals it is very helpful to explain basic guidelines to the visitors in the same way. Subjects like the registration process; kitchen, bathroom, temple grounds and Sadhana behavior would be good to be included here.

Projects of the community and their development for exhibition

This is an essential sheet for controlling the development of projects similar to any productive company which keeps careful account of the progress of their efforts. Every project has different steps and usually more than one person is involved in different aspects of the project. This sheet shall explain the following aspects:

The date started. The person in charge. The estimated cost. The production steps. The materials to be used. Any additional helpers. The final cost and the date service is to be offered to Krishna.

This sheet facilitates all devotees to check on its development, to remind someone if he has been neglectful with his duties; or when it is necessary to find someone else to realize that project. Also it shows the short term, long-term projects of the Ashram and which are the priorities in accordance of the Vaisnava Board.

Devotee list and service list for permanent consultation in the temple office

This is one of the most important tools of temple management. This sheet has the names of all the internal and external active devotees attached to their services. With a glance the Temple President can realize if someone is absent and what service will be neglected. He can easily find a substitute for a service, because all the available devotees are listed in front of him. There is also a list on the same sheet of all the services the ashram aspires to present. Thus by looking on this sheet the Temple President can realize that he needs to train devotees for special services, which are projected but not yet realized, due to lack of devotees or to lack of good organization. It is very practical to work with magnetic tape on a metal sheet as one can freely move the name plates and service plates around for easy visualization.

Devotee list with all addresses and telephone numbers in the community for identification

This list should include all devotees and friends in the community and shall be available to all members. This will help when inviting devotees to festivals, children programs, meetings, etc. It must be updated all the time.

Daily finance report sheet for a small community

This report sheet keeps the profits and the cost strictly separate and helps the leaders to understand the financial situation of the ashram in a few moments. It helps to control the inventories and trains all departments to be up to date and to report their movements to the treasury. It is ideal for a small temple with several departments. If the size of a program makes this sheet impractical, you need to consult with your accountant on how to keep control and how to report to the community.

Service program of a Yatra to be posted for the Community

This information is the basic introduction of our lectures and other preaching programs, which are manifested in posters, banners, leaflets or Hari nam programs with billboards. The best way is to publish a tri-monthly project invitation with all the diversified presentations, titles, information about the teachers and any other wonderful thing you can offer. Your preaching will thus be more attractive.

Here are some ideas that could be offered to the public in your city. Try to get as many devotees involved as possible in making the programs more interesting.

1. Deity worship

- A. aratik service
- B. Prasadam distribution
- C. Special functions and festivals on holydays.
- D. Dress making classes
- E. Flower service classes

2. Musical classes

- A. Bhajan classes
- B. Mridunga, Harmonium classes
- C. Form music groups with Vaisnava message

3. Vedic cooking science

- A. Classes in how to cook for Krishna.
- B. Nutrition and preventive healing (Ayur Veda) classes.

C. General Vegetarian cooking classes for groups, home service, TV programs, etc.

D. Catering of prasadam to different functions

4. Lectures

A. Lectures on Vedic scriptures

B. The introduction to the Yoga course.

C. Yoga as therapy against addiction.

D. Lectures and functions for the elderly in old people homes for the aging.

E. Lectures in jails to give hope and enthusiasm to inmates.

F. Lectures on Vedic culture for schools and universities.

G. Lectures on different Yoga systems with practical Hatha Yoga exercises.

H. Lectures for Women in spiritual life.

I. Spiritual entertainment and education for children.

J. Lectures and preparation of Vaisnava drama

K. Lecture and preparation of Vaisnava puppet shows.

L. Lecture and preparation of Vaisnava audio, video services.

M. Lecture on the Harmony school of conscious art and exhibitions of the items.

N. Lectures on preaching and other different special topics.

O. Lectures of scholarly qualifications such as Bhakti Shastri Exams.

P. Lectures about children's education in Krishna consciousness.

Q. Lectures and meetings about Vaisnava contributions to the world; such as, The Vegetarian Society, Food for all Projects, Vaisnava Charities, etc.

R. Lectures on how to form a Spiritual marriage.

S. Vaisnavas debate on talk shows to preach.

5. Other attractive programs

A. Join our Vaisnava pilgrimage for a weekend retreat.

B. Join our Vaisnava pilgrimage to India.

C. Look at Vaisnava Drama, Puppet Shows, etc.

D. Look at Vaisnava Video and Slight shows.

E. Look at Vaisnava Art or listen to Vaisnava music in concert.

F. Join special Vaisnava service groups such as the charity, philosophy and social projects organized by the Vaisnavas.

G. Travel with a Sannyasy and become a Brahmachari

H. Vaisnava health care, Astrological counseling and Brahminical services.

I. Vaisnava retirement plans and forming spiritual self-sufficient communities.

J. Whatever else you can come up with to attract people to come closer to the life of devotional service, and which can be well represented by a qualified Vaisnava.

Do not forget that people are attracted to people first and to different topics on a secondary level; Therefore, you have to always give an emphatic introduction of the person who will speak on any subject or project. Without that, it is very impersonal.

Try to use only trustworthy Vaisnavas in representation of the programs announced as part of your mission.

The more people find out about your service efforts, the more people will attend your functions.

The different functions and services of a temple

The following list of functions may assist your realization as to how many departments a temple could have and how many the temple must have to function properly. Many times 90% of these services are either executed by the Temple President himself or simply neglected.

This list should help the Vaisnava Board to appoint devotees to these responsibilities and thus include more devotees in responsible positions, thus expanding the temple service. A small temple has often a sweeter family atmosphere, but still we should always search for more Vaisnavas who desire to participate.

All services are important because we all serve the same cause.

The Temple President

The Vice President

The Temple Secretary

He keeps the different books of the different meetings and communicates to the news sheet department.

The Receptionist

The Head Pujari

The Pujari assistant crew

The Flower department

The Deity dress department

The Samkirtan leader

The Traveling samkirtan leader

The Leader of the Room which receives new aspirants and visitors.

He controls that no unwanted elements come to enter the Ashram, but at the same time makes sure that no searching aspirant is turned down at the door due to insufficient documentation, etc.

The director of the new devotees

He trains those who have been accepted as true students and he guides them until initiation.

The Temple Commander

The most difficult service is to distribute all the services to the other members. Sometimes it is a challenge to get some members to cooperate nicely. He is the right hand of the Temple President.

The Coordinator of the Pre initiation

He prepares all the lists and ingredients for the Pre initiations. Regularly organized pre initiations are conducted by the senior most devotee present.

The Coordinator of Vedic sacrifices (Hotri)

He knows how to set up Agni Hotra Yajnas and hold marriages, conduct first grain ceremonies, hair cutting ceremonies, funeral rites etc.

The Life membership coordinator

He keeps record of all those who give active support to the mission and makes sure that they are invited to and especially received when they visit the temple.

The Brahmin training director

He gives special lectures for those who want to learn how to preach and worship the deity.

The Indian community coordinator

The Temple news sheet secretary

He updates the different news sheets in the temple office or in the reception area in nicely decorated cardboard or other media.

The Temple Cleaning crew

The Temple Kitchen director

The Temple Kitchen crew

bakery in charge of that Temple

The Temple treasurer

He handles the incoming money, reports to the accountant and receives reports from the Samkirtan paraphernalia office. He makes the bank deposits and gives out petty cash, if it is authorized by the Temple President. Every financial movement is backed by him with some kind of written format.

The Temple purchase expert

He receives the list of all necessities and also coordinates the best time, place and quantities to be purchased. He helps save time and money.

The Temple accountant

He keeps the daily balance sheet and gets all the receipts into his hands. He does not handle the funds at any moment, but the treasurer is supervised by his numbers.

The one in charge of the Temple Visitor book

The one in charge of Temple shoe reception

He makes sure that no shoes are lost and that the temple function is not spoiled by having heaps of shoes scattered around the entrance. He shall use numbers to control the shoes.

The Temple prasadam distribution coordinator

The Prasadam distribution coordinator for special guests and leaders.

The Temple Pot cleaning crew

The Temple Community coordinator

This person coordinates the participation of all internal and external members for the different temple functions. If any devotee tends to drift away he tries specifically to save him, to give him a new position and renewed enthusiasm. He may guide meetings and is the friend of all. He gives great support to the Temple President.

The Temple Hari Nam leader

The Hari Nam emergency coordinator

This devotee is dressed in civil cloth and protects the Hari Nam from any disturbance such as Police interference, drunks, uncontrolled children, traffic obstruction, book table interference, etc.

The Hari Nam Book table coordinator

The cycle Vaisnava preaching store coordinator

The Temple Restaurant manager

The Temple Gift store manager

The Temple garbage coordinator (strict separation of organic and inorganic garbage)

The Temple Sunday feast coordinator

He makes sure that the visitors are not bored from the moment they enter the temple until they leave. He reminds devotees of their different duties and keeps the children in the Sunday Children's program, so that the adults can concentrate on their part of the festival.

The Temple Drama coordinator

He collects scripts of all good Vaisnava dramas and tries to present different presentations weekly. The best plays can be chosen for outside street or stage performances.

The Temple library coordinator

He makes sure that all the books published by the mission are made available to the devotees and guests in a library system. He also includes audio tapes and videos. He also keeps an inventory of his library and circulates it in the community. He makes sure that all publications are announced or exhibited in the reception area.

The Temple Music and Bhajan coordinator

He tries to organize different music groups which can present Vaisnava songs in festivals.

The Temple music class teacher

He makes sure that devotees know how to play Kartals and Mridrunga. That they sing in tune or very softly. That the instruments are played in coordination to produce a sweet sound.

The invitation coordinator

He makes sure that all temple programs are properly advertised. That members are informed about functions. That posters, leaflets, banners etc. are prepared and posted on time and on a regular basis.

The Mataji Ashram director

This service is the central function for enthusing all the external and internal Matajis to be closely connected to the spiritual masters mission and to the preaching. He also organizes the Children's Vaisnava education program and the Mataji community meetings.

The Temple Printing and advertisement director.

Printing and design is a complex and costly affair. One person should be the expert and advise and help other departments in this connection.

The Children Vaisnava Education director

He makes sure that all children in the community have at least the opportunity (regardless of whether or not their parents cooperate), to receive spiritual education on at least a weekly bases. He also coordinates that Vaisnava festivals have simultaneous children's programs to make our children happier and Krishna Conscious.

The Temple Computer department director

This devotee tries to offer computer services to other departments as required.

Preferably he should have laser print facility and knowledge of design software to present advertisements, texts, accounting facilities, etc, professionally.

The Temple Car department director

He must protect the lives of Krishna's devotees and the vehicles of the temple by teaching devotee drivers the rules of safety and proactive care of the vehicles they drive.

The puppet show coordinator

He makes children and adults happy by preaching regularly through the wonderful puppet media. He collects scripts and newer puppets to have excellent variety.

The Temple Video production director

The Temple Audio recording and copying director

He makes sure that all the important tapes of music and lectures are available to all devotees and departments heads. He pushes for the utilization of these items since they get easily forgotten.

The Temple Trustee in charge

Keeps all valuable items under control and monitors the use of all materials. Organizes purchases at best wholesale or market rates.

The Temple Samkirtan books and preaching materials coordinator

This devotee has to assure that all departments have access to all the materials the mission has printed. All departments receive materials from this office and report back daily to the distribution office.

The Temple India Journey coordinator

He collects all the names of those who want to visit our Ashrams in India. He coordinates classes about the norms of the pilgrimage. He finds the best Ticket connections and plans the journey. He coordinates the financial part of the journey.

The Temple Nama Hatta Program director.

He tries to use every available possibility to increase preaching in every town and village. He keeps record of all Nama Hatta centers and recruits devotees to visit the different locations regularly. He tries to turn every Nama Hatta center into a preaching center with exhibition and distribution of all the mission's literature and tapes.

The Temple outside lecture coordinator.

He coordinates all possibilities to increase outside lectures on different Vaisnava topics and he recruits devotees to preach who are being trained to become lecturers. He uses videos, slide shows and prasadam, as well as full book tables if practical and available. In emergency one devotee is enough to give a class in a school.

The Temple introducer and protector of all lectures and programs.

This service protects all lectures from disturbance. Children should go to the children's room or at least sit still with their parents, close to the door of the lecture hall. Question and survey papers are given to the visitors as they enter the hall. If available, the listeners are divided in two groups. That is, newcomers and regular students in different halls. He introduces the speaker and the book to be presented and keeps silence during the talk. He looks that the book table is well decorated and attended.

The Temple Yoga Course coordinator

The Correspondence Yoga Course published by us is a kind of a home study guide, a pioneering project to teach Bhakti Yoga. All persons who take this course are already seriously affiliated with our philosophy and life style. This service requires organizing the distribution of course material and taking care of the new students either by mail or by organizing meetings with them, and so requires a very mature and responsible person. The coordinator also recruits new Yoga course distributors from all devotee sections and holds regular meetings to enthuse further study and distribution amongst all students.

The Temple excursion coordinator

He coordinates outside festivals and spiritual retreats on a local and national basis.

The Temple donation collection crew

They try to raise funds for the mission by preaching and distributing mission related publications, etc. They meet regularly to discuss how to increase their service.

The Temple files and the coordinator of all surveys such as the visitor forms

He receives all the surveys and informs the respective departments of their potential new interested persons. He files all of them and keeps on revising them, to see whether the requests are properly met. He keeps the devotee register up to date as well as all the graduates of the Yoga course, Pre initiates, Nama Hatta members, etc.

The Temple newsletter department director.

This devotee gathers from the community and from different departments of the Temple all important information. Ideally this information is published in an internal newsletter or general journal for all the members. It is an expanding service as new possibilities continually manifest. In addition, he regularly publishes the messages of the spiritual master to the community.

The Temple art coordinator for decoration

This devotee coordinates all the decoration and presents the artistic plans to the Vaisnava Board. He encourages Vaisnava artists and collects all connected materials in the art library.

The Temple architecture coordinator

All constructions are very serious and have to be coordinated. Special designs have to be maintained in order to develop a beautiful community. All artists shall propose their plans through this person to present to the Vaisnava Board.

The Temple public relations representative

All public defenses and connections with the Media should be coordinated. He should maintain friendships with all important officials and media connections.

The Temple legal adviser

He must be a trustworthy connection who can quickly attend to any legal problems which may arise in the preaching affairs.

Please consider for the future

The following article was written by me, after experiencing many difficulties in the absence of my Diksa Guru Srila Prabhupada, in order to help future devotees to better face the hardest time in his life, after the departure of his Gurudeva.

3-7-91

Subject: Open call to all who are concerned with the spiritual continuation in the Brahma Madhva Gaudiya Sampradaya

SRI SRI GURU GOURANGA JAYATE

DEAR VAISNAVAS AND DEAR FRIENDS

ALL OF YOU WHO ARE SEARCHING FOR THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH AND THE CAUSELESS MERCY

PLEASE ACCEPT MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCES

Being a very fallen soul myself, nevertheless I felt that I owe all of you the following observations I made by the mercy of Srila Prabhupada, Srila Sridhar Maharaj and Srila B.P. Puri Maharaj.

In any spiritual institution without the presence of a pure leader, havoc will be created. Even in Vaisnava institutions that has unfortunately proven to be true. After the departure of my spiritual masters, I witnessed many difficulties and this book has the purpose to guide us into purity in leadership.

There is no way to cover all the different angles of confusion's which arise without the personal guidance of a truly advanced devotee. Here are just some recommendations and alerts to help you to remain on the right track and to protect the spiritual environment of your life.

For those in the future who will face similar situations after the departure of their guru, I wanted to alert them to be aware of the following symptoms, which are signs of imminent danger and indicate the need to do something about it, in order to save one's spiritual life.

1. Materialistic lifestyles appear even though spiritual leaders are supposed to live renounced and simple. Now luxurious comforts will be justified by public relations and that they are "too holy to be affected by those things".
2. The holy teachings are monopolized, (modern; copyrighted) distorted, hidden, or simply ignored. History shows us that uncomfortable books find their way into the fire, even when truly worship able, and critics are declared heretics, condemned, exiled, and sometimes killed.
3. The representation of God on earth and the holy truth is limited to voting committees or governing bodies, birthrights, or other social considerations.
4. Love is exchanged with fear and the "nobody trusts nobody" atmosphere starts to predominate.

5. Discussions and creative philosophical exchanges with outsiders are totally discouraged. Vaisnava philosophy can defeat any opposing concept. We still recall Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati declaring the totalitarian war against all misconceptions.

6. Intoxication, greed for money, lies, conspiracy, and mundane sexuality are general side symptoms of such false "saints". No religious community is immune against such deadly diseases. It only takes one leader to be a hypocrite. That is the reason why the Vedas have recommended to us to take shelter of a pure spiritual master and not of any institution.

Cooperative thinking, typical for our western multi-national corporations, will not help us much in keeping the line of our Srila Prabhupada alive. But all these before mentioned symptoms should not discourage us in our attempt to surrender and to actively spread Krishna Consciousness. Behind every suffering there is a great lesson to be learned. Krishna personally allowed all this to happen for the sake of all of us. This lesson is: wake up before we are all in our eighties as well as for all the future western Vaisnavas. The world is not interested in any organized religion except when it comes to politicians gathering votes. Churches are dead as far as true religion is concerned. But one truly realized soul and his truly beneficial contribution to society can win over many hearts, and like Srila Prabhupada proved, make a distinct impression on the consciousness of mankind without the need to be backed by any rubber-stamp committee. So it will depend on all of us how loud the true glory of Srila Prabhupada will be heard in our lifetime. Or should we all become big businessmen now, since we couldn't maintain his mission nicely until now?

I see many encouraging signs. New Vaisnava literature makes its appearance. More new temples and many individual devotees are shaking off the dogmatism and searching for the nectar we once so easily had access to when Srila Prabhupada personally supervised us and protected us from our own craziness.

I see that by the great loving sacrifice of so many of my friends and brothers new projects come to life and I pray that I may serve them sincerely.

I studied the will of Srila Jiva Goswami and the wills of my spiritual masters and I am thinking of those who will stand tomorrow by themselves in separation of their spiritual masters, but without a personal memory of the wonderful days when we had Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhar Maharaj personally with us giving us guidance.

Of course it is always true that the chaitya-guru in our heart will protect the sincere searcher and guide us to the proper protection. But whenever we have nobody to ask and we have to make our own decision about the continuation of our guru's mission I beg to present the following recommendations to be taken into consideration. They appear to me to be of vital importance.

Regarding the continuation of the spiritual succession

* Without sacrifice there is no mission. Without love and trust there will be no sacrifice and surrender. After my Guru departed from the physical plane

there was only really one question of importance for me. How can I go on serving him? How can I increase my desire to serve him and love Krishna? How can I enthuse others now, to take up spiritual life seriously? Previously, I happily took the new friends to my Guru and told them: "With all confidence you can surrender to him. I am trying to do the same. He can take us back to the Supreme Lord." But how will I preach now? Without having a good answer to that question we are in trouble. Our spiritual dignity is at stake. I can only represent what is fully approved within my heart, otherwise I will fall down to mundane considerations like: Who will give me the nicest job with the most fringe benefits? Who's disciple would I like to marry? Who will bother me the least?...

* How lovingly Srila Prabhupada handled every individual until the day he left the physical plane. How much knowledge and maturity will we need to be able to serve him properly?

* The search for purity, simplicity, modesty, humility and the true selfless service attitude must be an undisputed base for a divine revelation to come down to us.

* Never forget that the guru is also not his body. His body is engaged in Krishna's service and therefore not ordinary, but he is not limited by his body. Actually Sri Krishna is the original spiritual master. All his representatives (gurus) will come to those who sincerely want to serve him. To those honest souls some inspiration of the guru-tattva will come to show the proper way.

* Brahmins and Sannyasis have a great responsibility. Practically they are the spiritual masters in this world, and we are all requested to qualify us to be able to assume those services.

To accept disciples, who have felt in their heart that Krishna has sent them to you for protection, is a holy duty and a right in the guru parampara, after your spiritual master disappears. But you alone have the responsibility for your actions. It is on your own risk.

If you are a bad representative you will have to be removed in due course of time and your service to your guru will be ruined. If we are not sure if we are capable to represent Lord Caitanya and our guru truly, and that for the rest of our life, then it is better to take the new devotee to some other Vaisnava of whose sincerity we must be completely convinced. The new devotee will have to examine the Vaisnava you recommend, and/or any other he feels inclined towards.

* Whoever brings about that sentiment in our heart, that we want to become pure devotees of Sri Krishna, or whoever later increases that sentiment in us is really our spiritual master, who deserves our eternal love and respect. By carefully studying Srila Sridhar Maharaja's book Sri Guru and His Grace, we can get an appreciation of the mystery of guru-tattva.

* Let new gurus start new temples. Nobody should intrude anywhere and claim that he is the successor acarya of his guru unless particularly indicated by his guru and even then limited to the actual place where he conducts his preaching and not with any geographical implication. Krishna will lead the true searcher to his guru.

If a new devotee joins a temple founded by an already departed acarya and managed by devotees who don't personally accept disciples, he will gradually know the other initiated devotees and their disciples, since they are also welcomed to the main temples and in this way he can find his personal diksa-guru.

There is none obliged to accept you as a guru or to help you in your mission unless they feel that urge in their heart and that they should continue to serve their guru by helping you. Of course Vaisnava etiquette teaches us to be very cautious not to disturb the faith of the new devotees, another big reason why gurus have to have their special place(s) where their relationship with their disciples is not challenged. That is another reason why the main temples of the founder acarya must simply be open to all without anybody trying to become the new acarya there.

* A movement without such understandings will end up like a big swimming pool without water and people jumping inside in order to learn how to swim (surrender).

* Preacher or spiritual master means someone who is a real surrendered servant. He serves his disciples. He renounces his privacy and he works hard himself to spread his guru's message.

* Don't think that you know all of your gurus unless you have already reached Krishna's lotus feet or pure love for Krishna is flowing in your heart.

* Do not visit the temples of those devotees whose sincerity you doubt, or if you cannot share and support the feelings of the devotees there. Don't be envious or overly critical with those who may be more successful in serving your guru.

* Criticizing those who have no chance to help is like spitting against the wind. To dwell on the rumors about others or even over the true mistakes of others who we are unable to help, will bring their faults into our own mental world and they will want to manifest again in our gross world as a reaction. Only be eager to correct those who beg you for your help. We should only visit temples when we want to help them, and only join them to make them better and better and better.

Regarding Institutions and Spiritual Life

* If you are a leader of any group, please always respect the opinion of others who join to help your preaching mission. Don't become a victim of the deadly disease called megalomania. Let others participate in your projects and creatively contribute to the development. Make weekly board meetings. Appreciate the new devotees' need for space to develop. Exchange ideas, let everyone think freely and allow them to express their constructive participation, just like Srila Prabhupada did with all of his disciples. This attitude will protect your projects from lethargy and indifference. Whoever allows me to serve him is actually giving his mercy to me and a representative of my spiritual master.

* Don't ever condemn anybody who doesn't want to serve under your leadership. Rather search out how you can serve him.

* Every temple has some need for organization; president, treasurer, weekly meetings of responsible devotees. Every devotee should understand the basic concept of how to do all things in Krishna Consciousness. That is the principle for personal growth and the success of the entire community. Without the mystic, loving inspiration every organization will ultimately fail. Train leaders if you want to be a good servant of your guru.

* Vaisnavas in leading positions should be very cautious about their huge responsibility before the devotees and the general public. Therefore they should live in a very open way, without any secrets regarding their finances and their moral life. Their temple should have clear bookkeeping. Every devotee should give to Krishna what he likes to give from his heart. Krishna is not interested in any one's money or property. He only wants our heart. At the same time, all which has been donated to Krishna by the devotees and friends must be carefully protected. All properties bought by the devotees for Krishna must be registered in such a way that no individual can ever sell it or use it for his private interest. The founder acarya may choose before his departure to avoid fighting, or if he did not give particular instruction in this regard, then those temples should be maintained, as a place of unity for the new growing diversity in the Vaisnava family. The leadership in that case should be disciples who themselves are not accepting disciples. Such a place will only remain a sacred place of pilgrimage if the loving respect to all true members of the family is alive.

* Nobody should venture to become a temple or ashram leader if he doesn't want to do that service selflessly for the pleasure of Krishna.

* Give love if you want to get love. Do your service with all your heart. Stick to it. Never let anyone down. Srila Prabhupada expected his preachers to make lifelong commitments.

* Never fight with other devotees over mundane benefits or power.

* Pure preachers are always needed. Mundane governors are always surrounded by false friends. Nobody loves them.

* Don't get into any conflicts with mundane authorities. They can destroy our good name as Vaisnavas, servants of the Supreme Lord, and the whole world with their propaganda machine. Therefore devotees should deal legally with their contacts in this world. We want to teach the world to have faith in the devotees so we can serve them their highest benefit of their human birth.

* Don't impose your views but expose your wisdom. Don't demand respect, but command respect by your example.

* Organizations and their legislative operations are justified and necessary in their existence only as far as they truly promote and facilitate the essential principles of the Vaisnava ideal. The sacred principle is unity in diversity. Krishna is the real enjoyer of His real devotees' efforts. He is happily worshipped in His Deity form in the ashrams and temples. It is not so important who is in charge as long as he is appreciated by the other devotees. From the oldest to the youngest member, all of them should be **HAPPILY ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE MISSION**. That is the duty of leadership. If the reality in your place is different, then everybody should try

to change that situation following the heart of the Sadhu Sanga principles. If all good efforts have failed, one should search for a different ashram to serve in the association of loving devotees, or start a new ashram in the same place to truly worship Krishna and his pure devotees. Since practically every neighborhood should have devotees preaching there it may even turn out that the problem ends as a blessing in disguise.

* Every devotee should work exclusively with and under those Vaisnavas who he feels completely sure are pure in their transcendental purpose. Anyone may commit a mistake, but hidden motivations will destroy the love, trust and surrender in the community.

Some General Recommendations

* Anger and hate are generally just symptoms of our frustrated lust, therefore always try to deal kindly with all others. Don't scream unnecessarily at anybody.

* Always be ready to question your approach to everything. Utilize the help of guru, Sastra and Sadhu to fight your dogmatic tendencies. Conformism, sleepiness, laziness, laxness with one's self, surrounding oneself with flattering "yes men" will cover our objective view of reality.

* Preaching is always the essence and it must be essential to fit the claim of presenting the absolute truth.

* Don't get attached to money or real estate. It is better to begin a new mission, if that is necessary, in order to follow our ideals. Krishna can give us the whole world in one moment if He would think that to be fit. On the other hand He can take away everything that we have if He sees that material things start obscuring our advancement.

* It is not the goal of the process of Krishna Consciousness to follow many external rules. The true goal is to develop love for God. In this connection everything helpful should be accepted and every disturbance should be removed.

* Always take shelter of Krishna's Holy Name, both by chanting the rounds as well as by the congregational chanting in the temples and on the streets.

* Never expect anybody to do anything which they don't want to do or which they are unable to do. That is a golden rule for wonderful Vaisnava relationships. Of course a member of a community should be willing to voluntarily and happily share the burden of love with the others in order to qualify for living in a Vaisnava community.

* Never stop reading the transcendental literature of the Vaisnava Acaryas, preferably in the association of other devotees. Dive deep into the confidential meanings by exchanging with others and by clarifying any doubt which you may have.

* Always try to do things the best way possible. Accept no mediocrity, please. To the Supreme only the best should be offered. If you don't try your best it means that you yourself don't really believe in what you are doing. Human life is too short for nonsense. Brahmachari, Grihastha, or Sannyasi, cook, preacher, or pujari, always try to be excellent, to give your best full of love.

* Never fear to accept responsibility. Real compassion means that you have to be ready to sacrifice your energy in the service of Krishna to make others happy and hopeful.

* We should serve everyone, but with some discrimination.

We serve the advanced --- with full surrender

We serve our equals --- with friendship and love

We serve the newcomer --- with good example and dedication

If you have wisdom and knowledge --- enlighten the others

* Never forget that this movement started by the important ashrams organized by Srila Prabhupada, and that the ashrams are the center for shelter and true welfare work.

* Sadhana Bhakti will give us the strength to go on with our spiritual vows.

* Our most important guru is the one who has helped us the most to become Krishna conscious. Only a disciple knows who all his gurus are. Others may or may not know. Only you know how important Srila Prabhupada or Srila Sridhar Maharaj is for you. But fortunately there is no petty competition amongst pure devotees to be the only one loved by their disciples.

* If you cannot find anybody around you who carries on the living line of loving devotional service, then it will be up to you to take responsibility. Your guru will always be there when the only desire burning in your heart is to serve him. And that flame should never be extinguished. Always search how to increase it and then your exchange with other devotees will truly be Sadhu sanga.

* Never forget: Krishna and his pure devotees are never bankrupt.

I want to thank all of my beloved brothers and friends, all who have tolerated me and my shortcomings, all who allowed me to learn from their mistakes, all who trusted me and supported me in the most difficult moments of my spiritual search, all who have allowed me to speak about Krishna and his devotees, all who remind me of my spiritual masters and engage me in their service, all who have sacrificed so much and given me their love and friendship. I am eternally indebted to all of you.

Please try to maintain this wonderful Krishna consciousness always alive within your hearts and actions. Always try to deliver it to others in the same way as we have received it from above by the causeless mercy of our eternal guardians and for that purpose we have to become pure devotees.

Forever Your servant, friend, and aspirant to become a member of the extraordinary servants of the Rupanuga Sampradaya

B.A. Paramadvaiti

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