

Analysis of
“A program for respiritualization of the entire human society.”
Reflection upon Srila Prabhupada's mission

During his first meeting with his prospective spiritual master Srila Prabhupada received a mission for his life to spread Krishna's consciousness in English language in the Western countries. Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati repeated this order in his last letter to Srila Prabhupada which he had written just a few days before his disappearance from this world. Srila Prabhupada took it in his heart and soul, and hoped to carry out this mission with the help of the powerful preaching organization created by Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati. Alas, his hope was not destined to be fulfilled. Not long after Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati's disappearance his spiritual master's mission disintegrated, split and lost power. So in early 1944th, eight years after Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati's disappearance, Srila Prabhupada began publishing “Back to Godhead” magazine, and in 1950th he left home to dedicate his whole life to his preaching mission. Again and again he tried to establish a preaching movement which would deliver Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's teaching of love to this world. In 1958th he wrote:

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's message of universal love and fellow feeling requires to be preached in an organized manner and we Bengalis the countrymen of Lord Caitanya have a responsibility for this transcendental task.

Some years ago Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaja my spiritual master attempted to preach this message throughout the world but unfortunately after His departure the movement was not carried by the entrusted successors. I am feeling for it and I have come to Bombay for organizing this movement.

(Letter to Mr. Bannerjee, 28th July 1958)

For many years Srila Prabhupada was nurturing this mission of the Society which he had in mind. This mission was supposed to reflect precisely the will of the great acharyas of the past from Sri Caitayna Mahaprabhu to Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, and at the same time address the most burning problems of nowadays.

The first available mission statement was found in the “Prospectus of the League of Devotee” which Srila Prabhupada wrote on the 16th of May, 1953. Later, just a few days before ISKCON was officially registered in New York, he returned back to this document. Working on it he retained the structure but reformulated a few points. This document, named “Constitution of Association”, is preserved in his diary in the memo dated the 7th July 1966. Srila Prabhupada glued to his diary his typewritten “Constitution of Association” of the prospective society.

Just a few days prior to that, on the 1st of July, 1966, Srila Prabhupada moved into a small store in the 26th Building on the 2nd Avenue, and Mr. Goldsmith, his attorney, prepared the documents to register the International Society of Krishna Consciousness.

His diary entries became considerably shorter, probably for a reason that the society registration consumed all his time.

In order to picture clearly the days of the preparation of the document let's have a look at some pages of Srila Prabhupada's diary of those days.

“Friday 1 July

Chaturdasi: Sunrise 4/35 Sunset 7/32 Moonsets 4.07

Today I entered the new house at 26 Second Avenue near portion Room #B1. For my purpose it all good. I do not why Krishna is trying to establish me in New York. I am his servant's servant and therefore let His desire be fulfilled through my agency.

The Landlord Mr. Gardiner is pukka landlord. He knows how to increase the rent. But I am not sorry. For two months namely July and August I will have to pay at 62 and odds whereas from September 1st I will have to pay \$71 and odds. Let me see how Krishna arranges the things.

In the evening there was meeting in the New Store. There was about eight men Collection \$5.50. Book Collection 4.00

Wednesday 6 July

In the meeting at 26 Second Street Store, It is settled that the Society shall be incorporated and the name of the Society shall be: International Society for Krishna consciousness

Eleven Trustees were agreed.

Thursday 7 July

Panchami, Sunrise: 4/38. Sunset. 7/31 Moonrise 10/49

Today I saw Mr. Goldsmith in his office. He has paid \$10.00. The papers of the meeting were handed over to him. It is expected that the Society shall be registered by the next week. He says everything is alright.”

Further in the diary there is a typewritten prepared text of the “Constitution of Association” of the “Society” which he was about to register.

1. The name of the society is The International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
2. The headquarters of the Society are located at Radhakrishna Temple, 26 Second Avenue, New York City, 10003, USA.
3. The objectives for which the Society is being established are: (then 14 points are listed numbered with letters A to N)

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, Acharya

Raymond Marais

Michael A. Grant

Robert Lefkowitz

James S. Greene

Here we can see the “Constitution of Association” written by Srila Prabhupada at the time of the preparation of the official registration of ISKCON. Worth noting, that the language of this constitution is far from formal language of legal documents. It looks more like a mission statement, which reflects Srila Prabhupada’s pain concerning the present condition of the society, as well as his vision how to solve global problems which modern civilization has faced.

Officially ICKON was registered in a few days on the 11th of July. It could be due to technical reasons that the final version of ISKCON constitution consists only of 7 purposes, which Srila Prabhupada selected from the original document. It could be edited by the lawyer, who

registered the society. Thus appeared the “7 purposes of ISKCON”, well known to every follower of Srila Prabhupada.

1) *To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all people in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.*

2) *To propagate a consciousness of Krishna (God), as it is revealed in the great scriptures of India, Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam.*

3) *To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Krishna, the prime entity, thus developing the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Krishna).*

4) *To teach and encourage the sankirtana movement, congregational chanting of the holy name of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.*

5) *To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the personality of Krishna.*

6) *To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.*

7) *With a view towards achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books and other writings.*

For all ISKCON members these seven purposes appear to become the principal statement of Srila Prabhupada’s mission. Nonetheless, the first extended version of the “Constitution of Association” is more valuable, because it allows us to understand his idea in full depth.

Even a quick comparison of “The seven purposes” and the original version of “Constitution of Association” show that the authentic text explains Srila Prabhupada’s intention in greater and thorough details. That is why it is considered extremely important to scrutinize this document.

It is even more important at the present stage of ISKCON development, because the society founded by Srila Prabhupada has extended. A lot of nowadays missionary programs didn’t exist during His lifetime. Analysis of this document allows us to understand which current programs are consistent with the founder-acarya’s original idea and which ones fall out of the framework and therefore undesirable. In order to regulate the developmental course of our society there must be a document for the leaders to follow, based on Srila Prabhupada’s words and his real practice. Such document might create a united missionary foundation for a multitude of creative initiatives, and at the same time help Vaishnavas, engaged in different services within Srila Prabhupada’s mission, to understand and value more what others do. These contemplations of Srila Prabhupada’s mission were based on the original “Constitution of Association” and resulted in the discussion of the *strategic development of the Society in Russia which took place among the members of ISKCON GBC for Russia and National Council*. While working on this document we tried to understand Srila Prabhupada’s will in an objective and unbiased way, by scrutinizing his words and deeds in order to execute his mission.

The title of the document.

In Srila Prabhupada's diary this document is entitled as "Constitution of Association". It was translated in Russian as "Charter". However it is not correct to entitle it as ISKCON Charter of Association because its abbreviated version has been already registered as "Constitution of Association". More to that, the word "Charter" doesn't indicate in full depth the real meaning of Srila Prabhupada's teachings. The meaning of His document is much wider and deeper. Therefore we took a risk to name this document "A cultural presentation for the respiritualization of the entire human society", hoping that every Srila Prabhupada's follower would associate this title with the statement He made in the introduction to Srimad Bhagavatam.

"At the present moment human society is not in the darkness of oblivion. It has made rapid progress in the areas of material comfort, education and economic development throughout the entire world. But it looks like there is a "splinter" somewhere in the social body at large and therefore there are global conflicts mostly over a minor issue. There is a need of a solution how to unite all humans in order to achieve a common goal - peace, friendship and prosperity. Śrī mad-Bhāgavatam is bound to serve this need, *because it is a cultural presentation for the respiritualization of the entire human society.*"

Srila Prabhupada's global vision.

An attentive and comparative study of this and other Srila Prabhupada's programs reveals that Srila Prabhupada has initially conceived our Society to be broad and open to the world, with global purposes in mind, spreading far beyond preaching specific religious practices. At the same time, he remains chastely loyal to specific tradition of Gaudiya-vaisnavism founded by Lord Chaitanya. This truly amazing combination of the broad vision and unconditional fidelity to this specific spiritual and religious tradition identifies Srila Prabhupada's vision. He received this vision from his spiritual Master.¹

However in reality we observe that people, while remaining faithful to tradition, lose the broadness and freedom of thoughts. On the contrary in a pursuit of broadness they lose devotion to a specific tradition and spiritual practice, thus making it moderate and apathetic. Therefore, the task of implementing Srila Prabhupada's vision is extremely difficult but undisputable, especially under specific circumstances of the modern world which is torn apart by ideological contradictions. The conflict between liberal humanistic (human-centered and therefore atheistic) ideology of the West and fanatical theocentric (sometimes misanthropic) ideology of the East is seen as the main one of the present. Both views on the world are equally unacceptable for any intelligent person. **Therefore Srila Prabhupada's vision is absolutely relevant. It is flexible; it unites liberal broadness with strict fidelity to the higher goal.** Srila Prabhupada never concealed that he didn't have a purpose to create another religious tradition limited by its nature; he aimed to unite contradictory forces of society based on understanding of the internal human harmony in the world. Here is what Satsvarupa Das Gosvami writes about it in "Srila Prabhupada-lilamrita" (vol.2):

¹"Many times Om Visnupad Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur told me: "Sri Siddhanta Sarasvati prabhu descended to Earth to found Daiva-Varhasnrama-dharma and Suddha-Vaishnava-Samaj, and to preach Suddha Nam. These two missions were given to him by Gaurasundar Himself." Bhakti Pradip Tirtha Maharaja "Jaisri", memories of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

"ISKCON's preaching would achieve what the League of Nations and the United Nations had failed to achieve-"real unity and peace in the world." ISKCON workers would bring peace to a world

deeply afflicted by materialism and strife. They would "systematically propagate spiritual knowledge," knowledge of the nonsectarian science of God. It was not that a new religion was being born in July of 1966; rather, the eternal preaching of Godhead, known as sankirtana, was being transplanted from East to West."

Srila Prabhupada himself kept coming back to this global mission, again and again reminding his followers about the goal to unite such diverse people on the principles of spirituality. Now, fifty years later, the mission hasn't been yet accomplished and has become even more relevant.

Radicals could use the document to confirm their point of view. But only those who are able to respect others and appreciate diversity in harmony will be able to execute Srila Prabhupada's vision. This is about the implementation of one of Srila Prabhupada's last instructions: "Your love for me will be shown by how much you cooperate to keep this institution together after I am gone." Cooperation is that "burden of love", which Srila Prabhupada mounted on the shoulders of his follower. Study of this document would help everyone to expand their vision and fulfil the principle of "harmony in diversity" in their lives. Someone could consider the tasks set by Srila Prabhupada in his master plan unrealistic. But it is necessary to understand, that He challenged us, his followers. And if everybody makes a minor contribution to this common cause, all together we will be able to achieve a lot helping people to reach harmonious society centered around God, society without internal contradictions which seems yet unattainable.

Structure of the "Program"

In the "Program" Srila Prabhupada lists fourteen purposes of his prospective Society, marked with letters from A to N. We are used to numbers, so for convenience we have replaced letters with numbers. The enumeration of purposes in the "League of devotees" remains original.

Scrutinizing the document it is not difficult to understand its internal logic, but it can elude when browsing. The clarification of this logic is very important in order to understand the position of each of the "Program" points. For example, points 3, 6, 9.3 and 14.1 are dedicated to the creation of a healthy society, and points 7 and 13 are about spiritual initiation (diksha). At first these points might look repeating each other, but general understanding of its logic allows us to see more clearly the specifics of each of these points, along with their place in Srila Prabhupada's vision.

The "Program" is divided into three approximately equal parts. First six points describe the external preaching mission of ISKCON. It describes what ISKCON is to do in order to improve human society in general. Next three points (7-9) describe the internal purposes of the Society. Considering that the 9th point contains three subparagraphs there are also 6 internal purposes in the document. In these points Srila Prabhupada explains how ISKCON, as an organization, is to help people who joined it to develop spiritually. And last five points (10-14) describe practical methods which aim to achieve the objectives, listed above.

For the best understanding and complete vision of the "Program" we have tried to outline briefly the essence of each of the fourteen points in the form of sutras.

External objective is to raise awareness of the universal teaching of the Vedas to awake people's consciousness.

1. Focus on spiritual nature of a living being. To improve people's lifestyle and to create unity of the society in accordance with spiritual technologies. God-centered concept of life.

2. Concept of Godhead as a basis to unite the whole human society. The universal theistic teaching of "Bhagavad-gita".
3. Connection between living being and God through the service. Service as a uniting principle.
4. Chanting of the Holy Names as a practical method of uniting people into one spiritual family in order to establish an atmosphere of Spiritual world in this society.
5. Ideal God-centered society where all spheres of social life and relations are connected with the Personality of Godhead. Role of Vaishnavas as a role model for common people.
6. Vaishnavas as a part of a big family of God are to participate in manifesting and maintaining the spiritually-oriented social structure because they represent it.

Internal objective is to help people who have joined ISKCON in their spiritual development.

7. Individual spiritual initiation, diksa as a mean of transferring true spiritual vision.
8. Thorough study of Gosvamis' books to obtain experience of the real presence of God.
9. Realization of the six Gosvamis' mission in modern circumstances:
 1. To construct a Holy place for members of the Society, which atmosphere would help their spiritual experience to flourish.
 2. To create educational centers for preaching the universal science of the devotional service.
 3. To create open communities of Vaishnavas, including admirers who took upon the ideal to serve God as their lifestyle.
 4. To build Radha-Krishna and Sri Chaitanya's Temples to educate people to worship the Personality of Godhead.

Practical methods to achieve the objectives stated above.

10. Agricultural communities. "Plain living, high thinking".
11. Various modern methods of mass preaching.
12. Printing books and periodicals.
13. *Diksa* as a mean to uplift a person to the mode of goodness.
14. Minor objectives of ISKCON:
 1. To restore Varnasrama.
 2. To discharge false concepts of the cast society.
 3. To propagate Vegetarianism.
 4. To fight against drug addiction, alcoholism and other forms of addiction.

Role model is the fundamental principle of the "Program".

Before scrutinizing the "Program" let us draw reader's attention to one important principle which is considered as a basis of this document. Srila Prabhupada established *the principle of a role model and creation of functional models*.

In this world there is no deficiency in utopias. Each generation has created its own "Utopia" as a picture of bright future, or heaven on the planet. Sometimes these pictures, described by philosophers and writers, were so attractive that a huge mass of people created a banner and tried to establish sometimes at a cost of the lives of those who refused to believe. A brief reading may present the "Program" as the next utopia. Some would believe in it, get fired up, and would try to impose it to others. Some others would grin cynically and become surprised how educated people of our century can believe in such concepts.

It is necessary to understand that Srila Prabhupada was not a naive idealistic dreamer. He was very practical and sober-minded person. Neither was he a religious fanatic, ready to impose his belief which was not proven by practice at any cost. From his experience he knew, that spiritual paradigm can relieve a person of internal problems and fear. Born to a very traditional pious family, he also experienced a big influence of the Vedic philosophy on his life, and he knew that it could solve a majority of social problems. In his life his words never differed from his actions, and at times his role model was even more convincing than his words. Therefore again and again he emphasizes in this "Program" that his established Society is bound to give people *a live example how to solve burning problems of the present time, i.e. a problem of international and interfaith hostility, discrimination, exploitation of human beings, a problem of moral decay, environmental destruction, a problem of family degradation, etc., etc.*

Unfortunately we, the followers of Srila Prabhupada, quite often break this principle which was so clearly stated in the "Program". We have nicely mastered excellent coherent philosophy of "Bhagavad-gita" and learned to convince the others. But, unfortunately, we are not always role models to practice this philosophy. It seems that every sincere follower of Srila Prabhupada first has to honestly answer some questions before implementation of these objectives in the Society. "Do I live in accordance with his "Program" myself?" "To what degree have I implemented the ideals and values which Srila Prabhupada put in this document? Do I have moral rights to preach this truth to the others?" If you hadn't asked these questions and answered them honestly, studying the "Program" would not be really beneficial."

Analysis of the "Program" point by point.

To understand the essence which Srila Prabhupada put in the points of the Program in full depth, we have translated in Russian both documents (the objectives from "League of Devotees Prospectus" and "Program").

We have tried to keep the specific language especially in the first document. To make comparative analysis more convenient, first we placed the article from the "Program" (in bold), and then related articles from the "Prospectus" (in italic).

To interpret the aspects of the "Program" we have quoted Srila Prabhupada's books and lectures and also presented extensive quotes from Srila Prabhupada's essay "Concept of Gita-nagari" ("Back to Godhead", 1956) and Prabhupada's several directive letters to Sardar Patel (28.02.1949), letters to Mahatma Gandhi's Memorial fund (5.07.1949) and letters to Rayarama from 17.10.1968 (so-called "The program for spiritualizing of a world civilization"). We have also quoted the previous teachers to illustrate different aspects of the "Program" to prove that Srila Prabhupada's understanding of ISKCON mission was faithful to the traditions. We have also used the testimonials of Srila Prabhupada's disciples and associates. We have highlighted all the quotes.

1) To educate the greater human society in the techniques of spiritual life as the basis for a balanced psychic and biological development, and thereby achieve for the first time in human society a real peace and unity among the contending forces in the world today.

(A) *To propagate spiritual knowledge systematically for checking the imbalance of life, to the whole race of India and the world over, with a view to educate the people in general in the techniques of spiritual life as the basis for balanced psychic and biological developments of the human race and thereby achieve real unity and peace of the contending elements of the present world.*

Purport:

Purposefully Srila Prabhupada puts this point in the first position in both documents. Apparently it was of a great importance to Srila Prabhupada. Therefore, it is important to understand that practical meaning which Srila Prabhupada put in this aspect of the “Program”.

There are four keywords here: "systematically", "knowledge", "techniques" and "values". Any person engaged in education, would see in these words a formula of systematic education as a means of knowledge, skills and transmission of the values. Srila Prabhupada sometimes called ISKCON an educational institution. Therefore it is not surprising that in the first point of the “Presentation” he mentions the way the Society established by him is to educate people.

Obviously speaking about the "spiritual practice as a background of the balanced mental and biological development", Srila Prabhupada has in mind the base paradigm of the Vedic philosophy, according to which a human being represents a trinity of a body, mind and eternal soul. The soul takes a leading role in this trinity; the body and the mind are her tools for fulfilling her desire to enjoy independently from God. With understanding of this truth begins everybody's spiritual life, which allows eventually to elevate a body and mind to a spiritual level. That is another reason why Srila Prabhupada puts this point at the first place.

Unfortunately, when people forget about the primary role of the soul and satisfaction of bodily requirements becomes their main life goal, men and all human society cease to develop harmoniously. As a result the balance in the universe and its ecological system along with the fragile internal ecological system (i.e. human personality) is broken. Absolutely, this naive identification of ourselves with our body is a root of all the problems both for a human and mankind.

The balance in the world is broken because this attempt to satisfy insatiable bodily requirements leads to a desire to broaden infinitely the sphere of material satisfactions. Eventually and inevitably it causes competition between people (countries) and destroys both our material body and universal body i.e. the world around us. In other words, this attempt to broaden the area of sensual gratifications, which is an outcome of our misconception of it as a purpose of human existence, perniciously affects a human body. It generates unlimited agitations in our mind and destroys our relation with other people, which is a very important part of our emotional welfare. Certainly it does not help our spiritual evolution. On the contrary, understanding of the primacy of the soul and spiritual requirements of a human being would restore this balance. The sphere of sensual gratifications would narrow which at the same time positively affects the body. Uncompetitive attitude and tranquility would help to counterbalance the mind and experience satisfaction from

relations with other people. Thus a human life would become filled with the highest purpose which itself is a source of happiness and psychological stability of a man.

“If this bodily concept of life is removed, immediately all the problems of the world solved. Immediately. All these great writers, thoughtful men, philosophers, politicians, diplomats, and the United Nations, they are trying to solve the problems of the world, but they are increasing the problems. andhā yathāndhair upanīyamānās [SB 7.5.31].

How they can mitigate? It is not possible, because the basic principal mistake is there. “(Arrival lecture, 29.06.1971)

The words “to educate people in techniques of spiritual life” are of a great importance and require clarification in this point of the “Program”.

As an alternative but more precise in the context of Srila Prabhupada’s opinion the translation would be "the methodology of spiritual science".

On numerous occasions Srila Prabhupada emphasizes that the Vedas are not a religion to be accepted blindly and faithfully. Vedic scriptures formulate universal spiritual laws, which are equally fair in all circumstances. Other religions also discuss spiritual and immortal nature of consciousness, however the spiritual basis of the universal laws is formulated in the Vedic scriptures in the most comprehensive and consistent manner. The criterion of truth of this science is its ability to resolve people’s problems:

“So similarly, you may be busy with all kinds of technology. That, that is not forbidden. But at the same time, you try to understand this technology, the science of soul. That is there. It is not a bogus propaganda. It is factual. It is science. As science is not bogus propaganda, similarly this Krishna consciousness is also not bogus propaganda. As science means two plus two equal to four, similarly Krishna consciousness means mitigating the all problems of life.” (Lecture to Technology Students [M.I.T.], May 5, 1968, Boston)

Therefore Srila Prabhupada says that the purpose of ISKCON is not to convert people or to change their religion but to familiarize them with the principles of the spiritual science and to help them to better their religion practices, which they are attached to. In other words, ideally devotees should avoid creating religious conflicts when preaching. On the contrary, preaching should give people the universal and suitable worldwide, which allows to overcome all conflicts, as well as the universal principles of life based on this world wide view (spiritual techniques).

Let's try to understand what exactly Srila Prabhupada meant when He mentioned training people in the methods of the spiritual practice (spiritual techniques). Does it mean spreading the Hare Krishna mantra or, for example, the techniques of meditation and yoga, which can also be classed as spiritual techniques? Or it may be about extensive preaching with objectives to make external society healthier and helping many people to uplift their consciousness to the level of the *guna* of goodness?

For better understanding what Srila Prabhupada has in mind regarding the concept of spiritual techniques we will provide a few examples when he uses the word “techniques”. The most known example is Srila Prabhupada's well-known Purport to one of the verses of the First canto of "Srimad Bhagavatam":

“The same spirit of cooperation is needed to broadcast this transcendental message of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam throughout the polluted atmosphere of the world. After all, it is a technical science of spiritual values, and thus we are concerned with the techniques and not with the language. If the techniques of this great literature are understood by the people of the world, there will be success.” (SB, 1.5.11, Purport)

Defining Srimad-Bhagavatam as “an applied science” Srila Prabhupada wants to emphasize that the teaching of “Shrimad-Bhagavatam” is the very essence of the spiritual science of a non-sectarian, rational and universally applicable character. This statement itself suggests that Srila Prabhupada uses the word techniques in a bit different meaning to what we are used to. In this context the expression “spiritual techniques” is no way a ”method”, “system” or "training". More likely it is "specific practical conclusions which logically come out of the spiritual concept of life and support them". There are many other examples of this word used in the same meaning. So, in the “Prospectus of League of Devotees” Srila Prabhupada writes to comment on this aspect:

“The League of Devotees' invites every individual member of the human society to become a constituent member of the Society and learn there of the Spiritual techniques in perfect order. The 'Bhagwat Geeta' is recognised all over the world. This great book of knowledge is the basis of Spiritual techniques. “

The correct meaningful translation of this statement would be "the foundation of the Spiritual way of life". In "Gita-nagari", which is another essay, Srila Prabhupada writes approximately the same:

“The Lord summarized the full text of the Vedas and Upanicads in the techniques of the Bhagavad-gītā in order to give facility to the people of the present age, who are mostly affected by the influence of the age of quarrel (Kali-yuga) and disagreement”. (Gītā-nāgarī Part 1)

It is very important to emphasize that Srila Prabhupada meant not only the theory described in the Gita, but its practical application as well:

“People are accepting Bhagavad-gītā as something Indian or Hindu, but actually it is not. It is universal. Kṛṣṇa says that there are so many forms of living entities. There are 8,400,000 different types of bodies. "And all of them are My sons." So if you love Kṛṣṇa, then you love white man, you love American, you love European, you love Indian, you love cow, you love dog, you love serpent—everything.

So you have to know the techniques. Simply by theoretical knowledge you cannot make any improvement. And these are practical examples.” (BG lecture 6.01.1967)

For Srila Prabhupada to teach people spiritual practices or the methodology of “Bhagavad-Gita” (spiritual techniques) is to help them to change the attitude towards all living beings:

“Shri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is the living encyclopaedia of the terms of knowledge inculcated in the Bhagwat Geeta and other revealed scriptures. He therefore recommended brotherhood of all living being... The blind leaders of men do not know the techniques of peacemaking plan. The plan is already set up in the Bhagwat Geeta. It is said there that peace can be enjoyed only by Owner of everything, by accepting Him as the enjoyer of everything, and by consulting Him as the only friend and philosopher of all living being. Shri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu wants to teach this cult of universal brotherhood and when He agitated the movement, He practically proved that men and the jungle beasts and all other living

entities can live peacefully under the cool banner of 'Bhagwat Dharma' or the cult of devotional activities." (Conception of Universal Brotherhood, BTG, text 5.3, 5.05.1956)

This point of Srila Prabhupada's mission seems to be revealed in "Gita-nagari" in the clearest way (part 2):

It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kunti, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father." [Bg. 14.4]

"We can know from this fact that there is a sweet transcendental interrelation between all living entities, irrespective of not only caste, creed, and colour between man and man, but between man and beast, man and birds, man and reptiles, man and plants, etc., and so also between man and God, and between God and others, and so on. The Bhagavad-gītā can most scientifically raise this standard of life of sweet relation between one thing and another, and as such the Gītā-nāgarī shall be the centre for such supreme culture of knowledge. The Gītā-nāgarī shall set the example that neither God nor the living being nor Nature is in any way antagonistic toward one another, but that all of them exist in harmony as a complete whole unit. When Gītā-nāgarī will attempt to harmonise such sweet relation between man and God, Man and the world and the world and God, at such an auspicious time only, the united nations effort to establish peace in the world will be successful or the dream of a casteless society all over the world will be realised in practice. There is no other practical solution of the scientific basis of universal brotherhood or of universal religion without understanding this simple truth of the fatherhood of Godhead, motherhood of Nature, and childhood of all living entities."

In other words, this point of the "Program" in general describes the uniting universal principle of the devotional service which is based on the understanding of our spiritual nature.

"Religious affiliation in terms of different countries and cultural circumstances is obviously not the common religion of the human being; rather, the basic principle is devotional service." (SB, 2.8.18, Purport).

It is also about the forms how this universal principle appears in the specific areas of human life when we learn how to use our senses and the surrounding world in the service to God. This is a practical application of the methodology of "Bhagavad-gita".

"But so long it is under my control, if I can utilize it for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then these material assets can also help me. Very nice. So we have to know the techniques, how to engage everything in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so in any circumstances we can cultivate this bhakti-yoga, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness... Simply we have to know the techniques, how to apply it for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then everything will be perfect." (681108BS-LA transcripts)

Srila Prabhupada uses the word "techniques" to underline practical, applied nature of this knowledge that possesses extensive practical consequences. For example, in the following quote Srila Prabhupada lists three specific forms (techniques, methods) which this understanding can take:

"Vedic instruction is so nice that the soul, when he jumps over this material ocean, the Vedic instruction teaches him how to swim and come back again to the shore. This swimming process, according to Vedic instruction, is called sacrifice, charity and penance. One who learns these techniques of swimming over

the ocean of nescience, he goes back to home, back to Godhead. One who does not take to this swimming process, he becomes drowned.” (letter to Upendra 9.10.1971)

In 1969 in his lecture (Bg, 3.31-43) Srila Prabhupada explained that knowledge means understanding of our nature is to be a servant and what we always are and we always will remain. The rest is ignorance.

“Yes. What is Vedic wisdom? Vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah [Bg. 15.15]. Knowledge. Veda means knowledge. What is perfect knowledge? Perfect knowledge is that "My constitutional position is to serve." Bring any man in this world. Who can say that "I am not servant"? Is there any man or woman within this world, within this universe, who is not a servant? Can anyone of you say that you are not servant? Is there anyone? Everyone is servant. Somebody is servant of the society, somebody is servant of the country, somebody is servant of his wife or family, or some cats and dogs, ultimately. One must be a servant.

So when a man comes to this knowledge, that "I am serving. Why not serve the Supreme?" this is knowledge. This is perfection of knowledge. Nobody can be freed from being a servant. Either you become a servant of God or you become a servant of dog, you must be a servant. So the intelligent person, a wise person, he prefers to servant of God instead of becoming servant of dog.

There is no escape, that one cannot..., one is master. Nobody is master. Everyone is servant. "Therefore one who executes his duties according to My injunction," God's injunctions, "and who follows the teachings faithfully becomes free from bondage." As soon as you become servant to somebody besides God, then you are in bondage. You are in obligation. Obligation there is, but that is not bondage. To become servant of God is not bondage. But servant of dog is a bondage.

So the intelligent person is he who knows that "I am servant, so why not become servant of the greatest?" Just like somebody wants to be worker in government service. Why? Because government is very big establishment, great establishment. He has got many facilities. That is not bondage. Similarly, why not become the servant of the supreme government? That is perfection of knowledge. So long we are not servant of God, that means we are deficient in knowledge. And perfect knowledge is to become servant of God. Because you cannot escape by not being a servant. Everyone has to become a servant, this side or that side.”

It's important to note that by saying “spiritual techniques” Srila Prabhupada does not mean preaching of sattva-guna and its methodology. The sattvic way of life is obvious consequences of elevated spiritual understanding. Taken out of the context of the spiritual science, it might become an obstacle on a man's spiritual path. Srila Prabhupada understands that any attempt to begin from any other side would inevitably ruin the balance. **Only spiritual foundation is to become a reliable basis of human life.** In the same lecture he said that Arjuna wanted to become “a good person”, but Krishna did not approve it:

“One has to transcend this position. One has to transcend even the so-called goodness of the material world. Just like Arjuna was trying to be so-called good man of this material world. He was trying to avoid the injunction of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa wanted him that "You should fight this Kurukṣetra battle," but he wanted to be good man. So that fighting, when he was convinced of Kṛṣṇa's instruction, this Bhagavad-gītā, that means he transcended even the goodness platform of this material world. So Kṛṣṇa is trying to raise him to the... traiguṇya-viṣayā vedā nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna. This whole material atmosphere is surcharged with three modes of material nature. So one has to transcend the modes of material nature. Just like one should not try to become a first-class prisoner. In the prisonhouse, if one is a third-class prisoner and one is first-class prisoner, the third-class prisoner should not aspire that "Let me remain

in this prisonhouse and become a first-class prisoner." That is not good. One should transcend the prison walls or come out of the prisonhouse. That is his aim".

In other words, preaching material techniques of *sattva-guna* (sattvic habits, a way of life, etc.) doesn't make sense on its own. It does make sense when we start to understand our true spiritual nature and consequently the principles of our behavior and relation to the world and other living beings at the same time.

Brief essence of this point:

Considering all previous quotes, we can tell that Srila Prabhupada emphasized a few moments in this point as well as in his preaching in general.

1. Spiritual knowledge communicated in the Vedas is universal and scientific, especially the knowledge of the eternal relations between living beings and God as a servant and a master (*sambandha-jnana*).
 2. Distribution of this knowledge in the most concise way is the main goal of ISKCON.
 3. This spiritual science (Srila Prabhupada described it as methodology) is communicated in "Bhagavad-gita". It is the foundation of the universal spiritual view, which allows to unite all people.
 4. The knowledge described in the Gita is not an abstract theory but practical on its own. Any kind of contact with it can fundamentally change everybody's scope of values as well as their life.
 5. To understand the nature of our relations with God and plus to that put it in practice is bound to correct our relations with other people and relations with the world (nature that surrounds us and environment in which we live) Besides it is meant to resolve all our problems both on the individual level, and on the level of all mankind.
 6. The principles of spiritual science are practical. Its understanding can improve everyone's quality of life, irrespective of their beliefs and eliminate hostility between people, based on the material concept of life.
 7. Actions in these relations are to restore the balance between material, emotional and spiritual aspects of our life, and help all mankind to restore destroyed balance.
 8. For Srila Prabhupada the preaching of the sattvic way of life has no independent value; he mentions it briefly in the last point of the "Program" among the minor purposes of the Society.
- 2) To propagate the Sense of Godhead, the all attractive Personality of primal and eternal Form, as He Himself revealed in His own words in the Bhagavad Gita, the Holy Scripture of the Lord Sri Krishna, the Godhead.**

(f) *To imbibe and develop in the mind of the individual soul the all attractive Personality of Godhead (Shree Krishna) in His Primeval and Eternal Form as He has revealed Himself in His own words the Bhagwat Geeta. He has to be known all over the world in the manner as revealed by Lord Chaitanya who practically demonstrated the transcendental process of approaching the Absolute Godhead by his acts of Congregational Chanting of the holy Name of Godhead. There is nothing in the teachings of Lord Chaitanya which is not intelligible by human reasonings or is against any religious feeling accepted by the civilized society of the world.*

Purport:

There is a very important addition to this article in the “League of Devotees prospectus”:
“**There is nothing in the teachings of Lord Chaitanya which is not intelligible by human reasonings or is against any religious feeling accepted by the civilized society of the world.**”
Thus Srila Prabhupada again emphasizes the non-sectarian, scientific character of Lord Chaitanya’s teachings. In other words, even at the highest stages of understanding of God as an all-attractive personality **in his initial and eternal Form**, we speak about rational and logically faultless concept of God but not religious dogma or object of the blind faith generated by fear. At the same time Srila Prabhupada referred to the specific scripture that corresponds to these requirements. It is the “Bhagavad-gita”. According to his belief "Bhagavad-gita", but nothing else is to be the basis of our preaching. The essay "Gita-nagari" in the whole is totally designed to prove this thesis:

“The philosophy of Bhagavad-gītā is applicable to everyone's practical life, and therefore, the principles of Bhagavad-gītā are really meant for a universal type of religious faith, to be accepted after all reasonings of human society. As such, all intelligent persons all over the world must now combine together to preach the universal religion of Bhagavad-gītā. It is above all types of communalism.”
(Gita nagari, part 2)

Srila Prabhupada formulated the comprehensive understanding of ISCKON purpose in the first point: to give people the universal basis of the world view, which aimed to resolve all conflicts and problems. Then he takes the next step, which is ideally a must to do for every person, who follows spiritual path. To bring people to understanding of Krishna as the Supreme and all-attractive Personality of Godhead is the next and the highest goal of the Society. Therefore Srila Prabhupada’s statement is very important. If we give them this philosophy in a correct way, as rational teaching but not as a dogma, it will not impact on their religious feelings.

A few times in his conversations he emphasizes the knowledge of a soul is of a scientific nature. Any Science, if it is an **objective truth** by definition, cannot impact on anybody’s feelings.

“Prabhupāda: Yes, so that solution we are preaching, we are trying to preach: at least one section of people should know the science of the soul. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Just like medical necessity is there, does not mean that everyone should become medical man. Similarly, the science of soul is necessity; it does not mean that everyone will be the transcendentalist or the scientist about soul. But at least one section of people must be there who knows perfectly well about the science of soul. As much as there is medical man—he knows perfectly well what is psychology... what is physiology, anatomy—there is engineer—he knows how to construct—similarly, a section must be there who knows perfectly well about the science of soul. So as there is need of medical men, engineer or lawyers or other, similarly, there is need of one section of expert who knows the science of soul. The medical man, the engineer, the archaeologist or this or that, they are all meant for the body. Similarly, there must be one expert section who are meant for the soul. But all the universities, all the universities, they have got these

departments—medical department, engineering department, law department—but there is no department which is teaching perfectly well about the science of soul.

Lady: [Spanish]

Hṛdayānanda: [translating] She said that she has studied... She, for example... She's not sure, because she herself has, for example, studied two years in theology when she was a student.

Prabhupāda: Theology is different. Not very much different; but the modern so-called theology, that is also different speculation. That is not science. There are different theologians. Science cannot be differently opinion. "Two plus two" is science. It is always four. Nobody can say that "In my opinion it is five," "In my opinion it is three." That is not science; that is speculation."

(Room Conversation with Psychiatrists, February 22, 1975, Caracas)

The paradox of this situation is that ISKCON is to provide a nonconfessional and theistic world view that describes personal nature of God. People tend to think that a specific form of God (attributes, name, qualities and etc.) would inevitably make Him a part of a particular confession and a subject of the irreconcilable interfaith disputes. Swami Vivekananda made his well-known speech at the congress of religions in Chicago in 1893. After that it has been considered in the West, that only the recognition of the initial impersonality of the Absolute, His formlessness can become a basis for the interfaith peace. However, it is a proven fact, that numerous attempts of impersonal philosophers to create a certain universal religion and synthesize existing beliefs on the basis of their philosophy haven't been successful. On the contrary, all rational followers of the traditional religions reject syncretism because they understand that it emasculates the essence of religion i.e. the real relations with the live God. Srila Prabhupada claimed that ISKCON mission is to disprove the idea that only impersonalism can be universally accepted. At the same time Srila Prabhupada demonstrates that the personal God is the universal center of Gravity (Krishna), i.e. the center around which the civilization can unite. The faceless Absolute can unite no one and nothing, but the "Bhagavad-gita" philosophy has this ability when presented properly as the universal metaphysical system.

In the letter to Satsvarupa Maharaja dated June 16, 1968 Srila Prabhupada proudly wrote about his achievements in this direction:

"Yes, I am getting some good opportunities to meet here several learned scholars. Last night we had a meeting in the house of Mr. Abdul Rabbi, and there were some University professors and a Dr. Abbot, a Dr. MacMillan, and many others, two clergymen, and their wives. One Father Lanlais was without wife. So there was very good discussion and by the Grace of Krishna, I was able to give them some impression of this philosophy, that it is nicer than anything. Professor Abdul is Mohammedan, and is writing a thesis of Sufi religion. And he was also impressed."

Srila Prabhupada purposefully mentioned "Bhagavad-gita" in this point of the "Program". The Gita and the Lord Himself are not different from each other. Therefore to preach and distribute Bhagavad-gita is the same as to give God to people.

"The Personality of Godhead and His transcendental utterances as sounded in the Bhagavad-gītā are identical. Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā is therefore eternally the Personality of Godhead Himself with full potency of His Lordship."(Gita-nagari part 1)

At the same time the recognition of the personal nature of God inevitably leads to the recognition of His absolute form. Therefore Srila Prabhupada emphasizes, "To imbibe and develop in the mind of

the individual soul the all attractive Personality of Godhead (Shree Krishna) in His Primeval and Eternal Form".

First point of the “Program” describes human’s first steps on a spiritual path, the second tells about the top level of the spiritual understanding which anyone can achieve. Srila Prabhupada wrote about it in the Purport to one of the last verses spoken by Krishna in "Bhagavad-gita" (18.66).

“One should be attracted by the beautiful vision of Kṛṣṇa. His name is Kṛṣṇa because He is all-attractive. One who becomes attracted by the beautiful, all-powerful, omnipotent vision of Kṛṣṇa is fortunate. There are different kinds of transcendentalists—some of them are attached to the impersonal Brahman vision, some of them are attracted by the Supersoul feature, etc., but one who is attracted to the personal feature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and, above all, one who is attracted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead as Kṛṣṇa Himself, is the most perfect transcendentalist.”

Obviously no one can reach this level instantly, but eventually ISKCON is to provide people with non-sectarian methodology which would help everyone to reach the level of understanding of initial eternal form of the all-attractive Personality of God.

“So this yoga system, Kṛṣṇa consciousness yoga system, is to begin with developing attachment for Kṛṣṇa. ... So for the beginners, attachment for God, everyone, people in the lowest stage, he has to admit the greatness of the Supreme Lord. God is great; there is no doubt about it. ... I don't speak of the animals. Animals, they have no sense of God. I am speaking of the human being. There are different, different grades of human civilization—the highest type of civilization and the lowest aboriginal—but every one of them has got a sense of God. That is there. This is the special prerogative of human being. ... So God is great. That is admitted by the human civilization. Now what is that greatness? Generally when we speak of greatness. ... We think of the greatness of the sky. That is the simple example how thing can be great: "As great as the sky." But in the sky you have no perception. As there is development of these material elements from finer ...to grosser form, and the grosser form becomes tangible for our understanding, similarly, in every religion or in every society, the greatness of God is admitted. But how that greatness becomes tangible, that you can find in the Bhagavad-gītā. ... But if I speak about sky, I cannot get any direct perception. Therefore simply understanding of greatness of God is not all. That, that is the beginning of attachment, "God is great." But you have to develop your attachment to the fullest extent. And that is love of God.” (BG lecture 10.09.68)

In other words, all religious traditions describe the greatness of God, His power and magnificence (Aishwarya). The scene of "Bhagavad-gita" where Arjuna contemplates His Universal form is the culmination of this experience of understanding the greatness of God. However, "Bhagavad-gita" goes even further, because immediately Arjuna asks Krishna to show him the four-armed form and afterwards to give him back his ability to behold Krishna’s sweet and beautiful human form (Madhurya). **Elevated stages implicitly include the lower ones; therefore the concept of God as an all-attractive personality, in principle allows synthesizing and reconciling all other ideas of God.**

Different concepts of the nature of God, described in “Bhagavad-gita”, and in more details in "Srimad-Bhagavatam", correspond to the consecutive steps of one’s spiritual development.

By such a gross conception of God through the material manifestations of His energy, one is enabled to spiritualize the mind and the senses and gradually concentrate the mind upon Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme,

who is present as the Supersoul in every heart and everywhere, in every atom of the material universe. The system of *pañca-upāsana*¹, recommending five mental attitudes for the common man, is also enacted for this purpose, namely gradual development, worship of the superior that may be in the form of fire, electricity, the sun, the mass of living beings, Lord Śiva and, at last, the impersonal Supersoul, the partial representation of Lord Viṣṇu. They are all nicely described in the Second Chapter, but in the Third Chapter further development is prescribed after one has actually reached the stage of Viṣṇu worship, or pure devotional service, and the mature stage of Viṣṇu worship is suggested herein in relation to the change of heart. (SB, 2.3.24, Purport)

Without going into details, we can place all theological concepts, existing in the world, in such order:

- i. Concepts of great number of Gods who personify the forces of the nature are on the lowest position. In “Bhagavad-gita” it is assessed negatively (7.20-23) though Krishna recognizes that such worship will always take place in human society, and even refers to demigods worship as faith in *sattva-guna* (17.4).
- ii. At a higher stage people recognize the existence of the only one God, who is transcendental to this world. For the majority His transcendence is a synonym of His non-cognoscibility (*mām tu veda na kaścana*), and therefore at this stage recognition of a specific form of God is purely formal, even if it exists. Usually, people at this stage of development consider God as a shapeless and faceless Absolute. These theological representations are described in Gita in several places, particularly in the verses 7.24 - 26.
- iii. On the next stage people begin to see the power of God manifested in each particle of His creation. Acknowledgement of the personal nature of God is equivalent to acknowledgement of His uncountable and infinitely powerful energies which means ability to see God’s personal presence in all His creations. This real experience of seeing transcendental and at the same time imminent God can be compared to Arjuna’s contemplating the Universal form (Gita, 11th chapter). The same theological representations are described in the beginning of the 7th chapter of Gita and clarified in 7.19 (*vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti*).
- iv. On the fourth stage people realize, that God manifests Himself not only in various objects of this world. They come to understanding, that God is present in the hearts of all living beings. They realize God as Paramatma in their hearts, the witness of all our activities, the judge (13.22-23). For such people God is the personification of the eternal time that rules the wanders of living entities in this world.
- v. On the next stage of spiritual development people realize that God is an all-powerful person, creator of this world, transcendental and immanent to this world. This concept is described in the beginning of the 9-th chapter (9.4-10) of Gita. It is the Supreme Lord in the form of Maha Visnu or Narayana.
- vi. Finally, on the highest stage a person can have real experience of God as All-attractive Person in His full beauty and sweetness (*madhurya*). The 10th chapter of Gita is dedicated to the description of these understandings of the Lord.

¹ *Pancha-upasana* is a system which recommends to worship five gods as five different manifestations of universal God – Durga (personified material energy of the Supreme), Sun god (a visible source of all energy), Ganesha (the master of vital energy in all living beings), Siva (the master of ego) and Vishnu as Supersoul in the heart of all living beings.

First two stages (polytheism and impersonalism) are initial stages of understanding of the oneness of God. Four following stages are gradual perceiving God as a person. All these theological concepts are consecutively described in the seventh, ninth and tenth chapters of Gita. Later, in the eleventh chapter, Arjuna represents a spiritual seeker who via express-method passes through all stages of spiritual path from the beginning to the end. At first he sees the Universal form of God (the third step), then he gets experience of God as the eternal time, controlling the destiny of all living beings, then he sees God as all-powerful four armed Vishnu, and at last, he sees the magnificent human all-inclusive form of Krishna. So, by means of *paroksha-vada*², in the eleventh chapter Krishna proves the highest superiority of the two-armed form as **initial, eternal image of God**. A man is created in the image and likeness of this form.

Thus, all possible theological concepts are rationally reflected in “Bhagavad-gita”, including the concept of All-attractive Personality, which contains all other theological representations as well. This is the reason why it cannot impact anybody’s religious feelings. If people take it on board, it is capable to help them experience delightful relations with loving God *within* their own tradition.

Hence Srila Prabhupada offers an essentially new approach to the interfaith dialogue. Previously there has been an approach in the interfaith sphere, which is common for people, who directly or indirectly profess impersonal philosophy. They stand for the oneness of everything and declare that any specific religious forms have no importance. This attempt of mechanical synthesis, or mixture of traditions, is called syncretism. The approach in “Bhagavad-gita”, which Srila Prabhupada insists on, is based on the installation of the universal reference system which includes all possible interpretations of God. Provided everybody agrees to that he suggests communicating within this system without mixing different traditions, and keeping in mind that each tradition allows its serious followers to develop specific emotional loving relation with the personality of God. Srila Prabhupada puts forward this approach in this point of the “Program” and expects that his followers would use it to mitigate this very intense and agitated ideological atmosphere in this world.

Brief summary of this point:

1. "Bhagavad-gita" is to become a basis of our missionary actions.
2. Philosophy of "Bhagavad-gita" is universal; its methodology allows everybody to gradually uplift their consciousness and provides tools to compare and analyze thoroughly various theistic concepts without touching anyone’s religious feelings.
3. Only the theistic concept of God as a person, who is infinitely diverse and reciprocates when someone tries to serve Him, can become a platform for mutual understanding between people of different religious traditions.
4. On the contrary, impersonal perception of God, as well as all attempts to create a syncretic religion, cannot really unite anyone. Such religion would be rejected by people, because they value their own tradition and they would consider it as an attempt to belittle God and their religion.
5. All religions begin with the description of God’s greatness. The philosophy of "Bhagavad-gita" gives scientific description of two aspects of His greatness, transcendental and immanent. At the same time it explains the universal metaphysical system, which allows

² Indirect indication or in this case, a hint

understanding a superior sweet aspect of the Personality of Godhead. It sets human's prime purpose which is to establish close personal relations with Him.

6. After reading "Bhagavad-gita" some people would be attracted by Sri Krishna's personal form and by the spirit of the service to Him. Others would become stronger in their own religious tradition, because they receive a rational logical reason for their faith and realize the basis of the universal world view of all theological doctrines. This strategy would move ISKCON beyond the sectarian religious space and its authority would be recommended as the spiritual Movement, which is not dangerous to cooperate with.

3) To bring together individuals in a Society, regardless of nationality and irrespective of creed or caste, in order to develop a nearness to the Godhead and thereby the idea that within the members and humanity-at-large there is an infinitesimal soul-spirit that is part and parcel in quality with the Godhead, and that all life is meant for the satisfaction of said Godhead, the Supreme Soul.

(d) To bring together members (of the society) individually to one another and nearer to Godhead who is the Prime Entity and the individual souls are infinitesimal entities and humanity at large that individual souls being part and parcels in quality of Godhead the Absolute whole, they (the individual souls) are meant for the satisfaction of the Supreme Soul Godhead as it is revealed in the scriptures.

Purport:

The first, second and the third points of the "Program" describe *sambandha* which corresponds to the nature of a living being, the nature of God and their connection. Krishna's attractive nature as the Personality of Godhead is described in the previous point. Here Srila Prabhupada speaks about the nature of living beings as Krishna's part and parcel and the relations, which connect them with Krishna eternally. At the same time Srila Prabhupada describes how this understanding of our own nature and the nature of God can put an end to these all artificial barriers between people.

It is worth noting, that in the first two points Srila Prabhupada speaks about all people and formulates the most general principles as a platform of human life. Here he speaks only about those people who are ready to accept the philosophy of the service as a purpose of life. He wants to unite them in the Society in a true and real sense (as the organization). As a whole, this document is created in such a way that each following aspect is addressed to a narrower group of recipients. Srila Prabhupada begins with the widest and more universal statements, and gradually narrows and specifies the purposes.

Only two conditions have to be executed in order to unite different people with vast experiences and consequently, different perception of this world, pursuit of different goals. 1) They have to understand the true harmony (in our case, it is to find understanding of equality of all souls within themselves and before God). 2) To have a common goal (in our case, it is to agree that a soul's highest mission is to serve God). In other words, people have to realize the unity at *sambandha* level and realize this knowledge in the process of *abhideya*. This is what Srila Prabhupada writes about it:

"The actual fact is that everyone is a servant of the Lord, as confirmed in Caitanya-caritāmṛta by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (jīvera 'svarūpa' haya-kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa' [Cc. Madhya 20.108]). As servants

of the Lord, we are one, and there can be no questions of enmity or friendship. If one actually understands that every one of us is a servant of the Lord, where is the question of enemy or friend? Everyone should be friendly for the service of the Lord. Everyone should praise another's service to the Lord and not be proud of his own service. This is the way of Vaiṣṇava thinking, Vaiṣṇava thinking. There may be rivalries and apparent competition between servants in performing service, but in the Vaiṣṇava planets the service of another servant is appreciated, not condemned. This is Vaiṣṇava competition. There is no question of enmity between servants. Everyone should be allowed to render service to the Lord to the best of his ability, and everyone should appreciate the service of others. Such are the activities of Vaiṣṇava. Since everyone is a servant, everyone is on the same platform and is allowed to serve the Lord according to his ability.” (SB, 7.5.12, purp.)

Externally this understanding is manifested as cooperation between the most different people, and this in turn gives pleasure to the Lord and helps people to obtain an active spiritual experience quicker.

The unity of the individual souls attempting to satisfy the Supreme Lord or rendering service to the Lord is real unity. In the material world such unity is not possible. Even though people may officially unite, they all have different interests. In the United Nations, for instance, all the nations have their particular national ambitions, and consequently they cannot be united. Disunity between individual souls is so strong within this material world that even in a society of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, members sometimes appear disunited due to their having different opinions and leaning toward material things. Actually, in Kṛṣṇa consciousness there cannot be two opinions. There is only one goal: to serve Kṛṣṇa to one's best ability. If there is some disagreement over service, such disagreement is to be taken as spiritual. Those who are actually engaged in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead cannot be disunited in any circumstance. This makes the Supreme Personality of Godhead very happy and willing to award all kinds of benediction to His devotees, as indicated in this verse. (SB 4.30.08, purp.)

Once again: the uniting idea of the personal concept of God is in the universal principle of service as the main process of interaction between a part and a whole. Service is the eternal, universal nature of all living beings, *Sanātana-Dharma*. The service unites and the spirit of pleasure separates.

Here is what Srila Prabhupada writes about it:

In this way we can see that no living being is exempt from rendering service to other living beings, and therefore we can safely conclude that service is the constant companion of the living being and that the rendering of service is the eternal religion of the living being.

Yet man professes to belong to a particular type of faith with reference to a particular time and circumstance and thus claims to be a Hindu, Muslim, and Christian, Buddhist or an adherent of any other sect. Such designations are non-sanātana-dharma. A Hindu may change his faith to become a Muslim, or a Muslim may change his faith to become a Hindu, or a Christian may change his faith and so on. But in all circumstances the change of religious faith does not affect the eternal occupation of rendering service to others. The Hindu, Muslim or Christian in all circumstances is servant of someone. Thus, to profess a particular type of faith is not to profess one's sanātana-dharma. The rendering of service is sanātana-dharma.

Factually we are related to the Supreme Lord in service. The Supreme Lord is the supreme enjoyer, and we living entities are His servitors. We are created for His enjoyment, and if we participate in that eternal enjoyment with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we become happy. We cannot become

happy otherwise. It is not possible to be happy independently, just as no one part of the body can be happy without cooperating with the stomach. (BG, Introduction)

At the same time, the service to God is not limited to walls of mosques, temples and churches. The service of God can be carried out in everyday life, and in relations, therefore all people can be involved in this service.

From every position, as confirmed in Bhagavad-gītā, sva-karmaṇā tam abhyarcya: [Bg. 18.46] one can serve the Supreme Lord by performing one's prescribed duty. It is not that only the brāhmaṇas can serve the Supreme Lord and not the śūdras. Anyone can serve the Supreme Lord by performing his prescribed duties under the direction of a spiritual master, or representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead....Such loving service must be performed without reason, without impediment, and spontaneously. Kṛṣṇa is lovable, and one has to serve Him in whatever capacity one can. That is pure devotional service. (SB 3.29.15, purp.)

Srila Prabhupada was especially proud of that ISKKON is able to demonstrate this uniting power of devotional service in practice, which eliminates barriers not just between diverse people but elsewhere as well.

The common religion of all classes of human beings, regardless of whosoever and whatsoever one may be, is devotional service. Even the animals may be included in devotional service to the Lord, and the best example is set by Śrī Vajrāṅgajī, or Hanumān, the great devotee of Lord Śrī Rāma. As we have already discussed, even the aborigines and cannibals can also be engaged in the devotional service of the Lord if they happen to be under the guidance of a genuine devotee of the Lord. In the Skanda Purāṇa there is a narration that a hunter in the jungle became the most enlightened devotee of the Lord by the guidance of Śrī Nārada Muni. Therefore devotional service to the Lord can be equally shared by every living being.

Religious affiliation in terms of different countries and cultural circumstances is obviously not the common religion of the human being; rather, the basic principle is devotional service. (SB 2.8.18, purp.)

Rather those who are trying to do any harm by uncalled for agitation after spreading false facts, they are sure to be disheartened. It seems if these people without adopting the aforesaid wrong way of doing harm to our International Society for Krishna Consciousness, do themselves join our movement, there is every chance of a formation of the body of a Great United Nation.

After the last great war the existing body of the present United Nations was formed, but what real benefit there has been to be mentioned of for the worldly people. The ISKCON movement has actually got together all nations in the world by their adoption of nonviolence creed and spreading of Krishna's name, door-to-door. Amongst us there are Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Buddhists and others... (Letter, 28 September, 1976)

It is the service that Srila Prabhupada defines as the essence of “Bhagavad-gita” teaching. So, there is only one criterion to check if the assimilation of this teachings is genuine, which a person's ability and readiness to serve God and to cooperate in this service with the other servants.

The summum bonum teachings of the Bhagavad-gītā is that Religion means the art and science of learning the transcendental process of surrendering unto the Lotus Feet of the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The purity of such religious knowledge becomes polluted when conditioned souls

become too much influenced by the external material energy of the Lord and thus they forget the eternal relation with Him (Śrī Kṛṣṇa). (Gītā-nāgarī)

Thus, the teaching of Bhagavad-gita is a true platform, which can unite people. Though practically all Scriptures describe the service to God, Srila Prabhupada does not mention the specific name "Krishna" in this point. Nevertheless, politicians use the Scriptures to separate people, and even modern Indian leaders try to turn Gita into the instrument to propagate the policy of nationalism.

Prabhupāda: So our leaders, rather, they are misinterpreting śāstra, our leaders, and trying to mold it to the material way of life. This is the pity of the thing. Now you should reform them in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and real United Nations will be formed. There will be no question of nationalism. In the Bhagavad-gītā... Big, big leaders, they are reading Bhagavad-gītā, but is there any word as "nationalism"?

Indian man (1): None.

Prabhupāda: And big, big leaders, they are utilizing Bhagavad-gītā for so-called nationalism. Why? There is not a single word as "nationalism." As Kṛṣṇa says, sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya [Bg. 14.4]. Where is nationalism? There is no question of nationalism. So the difficulty is they do not understand even a line of Bhagavad-gītā...

(Evening Darśana, may 9, 1977, Hrishikesh)

However understanding of the spiritual unity of all living beings does not deny respect for people's different material status. Srila Prabhupada has never advocated the absurd western concept of automatic material equality of all people.

Woman reporter: Would you say that women are inferior to men?

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Woman reporter: Why?

Prabhupāda: By physiological condition. Just like you are. Your bodily features are different from the man's features. You cannot deny it. So according to the bodily features, the psychological condition and everything is there. How you can deny it?

Woman reporter: Do you think that I am inferior to you?

Prabhupāda: It is not the question of inferior or superior. Different. Now you take one inferior or superior. That is your calculation. But the bodily features are different. That is material. But spiritually, they are all one. Materially... Just like your bodily feature and a man's bodily feature is different. Now, so far question of inferior, superior, that is your calculation. But we say that by nature, a woman and man is different.

Woman reporter: What does this mean as far as whether women can do the same things that men can do, or whether women can lead people?

Prabhupāda: Well, women can bear children, but the man cannot. Is it possible to bear children? A man can become pregnant? Is it possible?

(Television Interview, July 9, 1975, Chicago)

Brief summary of this point:

7. Понимание духовного равенства всех живых существ не отменяет материальных различий между ними

1. Methodology to unite human society is described in the second and third points.

2. In order to unite, and forget about their disagreements, people have to learn their eternal nature, the nature of the servant, and understand that the only purpose of their existence in this world is to learn to serve God. This is a platform of their harmony.
3. Such understanding let people to cooperate with each other, without focusing on their differences and disagreements.
4. ISKCON practically demonstrates this uniting power of the devotional service which eliminates all artificial barriers between people.
5. Service to God is a special attitude towards God, the world and people. It is not limited to the walls of churches and mosques; everyone can serve God, always and everywhere.
6. “Bhagavad-gita” philosophy represents the true foundation for uniting people in one family.
7. Srila Prabhupada consciously does not mention a specific name of God because not only Gita but all holly Scriptures recognizes the principle of service to God.
8. Understanding the spiritual equality of all living beings doesn't deny material distinctions between them.

4) To encourage the teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who demonstrated practically the transcendental process of approaching the absolute Personality of Godhead by His acts of congregational chanting of the holy name of God, a process known as Samkirtan.

(j) To prepare the ground work of spiritual atmosphere for the people in general by Samkirtan movement as it is recommended in the scriptures and as propounded by the Father of the "Samkirtan" movement Lord Chaitanya.

Purport:

In the second and the third points Srila Prabhupada mentions *sambandha* which corresponds to the knowledge, which allows to overcome disagreements. Here he begins to describe a specific method to realize this knowledge. He mentions the name of Lord Chaitanya who is the Father of Sankirtana movement (*saṅkīrtanaika-pitarau*). Sankirtana means chanting of a Holy name together; which is the most simple and natural way to achieve direct experience of God's presence as a Person, because the name of God is not different from God. Also it is a prescribed method of meditation and sacrifice in Kali-yuga. **Sankirtana means cooperation of the most different people, united by a common goal.**

“Prabhupāda went on to explain that cooperation is the essence of the movement. Quoting a line from Ohe Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura he told them, "The Purport of the verse is that even Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu—He is God himself, Kṛṣṇa Himself—He felt, alone, unable to do this task. So this is the position. You are cooperating; therefore I am getting the credit. Otherwise alone what could I do?

"Ekakī āmāra nāhi pāya bol. Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself wanted our cooperation. He is God, Kṛṣṇa. Therefore cooperation is very important thing. Nobody should think that 'I have got so great ability. I can do.' No. It is simply by cooperation we can do very big thing. 'United we stand; divided we fall.' So be strong in pushing on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and Kṛṣṇa will help. He is the strongest.

"Still, we must be combined together. Saṅkīrtana means many men combined together chanting. That is saṅkīrtana. Otherwise kīrtana. Bahubhir militvā kīrtayeti saṅkīrtana. Bahu means many; many combined together. That is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission—combined together. All nations, all persons, they should combine together. There is hope in our society, combination. There are Hindus; there are Muslims; there are Christians; there are black, white. Combine them. That looks very beautiful, just like combination of many flowers.”(A Transcendental Diary Volume 1 Hari Śauri dāsa, Conversation with Radha-Damodara group, 16.03.1976)

Here Srila Prabhupada speaks about the change of atmosphere around the world. Sankirtana movement is meant to prepare *this spiritual atmosphere to descend onto common people*. In “Gitanagari” Srila Prabhupada explains the mechanism sankirtan influences a person’s consciousness and all mankind in more details:

“In the midst of his multifarious duties, Gandhiji never missed to attend to his ramdhun kirtana meeting. This is one of the soundest method for the culture of devotion to God. In the opinion of Srimad-Bhagavatam, one who is imbibed with the devotion of Godhead is also endowed with all the good qualities of the gods. But one who is not a devotee of Godhead, has not any value for his good qualities because he utilizes his so called good qualities for ulterior purposes. As such the easy way to raise the moral standard of people in general, is to make this sankirtana movement more popular...” (Letter to: Sardar Patel, Calcutta, 28 February, 1949)

In this regard it is worth mentioning how Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur defines the difference between *kirtan* and *sankirtana*. He emphasizes the potency of *sankirtana* to change our hearts:

“Saṅkīrtana means 'complete kīrtana', for it is unnecessary to perform any other devotional activities if one performs saṅkīrtana. Partial or imperfect kīrtana of Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name is not the same as saṅkīrtana. Imperfect chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name is unable to cause the optimum spiritual change in the living entities. This will lead them to doubt the potency of kīrtana.” (Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka, Śloka One)

Srila Prabhupada himself gives a very interesting explanation how to preach the *Sankirtana* Movement to achieve expected results. He emphasizes the need of rational, logical justification of *sankirtana* method. It will protect it from degeneration into a cheap show of artificial emotions:

“As such the easy way to raise the moral standard of people in general is to make this sankirtana movement more popular all over the world by philosophical discourses based on reasoning and moral and ethical codes. The Vaisnava acaryas especially Lord Caitanya and his six Gosvami disciples give us ample opportunity and scope for this work. Lord Caitanya first inaugurated the sankirtana or randhun movement and the later Gosvamis supported it by scholarly philosophical synthesis. The six sandarbhas by Srila Jiva Goswami are marvelous in this respect.” (Letter to: Sardar Patel, Calcutta, 28 February, 1949)

For this reason, following his spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada also defines *sankirtana* as the Distribution of books of Krishna consciousness philosophy, he even gives preference to this form of *sankirtana*, but not to traditional *sankirtana* which is congregational chanting of the Holy name.

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa. Preach as much as possible. By saṅkīrtana, big saṅkīrtana. Big saṅkīrtana is book distribution and small saṅkīrtana is with mṛdaṅga. Big saṅkīrtana is going on all over the world. Small saṅkīrtana locally. Overflood the demons' Godless civilization. Our declaration of war against this Godless civilization. (Room Conversation, December 31, 1976, Bombay)

Srila Prabhupada himself emphasizes the power of chanting the Hare Krishna maha-mantra especially, because Krishna's name possesses special power:

Yes, God has name, but the names are so many that you cannot understand which one is the chief name. Therefore the Vedantist, those who are expert in Vedic knowledge—and the word is also there—they

have selected the chief name of God as Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa means "all-attractive." (Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā 7.1, Fiji, May 24, 1975)

He presumed that the whole principle of *sankirtana* could be performed in other traditions as well, with a different name of God. He continues:

"He has His name, but the name is designated according to His activities. That means that God has His activities, and according to the different types of activities, He has got millions and trillions of name. So our this propaganda, "Chant the holy name of God"... So somebody may decline that "Why shall I chant the name of Kṛṣṇa? This is Hindu name," or "Indian name." But Caitanya Mahāprabhu says that if you decline to chant the particular name "Kṛṣṇa," then if you have got your name of God, you can chant that also. We are not dogmatic. If you have got actually the name of God, you chant that. That is His instruction.

*nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smarāṇe na kālāḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam īdṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ*

Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that whatever name you select, God's name... In India we have got God's name in so many varieties—Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu... [break] ...is our propaganda. We don't say that "You chant this particular name." Caitanya Mahāprabhu never says. But we selected to chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra because Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the inaugurator of the *sankirtana* movement, He personally chanted this Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma... So we follow. Mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ [Cc. Madhya 17.186]. We have to follow some authority.

So our request is to everyone—I think there should be any objection—that "You chant the holy name of God." This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. If you have got your own name of God, you chant that. If not, what is the objection? Take this name, "Kṛṣṇa," and chant. Why there should be objection? This is not dogmatism. We give freedom. We do not give. Caitanya Mahāprabhu gives that God has got many name. Why not? Just like one man in the family—somebody is calling him father; somebody calling him brother; somebody calling him by his name. There are so many ways to call the same man. Similarly, if you have got a name, holy name of the holy father, you chant that. This is our propaganda. Harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam [Cc. Ādi 17.21]. This is the recommendation in the Vedic literature, that in this age, this age of differentiation, this age of fight, quarreling, misunderstanding, if I say, "This is the name of God," and you say, "No, this is the name of God," then there will be fight. So better, Caitanya Mahāprabhu gives here, that whatever name you have got... But it must be God's name, harer nāma, not your manufactured name. It must be authorized God's name. You chant that." (Bhagavad-gītā 7.1 Fiji, May 24, 1975)

Here is another example:

"Allen Ginsberg: If you're identifying love, however, with the sabda Kṛṣṇa, what of those people who identify love with the sabda Allah?"

Prabhupāda: If that śabda, of course, identifies with God, we have no objection. That Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis. God has many names. God is attractive, His name is also attractive, because He's not different from His name. If you have got exactly

the same attractive name, we have no objection. We simply say, "You chant God's name, holy name." Then you become purified. That is our program. We don't say that you change your Christianity. No. We don't say. If you have got a nice name, all-attractive name, in your scripture—don't manufacture but authorized—then you chant that. We simply request, "You chant."" (Room Conversation with Allen Ginsberg, May 12, 1969, Columbus, Ohio)

One more time in the same conversation Srila Prabhupada emphasizes that not all sounds are equally beneficial:

"Allen Ginsberg... Part of the limitation is just a natural resentment or resistance, people wanting a prayer in their own tongue, in their own language. I don't know... So that is, for the same reason an American Indian chant would not take hold or even a Latin chant would not take universal hold.

Prabhupāda: Mantra, mantra means...

Allen Ginsberg: So that many of us will say, "Is it possible to find an American mantra?"

Prabhupāda: Mantra means the transcendental sound. You see. Just like omkāra.

Allen Ginsberg: So you think the very nature of the sound... Okay, but now, om̐ is an absolutely natural sound from the throat to the mouth. And yet even om̐, natural as it is, sounds foreign.

Prabhupāda: Yes. Therefore it is a praṇāma. It is accepted.

Allen Ginsberg: That also sounds foreign here. It's hard to get people to say aum̐ even. 'Cause I tried in Chicago with aum̐ and with Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Prabhupāda: But there is no other alternative." (Room Conversation with Allen Ginsberg, May 12, 1969, Columbus, Ohio)

An important question remains. How wide did Srila Prabhupada want to expand the movement of chanting Hare Krishna maha-mantra? Did he plan that all people around the world (or at least most of them) would be involved in it? The answer to this question is simple: "No".

As we already explained, at least the first points of this document are built according to the "ladder" principle. In the same conversation with Srila Prabhupada Allen Ginsberg again and again points out something, which he considers to be a problem in Srila Prabhupada's movement. He speaks about narrowness in the movement, because it strictly sticks to a specific tradition and requires people to follow the regulative principles, specific rituals and scriptures, using Sanskrit and so on. Allen suggests simple distribution of «chanting Hare Krishna mantra with no rituals». He even compares vaisnava's practice with the rules of orthodox Jews, and warns that under the pressure of modern trends Krishna Consciousness can simply vanish from the face of the world because of its extraordinary orthodoxy. But Srila Prabhupada steadily refuses all his suggestions to reduce the standards accepted in ISCKON. *"I have no excessive ambitions. Krishna consciousness is not for all. Not everyone will accept it. It is for rare souls, but there must be an opportunity to follow this way for those who want it"* (not word by word, but the essence is there). In other words, Srila Prabhupada wanted to expand Krishna consciousness movement, but not at any cost, not by means of decrease in the level of the philosophical understanding or standards of practice.

(In fact this explanation shows that Srila Prabhupada appreciated distinctions and didn't allow the Gaudiya-vaishnav's tradition to vanish. On the one hand lays the unity of all people, on the other hand – distinctiveness and uniqueness of gaudiya-vayshnav's tradition).

At the same time it is obvious that the first four points of the "Program" are closely inter-connected and supplement each other. The first point speaks about the method of uniting the whole world on spiritual basis, which is the same for everyone (that's why unity is possible). The second point

speaks about a common center which unites everyone which is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The third point says that all the living entities belong to one family, Lord's family. And the fourth point tells about the method of keeping in contact with Him or, to be more exact, the method of the descent of spiritual atmosphere, in which it is very easy to experience the presence of God.

Brief summary of this point:

1. A real union of people could happen. People of the world can really unite due to the congregational chanting of the Holy Names, which purifies the atmosphere.
2. Congregational chanting necessitates cooperation. Thus, congregational chanting by itself substantiates the ideal, which all people should aspire for in their service to the Lord.
3. Sankirtana changes men's hearts and makes them better and purer.
4. In order to do it sincerely people need to understand the philosophy which is behind chanting the Holy Name. They should have logical, rational understanding of why they are doing it. Besides, they must follow moral and ethical principles, and in this case chanting of the Holy Name will transform their hearts.
5. Therefore distributing books of Krishna Conscious philosophy is also a form of sankirtana, and moreover it is the most important form.
6. The name "Krishna" is the most important name of God, and its chanting is the most beneficial; but in general it is good to chant any name of the Lord provided in authorized scriptures.
7. Srila Prabhupada understood that not so many people would accept the practice of Krishna Consciousness, but he was not prepared to adjust the standards set by him in order to increase this movement. It was very important for him to preserve the purity of Gaudiya-vaishnav's tradition.

5) To prove by active work and preaching that Lord Sri Krishna is the only enjoyer of all the outcomes of individual and collective sacrifice, penance, meditation, arts, culture, science, because He is the Supreme Proprietor of the whole universe, eternally apart of Him everyone knows Him as a friend. Real peace can be attained when this is realized, in fact.

(g) To prove it practically by active work and preaching that Shree Krishna is the only Enjoyer of all the outcome of everyone's sacrifice, penance, meditation, arts, culture, science, because He is the Supreme Proprietor of the whole Universe, and Eternal Friend of everybody. Real peace is possible to be attained when this is realized in fact. Such supramundane state of existence is called Divine Life. This supramental state of Divine life is described in the "Ishopanishad" as follows:

"Ishabashyamidam Sarbam

Jatkinchit Jagatyam Jagat

Tenataktena Bhunjitha

Magridha Kashyachit Dhanam."

Purport:

This is a paraphrase of famous "formula of peace" (BG 5.29). Srila Prabhupada explains that when a man forgets about central position of Sri Krishna and tries to put himself in the center, he gets a lot of trouble. Actually, this is the main defect of humanistic, man-centered civilization, which started at the age of Enlightenment. Now the whole human society is at "humanistic dead end". Day by day the tension in people's mind and society increases, and nonetheless most of "intelligent"

people do not understand that atheistic humanism of the age of Enlightenment has exhausted itself. A lot of so-called learned people accepted degradation of art and culture, morality, destruction of family and social structure, mass of abortions, popularization of more and more perverted forms of material enjoyment as a sign of progress and freedom. Unfortunately, even those people, who understand fatality of these trends, can't see any alternative for humanistic culture with its attractive liberal and, at first sight, proper, ideals and values.

Most intelligent people can't accept strict (and maybe even cruel) and anti-cultural ideals of religious fundamentalism, either Judaic or Christian, or Mohammedi an, or Buddhist or Hindu. Modern people associate religious fundamentalism with violence, rightlessness and total suppression of creative individuality. Moreover, in the modern age of Internet and other forms of mass media it is practically impossible to return to medieval lifestyle (domostroi, shariat or varnasrama, whatever you call it). In the countries with developed democracy people usually balance between these two extremes, and it slows down degradation of the society, but it doesn't solve the problem. Strict autocratic orders, which try to resist this worldwide tendency, are artificial and not very solid. Very often their hierarchy uses these traditional values as a cover for keeping power and privileges, and for this reason they stand up for these values. Moreover, any of those leaders, who stand up for traditional values, hardly follow these principles in everyday life.

In this situation it is more and more vital to construct working models of a free and open society, a society with God in the center. A society where freedom is based on reasonable and conscious (but not blind and dogmatic) acceptance of the moral principles based on the scriptures; where creativity and science, based on these spiritual principles are not suppressed but encouraged.

We have already said that this document is based on the principle of a living role model. That is why Srila Prabhupada emphasizes here that the goal of the society he established is to show in practice that life according to the "formula of peace" will make people really happy and satisfied ("only then people will really understand it"). It is evident that he wanted people to see a real example of God-centered society, where only God is "the only enjoyer of all the outcomes of individual and collective sacrifice, penance, meditation, arts, culture, science, because He is the Supreme Proprietor of the whole universe, eternally apart of Him everyone knows Him as a friend." In other words, it is a society where everyone works for God, with complete understanding whom everything belongs to, and thus leaving no place for exploitation of one man by another.

Srila Prabhupada gives an image of such society in his essay "Gita-nagari":

The Gītā-nāgarī will be therefore the main preaching center of the Supreme Authority of Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Personality of Godhead. It shall be proclaimed from that place that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the Absolute Enjoyer of all benefits derived from all kinds of works, sacrifice, cultivation of knowledge, that He is the Absolute Proprietor of all the material and spiritual worlds, that He is unalloyed friend and philosopher of all living entities namely the gods or the rulers, the general people, the beast and the birds, the reptiles, plants and trees and all other animals residing in every nook and corner of the great universes. When such knowledge will be fostered from the vantage of the Gītā-nāgarī, at that time only real peace and prosperity will usher in the world so anxiously awaited by the people of the world. Unfortunately the present trend of civilization is conducted just on the opposite direction of the above standard view. The human being has declared himself to be the Lord or the Supreme enjoyer of everything and he poses himself as the proprietor of the world. He has declared himself as the friend and philosopher of the people in general enamoured by material power and wealth which is bringing in

ruination for himself and his followers also. Every human being is imagining himself as independent God (?) and foolishly trying to guide the activities of his so-called followers without knowing the art and science of such leadership business. Such leadership for the actual benefit of the people in general can effectively be conducted when the leaders themselves will know the art and science of surrendering unto the lotus feet of Sri Kṛṣṇa and will be able to convince their followers that God alone has the absolute prerogative in the abovementioned three functions.

It is interesting that in this quote Srila Prabhupada describes leadership and surrender to the will of God as «science and art». Obviously, it is the main art and the main science, which people should cultivate.

Srila Prabhupada intentionally emphasizes the key role of perfect leaders in building the model of such society. Polished ideals will remain on paper until the leaders become role models and apply to their life the art and science of devotional service to Sri Krishna. An obvious unhidden sign that they have acquired this knowledge is their inner peace and true happiness, and also their humbleness and humanity. In this article Allen Ginsberg's words when he presented Srila Prabhupada to the students of the university in the state of Ohio (12.05.1969, Columbus) are very meaningful. Allen tried to explain to the audience as well as to himself the secret of Srila Prabhupada's preaching amongst the hippies:

“In other words, the indigenous, the importation of a very strange oriental form, almost a hard-shelled Baptist oriental form, in the sense of its traditionality and its fundamentalism, its reliance on ancient texts and interpretation of ancient texts by long tradition of teachers—it's strange it's so far-out and ritualized an Indian form should take root in the United States a little more naturally than the more Protestant Vedānta Society or the extremely rigorous Zen groups that have taken root. I think partly it's due to the magnanimity or generosity or the old-age charm, wisdom, cheerfulness of Swami Bhaktivedanta, his openness of heart, his willingness to come down on to the street, and his sense of his own divinity and the divinity of others around that it's been possible for the bhakti-yoga cult of India to be planted very firmly here in America so that now there are communes, or ashrams, functioning on the basis of the Kṛṣṇa rituals, which are, in some respect, a model for all those anarchists and political people who are interested in establishing indigenous American communes.”

It is evident that Srila Prabhupada and previous acaryas of our sampradaya didn't want to create some ultraconservative organization which criticizes science and art and suppresses creative and individual nature of people. Most of the great teachers in our tradition were poets, dramatists, singers; they perfectly knew logic and other Vedic sciences and arts. Following them, Prabhupada wanted to develop God-centered science and for this purpose he created Bhaktivedanta institute, and he was proud of the work of its scientists. He wanted art to become God-centered, as it used to be from day one, and that's why he inspired artists, created his professional recording studio, the first «Transcendental exhibition» and the group «Vaikuntha players».

He sent his disciple to learn the Vedic astrology from the traditional gurus in Kerala. He wished spiritual musical culture, based on chanting the holy names, spiritual dramatic art and spiritual dramatists to appear. For this reason he personally discussed the plan of the play about Lord Caitanya in the conversations with Hayagriva and Tamal Krishna Gosvami. And at the same time he didn't consider his opinion on many of these special questions to be final. This is extremely important! For example, he told his disciples to go to South India and find some specialists in the Vedic astronomy, who could explain certain points from the Fifth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam.

There is an interesting answer of Srila Prabhupada to the letter of doctor Volf-Rottkey, a linguist, who used to help our movement in Germany. In his letter the doctor shared his doubts why devotees when preaching to scientists try to insist on some views which contradict with the basic scientific concepts, and thus make fool of themselves and present ISKCON as another odd fundamental sect. In particular he mentioned moon landing, geocentric model of Solar system, etc. Answering the letter Srila Prabhupada repeated his based on common sense point of view on moon landing with some humor, and he wrote:

“Regarding the scientists, we have entrusted our own three scientists namely Svarupa Damodara, Sadaputa, and Madhva and we leave the matter to them, we do not say anything ourselves, but are leaving it to them.”

Brief summary of this point:

1. Here Srila Prabhupada speaks about creating functional models of God-centered society, which he thoroughly explained in his essay “Gita-nagari”
2. This society should be open and its atmosphere should encourage creativity, so that people could use given by God talents to serve the Lord.
3. Srila Prabhupada himself encouraged his disciples to be creative and for this purpose he created Bhaktivedanta Institute and other creative subdivisions in ISCKON.
4. He didn't plan that his own point of view on some special questions of science or art would become strictly dogmatic and all members of this society would have to believe.

6) To assist whenever and wherever possible in the building of a social structure on the real foundation of spiritual progress and establishment of peace and unity between men throughout the world.

(k) To undertake civic enterprises which do not come in conflict with the ideals and missions of the 'League' with all the principles in view.

Purport:

According to Srila Prabhupada’s vision, a healthy society is indeed a society connected with God and based on spiritual values of service, mercy, truthfulness, austerity and purity.

The principles of Mahārāja Parīkṣit can be still continued, and human society can still be improved if there is determination by the authorities. We can still purge out from the state all the activities of immorality introduced by the personality of Kali if we are determined to take action like Mahārāja Parīkṣit. He allotted some place for Kali, but in fact Kali could not find such places in the world at all because Mahārāja Parīkṣit was strictly vigilant to see that there were no places for gambling, drinking, prostitution and animal slaughter. Modern administrators want to banish corruption from the state, but fools as they are, they do not know how to do it. They want to issue licenses for gambling houses, wine and other intoxicating drug houses, brothels, hotel prostitution and cinema houses, and falsity in every dealing, even in their own, and they want at the same time to drive out corruption from the state. They want the kingdom of God without God consciousness. How can it be possible to adjust two contradictory matters? If we want to drive out corruption from the state, we must first of all organize society to accept the principles of religion, namely austerity, cleanliness, mercy and

truthfulness, and to make the condition favorable we must close all places of gambling, drinking, prostitution and falsity. (SB 1.17.43-44)

All social diseases spread in the modern society such as drinking, drugs, abortions, criminality, sexual perversions, luxury and poverty right next to each other and the destruction of family institution present only external signs that people lack higher, spiritual goal of their existence. That's why Srila Prabhupada emphasizes that a healthy social structure can appear only on the basis of spiritual development. Misunderstanding of the higher goal of life inevitably creates a society with chaotic social structure, based on envy, cult of consumption and exploitation, supported by false slogans of equality, freedom and protection of "human rights". It is pointless to fight against each vice of the society separately if the structure of this society supports false values. That is why Srila Prabhupada formulates this point of his "Program" in a different and broader way to compare to its description in the League, where he simply speaks about the service to the society (to assist whenever and wherever possible in the building of a social structure on the real foundation of spiritual progress).

The main problem, main social evil of modern society is that the most vulnerable categories of people: women, children, old people and cows remain unprotected. He pointed out this deficiency of modern society on many occasions:

So, this Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is giving to the whole world real life, real, what is meant by life. So this..., these are the etiquette. To take care, especially, of brāhmaṇa, old men, children, women and cows. This is civilization. These living entities should be taken care of. Now these rascals they are killing cows and making women prostitutes, and killing the children even in the womb. And there is no question of brāhmaṇa respect, and neither there is the brāhmaṇa culture. Then how you can be happy? (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.14.43, New York, April 7, 1973)

According to Srila Prabhupada's vision, any human society which fails to take care of women, children, old people, Brahmans and cows is no better than the animal world. Old people, children and women remain vulnerable primarily because of the deterioration of the family structure, and the decomposition of the family structure of any society rests on the gradual demolition of sanctified marriage.

In the age of Kali, the women and the children, along with brāhmaṇas and cows, will be grossly neglected and left unprotected. In this age illicit connection with women will render many women and children uncared for. Circumstantially, the women will try to become independent of the protection of men, and marriage will be performed as a matter of formal agreement between man and woman. (SB, 1.16.21, Purport.)

So the point is that formerly, in India, marriage took place only after an astrological calculation of past, present, and future had determined whether the couple would be happy in their life together. When marriage is thus sanctified, the man and the woman live peacefully and practice spiritual culture. Each one helps the other, so they live very happily and become advanced in spiritual life. And at last they go back home, back to Godhead. That is the system. Not that a grown-up girl and a grown-up boy mix together, and if he likes her and she likes him they get married, and then he leaves or she leaves... This kind of marriage was not sanctioned. But of this Kali-yuga it is said, dām-patyē 'bhiruciḥ: Marriage will take place simply because of mutual liking, that's all. Liking one moment means disliking the next

moment. That is a fact. So a marriage based on mutual liking has no value. (Journey of Self-Discovery 6.4)

A healthy social structure of such society is always built on 1) rational division of labor, 2) a primacy of duties over the rights and 3) internal understanding of equality of all people before God. Three of these principles are closely connected with each other: Rational division of labor does not lead to exploitation and inequality only in society where duties, but not human rights are paramount.

Rational division of labor is impossible in the society based not on the value of the service, but on envy.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and bhāgavata-dharma are meant for persons who are completely free of envy (parama-nirmatsarāṇām). Therefore Prahlāda Mahārāja prays in this verse, khalah prasīdatām: "May all the envious persons be pacified." The material world is full of envious persons, but if one frees himself of envy, he becomes liberal in his social dealings and can think of others' welfare. (SB, 5.18.9, Purport)

The principle of human rights is the basis of our unwell modern society, but Srila Prabhupada explains that in a healthy society *regulated occupational duties, as prescribed in the scriptures in terms of the different orders and divisions of society, performed without attachment or proprietary rights...* (BG, 18.23, purp.)

In Western society a false concept of equality of all people, has been established since the French revolution and incorporated into material sphere. According to people's understanding, who were brought up in this culture, any recognition of the material inequality inevitably leads to the exploitation of a weak person by a strong one. However, it is impossible to eliminate material inequality, because people in this world are and will always be at the different stages of development, they have and will always have different needs. Therefore, in Western society all attempts to make all people equal in rights caused inequality of people and exploitation of a man by another man become hidden and twisted. For example, instead of a formal slavery, there came another, much more sophisticated form of a debt slavery.

The Vedic social philosophy solves the problem of inequality in a different way. Recognition of the obvious material inequality emphasizes that every person must carry out their duties. A person's social status is not determined by the form of his activities, but how well he performs his duties.

“With great power comes great responsibility”. Voltaire

In other words, a higher position in the social hierarchy presupposes much more complex duties, but not privileges in rights. In "Apastamba-Dharma-sutras" (10.10-11) it is said that if a person performs the duties of his Varna (social class), then with every next birth he will go up one step, but if he fails to, then with every next birth he will descend the social ladder. Simultaneously, the Vedic social system emphasizes the spiritual equality of all beings before God.

In executing the prescribed duties of life, no one is higher or lower; there are such divisions as "higher" and "lower," but since there is actually a common interest—to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead—there are no distinctions between them. (SB, 4.21.33, purp.)

This thought gave Srila Prabhupada grounds for calling the Vedic social system a "spiritual communism."

4. The fourth item is to organize the much discussed caste system as a solution of natural division of the human beings all over the world. Nationalistic division of human races is artificial but scientific division of the caste system as envisaged in the Bhagavad-gita is natural. We shall have to pick up brahmanas and others not only from the Indian people but from the peoples of all over the world. The vitiated caste system of present India is never sanctioned by the scriptures. But the caste system is made by God according to quality and work of the subject and it was never designed for the benefit of accidental birth right. Thus whatever is made by God cannot be destroyed by man. Destruction of the caste system as contemplated by some exponents, is therefore out of question. By the modes of nature different persons are imbued with different qualities and the scientific way of division of human society, from the qualitative aspect, by the caste system is quite natural. But the basic principle of such caste system is to serve the plan of Godhead and by doing so the four orders of caste system make a headway by the co-operative method. When such spiritual progress is definitely made, the materialistic progress is automatically effected as a matter of course. (Letter to: Sardar Patel)

Whatever the bodily condition is there, the spiritual condition is the same. Paṇḍitāḥ sama... This samatā, this communism, equality, is perfect. Their modern theory of communism, that "I am good, my brother is good, and all bad," this is not communism. When we are, we can see that "I am good, my brother good, the dog is good, the cat is good, the Englishman is good, the every living entity is good," that is communism. That is perfect communism. So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, or the Bhāgavata-dharma, there is ideal communism. You will find in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, in the Seventh Canto, Nārada Muni is giving, instructing to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira about this communism that "A gr̥hastha, before taking lunch, he must see that every insect, every lizard, every cat, every rat, even a snake in that house must have been fed, must have taken their food. This is so hospitable that the householder, the owner of the house, not only sees that his wife, children, servants are well-fed, but even the rats, cats or the insect or the lizard. Or even the snake has got his food. This is the ideal of communism. Because when you are paṇḍita, learned, you cannot distinguish that "This is animal and this is human being." You can treat them different because their consciousness is... But on the basic principle the living entity—any living entity—it doesn't matter whether it is animal or man—he is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. (Pandal Lecture, Bombay, January 14, 1973)

In other words Srila Prabhupada includes charity and social protection of dependent members in the society in the creation of a healthy social structure, based on the spiritual concepts. The idea of social service and charitable activities, as one of the main instruments of establishing a social structure and a foundation of people's spiritual development, is one of the postulates that causes a lot of arguments among the followers of Srila Prabhupada. Thus, we will provide more quotes on Srila Prabhupada's expectations of charity and social service in the organization he established. We will also quote sastras and the predecessors of Srila Prabhupada.

Talking about the social structure Srila Prabhupada purposefully mentioned "on the real foundation of spiritual progress ", and that social service "must not come in conflict with the ideals and missions of the 'League' with all its fundamental principles".

Of course, Srila Prabhupada clearly understood the danger of the substitution, when cheap mundane charity that pleases our mind and brings fast and attractive dividends was presented as a

spiritual activity. Following his spiritual teacher, Srila Prabhupada called this activity an "extended egoism".

People are very much interested in welfare activities for the human society. So they think that by feeding poor men or giving cloth or opening hospitals, schools, colleges—"These things are required. What is the use of hearing about Kṛṣṇa?" That is their opinion. But these welfare activities are extended selfishness. This word we learned from our Guru Mahārāja: "extended selfishness." Just like I love myself for my sense gratification, and then I extend it to my son. I am gratifying my senses. I have got my wife. And to get my son another wife... The principle is the same. Then my grandchildren, then my great-grandchildren. Or, not only limited with the family, then society, then community, then nationally, then internationally. But they are all extended selfishness. Yes. Without knowing what is the real self-interest. Therefore we find so many faults in such welfare activities. (Lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.8, Vṛndāvana, October 19, 1972)

However he included a point about social service in the "Program". What is behind? To reach a compromise with the public opinion? Is it a preaching technique? A deeper understanding of the mechanisms of human spiritual development? We try to understand the way social service is to be executed without contradiction and interference with "ideals and mission" of ISKCON and, at the same time, assisting spiritual development of its members. Looking at Srila Prabhupada as a role model and studying his statements we highlighted a few motives which should become a foundation of such social service.

1. Helping people is natural manifestation of the compassionate nature of a vaisnava. Vaisnava is a well-wisher of everyone.

Vaisnavas are compassionate. Compassion of a vaisnava manifests his devotion. Bhaktivinoda Thakur names compassion along with purity, truthfulness, religiosity and ability to love as one of the natural qualities of the soul. He writes in "Jaiva-Dharma" (chapter 8):

Dainya and dayā are not separate or independent excellences, but inherent to the very character of Bhaktidevī herself.

The following quotes from the books, lectures and conversations of Srila Prabhupada illustrate this idea.

One who works in devotion, who is a pure soul, and who controls his mind and senses is dear to everyone, and everyone is dear to him. Though always working, such a man is never entangled. (BG 5.7)

I do not pray to the Supreme Personality of Godhead for the eight perfections of mystic yoga, nor for salvation from repeated birth and death. I want only to stay among all the living entities and suffer all distresses on their behalf, so that they may be freed from suffering. (SB 9.21.12)

If the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement spreads all over the world, and if by the grace of Kṛṣṇa everyone accepts it, the thinking of envious people will change. Everyone will think of the welfare of others. Therefore Prahlāda Mahārāja prays, śivam mitho dhiyā. In material activities, everyone is envious of others, but in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, no one is envious of anyone else; everyone thinks of the welfare of

others. Therefore Prahlāda Mahārāja prays that everyone's mind may become gentle by being fixed at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. (SB. 5.18.9, purp.)

Jayapataka Swami: One day when we just moved into the Lotus building... Then there was a very big feast. And we invited many villagers and everyone to come. And it was a big feast. After the feast all the leaf plates were thrown behind the temple. And then Prabhupada went upstairs to his room. And I was sitting in the room with Srila Prabhupada and there was dog's barking in the back. So Prabhupada got up and walked over to the veranda and looked over veranda. And there he saw that there was a big pile, so many people had taken prasadam, there was very big pile of banana leaves. ... And there were some children, who were obviously very poor, they had torn clothes, they had sticks in their hands. And they were biting of the dogs to get the remnants of food that people left on their plates and thrown into the garbage pile. When Prabhupada saw that... people had to fight dogs to eat throwaways, literally, he started crying. He said: "Just see how hungry they must be." ... So he was really moved that these children are so hungry. And he said that we have to organize that nobody within 10 mile radius of the temple is hungry. Everyone should have food to eat. Then we started program that originally was called ISKCON food relief. (Srila Prabhupada's memories, vol. 1, ch. 2)

Prabhupāda: During āraṭrika time, hundreds of children come to us. I give little prasādam. You have seen it?

Dr. Patel: Yes.

Prabhupāda: They are very interested in dance and... Now, I wish that they may be given sumptuous food and dress.

Dr. Patel: Yes, dress, I also thought of that. Some of them are very badly dressed, poor people...

Prabhupāda: Yes, if they come, "All right, come here. Just take your bath, be cleansed, tilaka, and a nice dress" and giving them some food.

...

Dr. Patel: I think, I think we must do that. Then we will be able to propagate.

Prabhupāda: Not with that purpose. Here is a poor child. He comes automatically to dance. So we should take care of them.

...

Prabhupāda: ...voluntarily, to dance, to take prasādam. So why you should not take care of them? This is my point. We don't make distinction whether they are coming from Christian or Hindu or...

...

Prabhupāda: Our, our, our mantra is sarve sukhino bhavantu.

Dr. Patel: That's right.

Prabhupāda: Sarve sukhina... Everyone be happy. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. We want to see everyone to be happy. That's all.

...

Prabhupāda: And how lovingly they come to take little prasādam. I was thinking that...

Dr. Patel: I was noticing, myself, the same thing...

Prabhupāda: How lovingly they offer me obeisances, touch my feet, and a little fruit or little, whatever I give, they are satisfied. So they are so friendly because they are innocent. They do not know what is this Hindu, Christian. So we must take care of them. (Morning Walk February 17, 1974, Bombay)

We don't think that the human being is only our own community. We think every living is within the community, center being God. Just like spiritual our communism means... Just like I'm living in this house. I shall have to take care even for one lizard, that is also living entity. I shall have to take care of one rat, one mouse, even one snake, if he's living in one's house. That is spiritual community. The idea

is nobody should starve. I have to see whether the leader is also given proper food. Just like people generally save foodstuff from the attack of other animals. But spiritual communism... [break] We ought to make them happy. We want to see everyone is happy. That is our mission. Actually all our students who are presently working with us they are feeling happiness... (indistinct) So everyone will be happy if they take to this movement. We want to see that everyone is happy. That is our mission. We don't want to exploit others. (Interview, July 20, 1972, Paris)

2. Helping others is an essential part of Vaisnava's sadhana and temple mission. Serving people as part and parcels of Krishna is a part of our service to Krishna.

For vaisnavas who achieved perfection helping other living beings is a natural manifestation of their nature. For those who have not yet reached perfection, the manifestation of compassion becomes *sadhana* as a part of their spiritual practice which is designed to restore their pure spiritual nature.

«It is the duty of every living being to perform welfare activities for the benefit of others with his life, wealth, intelligence and words» (SB, 10.22.35).

«My dear Uddhava, narrations of My pastimes and qualities are all-auspicious and purify the entire universe. A faithful person who constantly hears, glorifies and remembers such transcendental activities, who through dramatic performances relives My pastimes, beginning with My appearance, and who takes full shelter of Me, dedicating his religious, sensual and occupational activities for My satisfaction, certainly obtains unflinching devotional service to Me, the eternal Personality of Godhead» (SB, 11.11.23-24).

From the Purportary: «The word dharma in this verse indicates that one's religious activities should always be in connection with Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, one should give charity in the form of food grains, clothing, etc., to the Vaiṣṇavas and brāhmaṇas, and whenever possible one should arrange for the protection of cows, who are very dear to the Lord».

In Sri Tattva Sutra (35) Bhaktivinoda Thakur when commenting on the verse from the Bhagavatam (3.29.27) writes:

«This gratitude and love for God is exhibited by a pure devotee, who knows that the Lord lives in every living entity. As such, temple worship necessarily includes distribution of prasada. It is not that one should create a temple in his private apartment or private room, offer something to the Lord, and then eat. Of course, that is better than simply cooking foodstuffs and eating without understanding one's relationship with the Supreme Lord; people who act in this manner are just like animals. But the devotee who wants to elevate himself to the higher level of understanding must know that the Lord is present in every living entity, and, as stated in the previous verse, one should be compassionate to other living entities. A devotee should worship the Supreme Lord, be friendly to persons who are on the same level and be compassionate to the ignorant. One should exhibit his compassion for ignorant living entities by distributing prasada. Distribution of prasada to the ignorant masses of people is essential for persons who make offerings to the Personality of Godhead» (SB, 3.29.24, Purport).

«So charity, or sacrificing your possession for the benefit of others, this is also yajna. But they are called karma-kanda yajna, fruitive activities. By such performance of yajna, one can elevate his

material position. Just like feeding the poor. It is also yajna. But the same thing, if it is dovetailed in consciousness, that becomes perfect. People are very much inclined to feed the poor with sumptuous food, but it can be done in a little different way, that the foodstuff offered to Visnu, prasada, that distribution foodstuff is better than ordinary distribution of foodstuff. Ordinarily, that is punya, pious activities, but when it is connection with Krsna, this is called yajna. Dravya-yajna. To distribute food and cloth, that is called dravya-yajna, but yajna can be said when it is done, dovetailing the activities with Krsna consciousness. That is yajna. Yajna means Visnu. Yajnarthe karmano 'nyatra loko 'yam karma-bandhanah [Bg. 3.9]. So our the Krsna consciousness movement, we are also distributing food in our about one hundred branches all over the world. But not directly, but through nirbandhah krsna-sambandhe yuktam vairagyam ucyate» (SP Lecture on Bhagavad-gita 4.28, Bombay, April 17, 1974).

«During this tour when Shrila Sarasvati Thakura and his followers were returning from a darsana of Sakshi-gopala, he noticed that his householder followers refused to give alms to some poor people who were requesting help. He then sarcastically described their attitude as, "Money should not be given to poor, distressed people ... if it is given it will be karma-kanda."

He stated that, "This type of consideration by householders expresses miserliness, mercilessness, and a lack of affliction at others' distress. From this attitude the heart becomes hard and attacked with niggardliness, and as a result the tendency to spend money even for Vishnu's service, which is the means of one's own interest, disappears. Therefore, offense in service (seva-aparadha) is invited. In order to guard against all these hypocritical, sinful deliberations, Shri Gaurasundara in His pastimes used to give help to lowly, distressed people. Even earned wealth is obtained by the mercy of God. It is not the incorrect use of wealth if some portion of mercy is given to requesting poor people-it is its proper use! To distribute mercy (prasada) is the compulsory duty of householder Vaishnavas. Even though their (poor people's) miserableness has been obtained through the fault of their own karma ... they are still God's people. Therefore, to give them help is the compulsory duty of well-to-do people. However, to think of them as 'Narayana' is only blindness to truth and a terrible spiritual offense!"» (From "Ray of Visnu, Rupa Vilasa das, chapter 9.Sannyasa).

«Yes, I fully agree that "What is the use of a temple if there is no prasadam distribution?" Prasadam distribution on a large scale must be resumed. Such a temple where there is no such distribution has no value, I agree» (SP Letter to Tamala Krsna, Los Angeles, 11 January, 1974).

3. By feeding people we awake dormant Krishna consciousness in everyone's heart and help people rise spiritually.

Material attachments harden people's hearts, but when they come across genuine unselfishness and natural virtues, which have been dormant in the heart of every living being, awake. It helps people to become closer to God.

«The main activity of Vaishnava - induce living beings to serve God. When the main purpose of our activity is the cure of disease or material hunger satisfaction, it should be understood as a lack of genuine qualities of a Vaishnava, because as a result of such activity living beings get only temporary relief, and not an eternal blessing. But when the same work is done in order to help leaving beings to turn to Krishna, Vaishnava get real pleasure from such activities» (Bhaktivinoda Thakur, Sajjana-Toshani, 4/8).

«Now I am especially concerned to distribute grains, rice, wheat in the form of dahl and rice prasadam to hungry people all over India. The people here are very disturbed because, partly due to the

punishment of Nature, and partly due to the mismanagement of the demon class of men, food is not available. If the people do not even have sufficient food they will not even be able to receive spiritual instructions. So I am hopeful that if we can widely distribute free foodstuffs to the people of India, by giving it out at our centers as well as by travelling parties to villages, we will win over the whole country and the whole world by this activity on Krsna's behalf» (SPLetter to Satyahit, Vrindaban, 16 March, 1974).

«Prabhupada: ...So I think this book department, by grace of Krsna, is all right. You don't require to invest. But whatever income you'll get from this record business, spend it for giving prasadam. So we have got so many centers, they will feed.

Ramesvara: Hmm. That's very good. That way a whole new department.

Prabhupada: Therefore I started Mayapur this prasada distribution. And it is coming to be successful. People are..., politicians are appreciating that here is Hindu-Muslim unity.

Ramesvara: All the devotees will appreciate this, then, that the records now, the money is going to be used for food relief.

Prabhupada: Yes. And we can increase. The same thing we see in the farm, in the village, "Come on, any number, I shall feed you. Come here, chant Hare Krsna and take prasadam." And we shall increase the quality of the prasadam. They will be very much pleased to come and chant. That I want. ...In all our temples the prasada distribution should be so round-up[?], that within ten miles nobody should remain hungry. There are many persons in India, they are half time hungry. ... "Come over here. You are hungry, take prasadam. If I cannot supply you daily, I'll supply at least two days, three days weekly." ... And Hindu, Muslim, they're sitting down. No grudges» (Conversation, January 13, 1977, Allahabad).

4. By feeding people with prasāda we do something understandable for the regular people and at the same time give people spiritual good.

Srila Prabhupada kept emphasising that the highest charity is teaching people the principles of the spiritual science. Caring for people's welfare, we must think about the welfare in their next birth but not just about their welfare in this life. This is the essence of a true charity according to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu (Cc., Adi, 9.43). However, not all people are able to appreciate such charity immediately. That is why while spreading the spiritual knowledge we distribute simultaneously sanctified food and thus help people to accept that spiritual knowledge.

«Therefore the best humanitarian work is to give knowledge to the humanity, not that one is suffering for want of food and... If I give some food, that is good work, but that is not sufficient. I may give food; that's all right. You give. We also give prasadam free. But that does not mean simply by giving prasadam, we are silent. We give knowledge also. This is Krsna consciousness movement. Food, automatically you have to give. That is... There is no prohibition. But at the same time: knowledge. Without knowledge-giving, if he remains ignorant... Just like the same example. If you have got some children, if you don't give them education, simply feed them, that is not your proper duty. You must give knowledge. Krsna consciousness movement is therefore giving them knowledge» (SPLecture on SB 6.2.5-6, Vrndavana, September 9, 1975).

«Just like we are distributing prasadam. Not that because he is poor man and we are giving prasada, no. This is not our idea. To our eyes, the so-called poor man and rich man, they are all suffering, not that the simply poor man suffering and the rich man is not suffering. Therefore we give them prasadam or isa-sanga. That prasadam is also Isa. The prasadam accepted by Krsna, offered to Krsna,

is also Kṛṣṇa. So if we give prasadam, then he is getting the opportunity of associating with Kṛṣṇa. This is our idea. **But people very much appreciate poor-feeding. So that, you can take it, that. But everyone is poor. Who is rich? Unless one has got knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, he is poor»** (SPLecture on SB 6.1.55, London, August 13, 1975).

«The second important program is this distribution of prasadam, without any discrimination, so that everyone will get equal portion, no matter how little or how much is there» (SPLetter to Bhavananda, Auckland, 14 April, 1972) .

«If not two hours, then I shall hold one hour Bhagavad-gita class, and I wish to see how people there appreciate our missionary activities. It is strictly on the basis of Lord Krishna's teachings as they are presented by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. That is our mission. So, if people become interested in our philosophy, then we shall consider the other two items, namely, the nursery school and dispensary. So far dispensary is concerned, we have none all over the world. It will be a new attempt. So far the school is concerned, we have got in Africa and America, and we have got men experienced to teach on our line. But for dispensary, we have no experience at all» (SPLetter to Dr. Ghosh, Mayapur, 5 April, 1975).

5. Charity is a stage in a step by step process of person's spiritual development, a part of his duties in the varnasrama-dharma system and an integral part of the healthy social structure not based on the exploitation.

In a healthy social structure any pious activities help people to purify themselves and step on the path of the spiritual development. Describing the ladder of spiritual development in the eleventh chapter of Gita Kṛṣṇa himself says that this is the step where spiritual journey of a person starts.

«If, however, you are unable to work in this consciousness of Me, then try to act giving up all results of your work and try to be self-situated».

Purport: It may be that one is unable even to sympathize with the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness because of social, familial or religious considerations or because of some other impediments. If one attaches himself directly to the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there may be objections from family members, or so many other difficulties. For one who has such a problem, it is advised that he sacrifice the accumulated result of his activities to some good cause. Such procedures are described in the Vedic rules. There are many descriptions of sacrifices and special functions for the full-moon day, and there is special work in which the result of one's previous action may be applied. Thus one may gradually become elevated to the state of knowledge. It is also found that when one who is not even interested in the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness gives charity to some hospital or some other social institution, he gives up the hard-earned results of his activities. That is also recommended here because by the practice of giving up the fruits of one's activities one is sure to purify his mind gradually, and in that purified stage of mind one becomes able to understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Of course, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not dependent on any other experience, because Kṛṣṇa consciousness itself can purify one's mind, but if there are impediments to accepting Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one may try to give up the results of his actions. In that respect, social service, community service, national service, sacrifice for one's country, etc., may be accepted so that some day one may come to the stage of pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord. In Bhagavad-gītā (18.46) we find it is stated, *yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānām*: if one decides to sacrifice for the supreme cause, even if he does not know that the supreme cause is Kṛṣṇa,

he will come gradually to understand that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme cause by the sacrificial method. (BG, 12.11)

In the eleventh song of “Srimad Bhagavatam” (11.18.42) Kṛṣṇa explains to Uddhava that the key responsibility of the householders in the system of varnasrama is to care for other living beings. Firstly a householder should provide food and make sacrifices: *grhiṇo bhūta-rakṣejyā*. Srila Prabhupada very often spoke about that.

«It is the duty of a householder to feed first of all the children, the old members of the family, the brāhmaṇas and the invalids. Besides that, an ideal householder is required to call for any unknown hungry man to come and dine before he himself goes to take his meals. He is required to call for such a hungry man thrice on the road. The neglect of this prescribed duty of a householder, especially in the matter of the old men and children, is unpardonable» (SB, 1.14.43, Purport).

«Nobody should accumulate for future consumption of family, society, or nation, more money or more grains or more vegetables or more eatables, one should have only as much as he requires. If there is greater production, that should be distributed to persons who need them» (SP Letter to Rayarama, Seattle, 17 October, 1968).

Brief summary of this point:

1. Healthy society is a society connected to God and based on the spiritual values such as compassion, honesty, asceticism and purity.
2. Therefore a healthy social structure could only arise on the basis of the spiritual development. Any society that does not aim for the spiritual development of its members will be inevitably attacked by all sorts of social diseases.
3. The sign of a healthy society is protection of the most vulnerable groups, i.e. women, children, elders and cows.
4. The first sign of the social deterioration is degradation of the institution of a sanctified marriage which has been replaced by a union based on a mutual agreement.
5. Divorces, legalised prostitution, unrestricted sex, abortions, unpunished killing of cows: these all are signs of a serious disease that affected mankind. Fighting against these social vices is one of the tasks of the Society, which Srila Prabhupada established.
6. Healthy social structure free from exploitation is based on three interconnected principles: 1) rational division of labour; 2) priority of duties over rights; and 3) internal understanding of equality of all people before God.
7. The Vedic social order that Srila Prabhupada called «spiritual communism» is based on the compassion to all human beings and care for their welfare.
8. According to the programs Srila Prabhupada initiated in ISKCON, feeding people with prasāda apart from spreading spiritual knowledge is the key form of the social service.
9. Feeding people is a natural manifestation of vaisnava’s compassionate nature.
10. Helping others is an essential part of a vaisnava’s sadhana and a temple mission. Serving people as part and parcels of Krishna is a component of our service to Krishna
11. By feeding people we awake the dormant Krishna consciousness in everyone's heart and help people to rise spiritually.
12. Distributing prasāda we do something people understand and at the same time we give people spiritual goodness.

13. Charity is a step by step process of a person's spiritual development, a part of his duties in the system of varnasrama-dharma and an integral part of the healthy social structure which is not based on exploitation.

The first six points contain the external program of ISKCON, our duties in the society we live in. The following points describe ISKCON duties towards those who joined us and started a serious practice of Krishna consciousness.

7) To attempt to save men individually from the chain of victimization the ongoing trend in modern civilization operates by, in the name of ideologies of false sentiment, so that Man may again be a free soul, to act and live freely with spiritual vision. This is possible by individual spiritual initiation, Diksha, when a man can see everything in Godhead and Godhead in everything.

(e) To save man individually from the system of chained victimization by the trend of modern civilization of false sentiments so that man may again be a free soul to act and live freely, an inspired life with spiritual vision. This is possible by individual spiritual initiation through the proper channel when a man can see everything in Godhead and Godhead in everything.

Purport:

Srila Prabhupada gives definition of *diksa* in "Nectar of Instruction" (5):

«Diksa, or spiritual initiation is explained in Bhakti-sandarbha (868):

*divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt
kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam
tasmād dīkṣeti sā proktā
deśīkaiḥ tattva-kovidaiḥ*

«By diksa one gradually becomes disinterested in material enjoyment and gradually becomes interested in spiritual life».

This definition states that *diksa* means a switch of person's attention, drastic change of life orientation. An extravert with consciousness attached to the matter gradually becomes an introvert and starts looking for inner meaning of life, and thus begins to perceive this world in a different way. Before they've seen the world as an object of their enjoyment and thus separated from God. But *diksa* restores connection between the world and God in a person's consciousness. Sri Krishna says about it in Gita more clearly. In the verse 4.34 He describes the relationships with spiritual master that are the essence of process of spiritual initiation: serving to the spiritual master with one's body, speech and mind. In the next verse (35) He describes the essence of knowledge which anyone can obtain from such relationships with *guru*:

«Having obtained real knowledge from a self-realized soul, you will never fall again into such illusion, for by this knowledge you will see that all living beings are but part of the Supreme, or, in other words, that they are Mine».

In the Purport to this verse Srila Prabhupada explains that false conceptions, which are to be dispersed by *diksa*, present conceptions of living entities about their independence from God, i.e. about their equal greatness with God:

«The sense of an existence separate from Kṛṣṇa is called maya (mā – not, yā – this). ... One can acquire such pure knowledge only from the bona fide spiritual master and thereby avoid the delusion that the living entity is equal to Kṛṣṇa».

Proclaiming independence from God a person becomes a slave of the matter and wastes his life in vain, trying to prove this lie to himself and to others. Freedom of men widely propagated in the modern atheistic society is nothing but slavery with material whims and attachments.

«Independence, artificial independence is no good always. Practically, we have no independence. I may think of independence, but practically I have no independence. I am servant of my senses. Kāmādīnām kati na katidhā pālītā durnideśa. We are all serving the senses. So where is my independence? I may declare independence from my father, from my state, from my country, from my community, but I am servant of my senses. So where is my independence? So we should know our constitutional position, that in all circumstances we are dependent». (SPLecture, Seattle, 07.10.68)

All these false but outwardly attractive slogans of the modern civilization speculate on human sentimentality: “universal equality”, “emancipation of women”, “human rights”, “freedom of speech”, “free love”, “right for abortions”, “protection the rights of sexual minorities” and so on. They defend the right of a man to rule this world that in fact means the right to violate God’s laws. Enormous propaganda system works to make people take all these slogans seriously and believe that they would be implemented in their “free” society. Modern people, even intelligent ones, sincerely believe that nowadays life has become better and people have more freedom than they’ve ever had before. It is rarely understood, that all these slogans are a cover of merciless and cruel system of exploitation, in which people voluntarily become slaves via their material attachments.

«So the materialistic class of men are undoubtedly very, very intelligent, but their intelligence is being used wrongly. Duskritinah. Duskritinah mudhah. Mudhah. Mudha means rascal, ass. So by their discoveries, by their materialistic activities, atheistic activities, they're simply disturbing, simply disturbing. That's all. They do not know that, that "I am discovering these material things." If we discuss, we can prolong so many things. Just like in India, when we were children, I saw one advertisement by the Remington typewriter machine company that "This machine has given emancipation to the woman class because they have found some job for typewriting." In this way they were advertising. But actually does it mean that because there are so many typewriting machine discovered, the women are emancipated? Rather, they have become dependent. Instead of being dependent at home, they have to go and to become a secretary of a third-class person, and unless he gives job, his [her] life is in precarious condition. So is that emancipation? But it was advertised as emancipation. Similarly, whatever material advancement we are making in the name of facility, emancipation, we are simply bungling the whole affair, disturbing. They do not know that. Life is so simple. Of course, it is not acceptable at the present situation» (SPLecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.9.11-13, Hawaii, March 24, 1969).

Modern society deliberately makes people addicted to different sensual pleasures which destroy their mind. People become slaves of endless imposed wishes and artificial needs. All these slogans and the whole social system programme a man on the deep psychological level.

Srila Prabhupada himself mercilessly disclosed the false slogans of the modern civilization and continues to do so via his books. Unfortunately, not all his following preachers have enough courage to disclose outwardly attractive slogans and values of the modern culture in the same way. And those preachers, who do it, often lack generosity, purity and compassion hence their preaching simply repulses people.

Here Srila Prabhupada underlines the necessity of individual approach in order to teach human beings to become free again. He also explains it as the essence of the *diksa* process. People have become victims of the tendencies prevailing in the society. Obviously there is a need to create a healthy social environment that would protect people from the pernicious tendencies of the materialistic society (it was discussed in the previous statement of the Program). But a healthy social environment itself will not solve this problem completely. The process of the internal liberation is strictly individual. In other words a real *diksa* means a closer communication of a disciple and a spiritual master. Liberation of a Man (with a capital "M" as Srila Prabhupada writes it) cannot become a mass production. Social mechanisms make men imitate others thereby enslaves him. But development of the spiritual nature is to help human beings to develop individuality and lead them to a real internal freedom.

Diksa is a process of transferring spiritual knowledge that liberates a person from the material inclinations. It is purely personal. If we try to mechanize the process of personal liberation by giving everybody standard recipes for liberation we will transfer a person from the system of the material slavery to the system of the pseudo-spiritual slavery. In order to find a real freedom a person needs to get individual spiritual teachings as the essence of *diksa* is *siksa*, or acquiring transcendental knowledge that lets a person change his vision and obtain the real experience of God's presence in everything and everywhere. The process itself could be organized to a certain degree, but it must be guided by an authoritative spiritual teacher that possesses the authentic spiritual vision. "It is possible by individual spiritual initiation through the proper channel".

«That is the way of Indian teaching, that there is one teacher, and how he's managing hundreds? That means there are groups. One who is elderly student, he's taking some beginners: "Write a or A like this." That he can teach. What he has learned, he can teach. Similarly, next group, next group. So in this way, one teacher can manage hundreds of students of different categories. This is organization. Not that everything I have to do. I cannot teach anybody to do it. That is not intelligence. Intelligence is that employ others to help you. That is intelligence. Not that "Oh, I was busy, I could not do it." Why? What about your assistant? Train assistant so that in your absence things can be done. ... Everyone should be teacher and student» (Room conversation, New Mayapur (French farm), July 31, 1976).

In other words, implementing this aspect of Srila Prabhupada's program assumes the existence of the mentorship institution, or existence of spiritual guides, who are able to help students to apply their *diksa*-guru's teachings in their lives. That is why the mentorship institution will function properly only when the connection between the *diksa* guru and the mentor of his students is established.

Anyway, why do we need to instruct individually? Aren't there enough universal spiritual recipes such as chanting Hare Krishna mantra or waking up early etc.? Instructing individually is essential to help people to get rid of their karmic programs hidden at the very deep psychological level, *anarthas*. *Anarthas* evoke inclination to offend in a person, which in turn interferes with their practice of *bhakti*. Very often people, who have chosen the way of *bhakti* and formally accepted a

spiritual master, don't have a spiritual mentor are not able to change anything in their lives. At the end of the day, their whole *bhakti* practice comes down to finding some spiritual grounds for their materialistic habitual actions. Even practicing devotees could be captured by karmic programs. *Diksa* is to liberate a person from that captivity.

⁴In the Gaudiya Math during the lifetime of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati there was a three-level system of mentorship. Bhaktisiddhanta Thakur himself gave his disciples titles Upadeshaki, Mahopadeshaki and Mahamahopadeshaki and the diplomas

«The third item is to take up the harijana movement. This movement is, in the real sense, a spiritual initiation movement and this should be organized in such a manner that people all over the world may take interest in it. The harijana is a word which shall not be used neglectfully as it is done now but attempt should be made to make everybody a harijana. Harijana means the recognized man of Hari the Personality of Godhead and thus he (the harijana) is as important a man as the knight of the king. So harijana movement should be strengthened more scientifically to turn every person who is now mayajana into a harijana. The mayajana is a word which is applicable to a person who is ordinarily engaged in the service of materialistic pursuits, whereas the harijana is the person whose main business is to attain perfection of human life, as Mahatma Gandhi did, by spiritualistic realization. This movement should therefore be conducted under strict disciplinary methods as prescribed by the mahajana or the harijana of accredited merit» (SPLetter to Sardar Patel, Calcutta, February 28, 1949).

Sometimes the status of a spiritual master is given to unqualified people and they teach their followers to follow the rules blindly instead of teaching them to develop their conscious and spiritual vision of the reality. Such teachings do not liberate people, but only enslave them even more. Srila Prabhupada always emphasized the importance of the spiritual master's qualification, as well as highlighted the necessity of student's personal efforts to acquire real experience of God's presence. According to his understanding, *diksa* is not a miracle that could solve all problems at once.

«Mahabuddhi: Every day Srila Prabhupada was giving darshan to all comers. Anyone could come to him and ask his question. Once in Bombay, some man came to Srila Prabhupada. That was evident that he was very excited. He fell down in front of Prabhupada and pleading voice begged Prabhupada: "Swamiji, will you save me? Is it true that will you save me? You will give me enlightenment?" Prabhupada looked into his eyes and after a moment a very calm voice said: "No". A few more seconds passed. "I can not give you enlightenment". And a few seconds dragged like an eternity. "But I can teach you how to gain enlightenment. However, for this you'll have to work by yourself"» (Memories of Srila Prabhupada, volume 2).

Srila Prabhupada emphasizes that the main goal of his mission is cultivation of completely liberated, enlightened and conscious people, truly devoted to serve Krishna.

«Persons who have become cent percent free from all kinds of infections of (page 16.) dualities of the relative world, render unalloyed loving service to Sri Krsna only. The Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna, enlightens the hearts of those devotees with transcendental knowledge, even at the time of their remaining in the material world, and although such devotees may be illiterate in terms of material calculation. THE MAIN FUNCTION OF SRI GITA-NAGARI SHALL BE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SUCH DEVOTEES ONLY, amongst other engagement» (Gita-nagari - highlighted by Srila Prabhupada).

Brief summary of this point:

1. A modern civilization enslaves people in an intricate way making them to be slaves of the material attachments.
2. The essence of *diksa* process is to transfer spiritual knowledge and give people their personal freedom back as well as to teach them to see God's the presence everywhere.
3. *Diksa* must be received from an "authoritative source", or from a spiritual master who is free from the material inclinations and attachments.
4. *Diksa* assumes individual teachings that a spiritual master can pass through his assistants, senior students and spiritual brothers.
5. A mentor does not act independently; he merely helps a student to implement *diksa-guru's* teachings in his life.
6. *Diksa* does not replace the necessity of students' self-improvement. Spiritual master only grants a person a chance to become liberated. It is up to the person whether to use this chance or not.
7. The real success of Srila Prabhupada's mission is defined by the appearance of enlightened and internally free people, who possess spiritual vision.

8) To further toward realization this highest truth as revealed by Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the six Goswamins headed by Srila Rupa and Sanatana Goswamins.

Purport:

Purport:

h) To propagate and realise the highest Truth as revealed by Lord Chaitanya through His Philosophy known as "Achinta Vedaveda Tatwa" (everything simultaneously one and different from the Absolute Truth) and other allied books of knowledge as revealed by the six authorised disciple Goswamins, headed by Sreela Rupa and Sreela Sanatana.

Purport:

Before explanation of this aspect in Srila Prabhupada's wording there is a need to clarify that for us, Srila Prabhupada's followers, this part will sound a little different: "To deepen the understanding of this ultimate truth in accordance with the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and six Goswamis, headed by Rupa and Sanatana Goswami, **in the way it is presented in Srila Prabhupada's books**". His books are (and will always be) the main pramana, the main proof. It is in-depth and systematic study of Srila Prabhupada's books that will help us to maintain unity and gradually purify our hearts through our spiritual practice.

"The ability to see everything in God and God in everything", mentioned in the previous paragraph is regarded as the ultimate truth. In other words, here Srila Prabhupada decrypts the previous point, explaining how *diksa* should work. The Sanskrit word *darsan*, "ability to see", means philosophy. It is not just a simple transfer of the theory but practical realization of the truth and gain the direct experience of *acintya-bheda-abheda-tattva*. In fact, to obtain such experience means to benefit love to God, which comes to a person in the process of study Goswami's books under the guidance of a bona fide guru.

«So we should follow Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the six Gosvames, and gradually, let us learn what is devotional service, how to execute it. Everything is very nicely explained in the Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu which we have presented herewith as "The Devo..., Nectar of Devotion, the Complete Science for the

Bhakti-yoga." So first of all, we should take advantage of these granthas, and then gradually make progress. Narottama dasa Thakura therefore says that kabe hama bujhabo sri yugala-piriti.

*rupa-raghunatha-pade haibe akuti
kabe hama bujhabo sri yugala-piri...*

*Without understanding, Rupa-Raghunatha, or without going through the literatures given by Rupa-Raghunatha, if we jumpingly, all of a sudden, try to become a devotee of Radha-Krsna... If course, our aim is to become devotee of Radha-Krsna, but how to become Radha-Krsna, we must study these books, **Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu especially**» (SP Lecture on The Nectar of Devotion, Vrindavana, October 23, 1972).*

It is very important that in the first place Srila Prabhupada selects “Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu” out of all Goswamis’ books as the most practice-oriented one (*abhidheya*). In the above paragraphs as well as in this one there is an obvious emphasis on the practice and implementation of the knowledge outlined in “Bhagavad-gita” and “Srimad-Bhagavatam”. This emphasis on the spiritual practice derives from the very wording of this point: "to deepen the understanding of the ultimate truth", the truth of love. Not just the study, but the practice allows us to deepen our understanding

«They were practicing to teach us, apani acari prabhu jivere sikhaya. Simply teaching will not do unless we practice. That is very important thing, practice, practical life. Simply quoting verses, like parrot, will not be very much beneficial. One must apply, jnanam vijnana-sahitam. Jnana means to know the thing, and vijnana means to apply the things in practical life. Jnana vijnana-sahitam. So we must know the vijnana, how practically. That is taught by the Gosvamis, krsna ot-kirtana-gana-nartana, always chanting the glories of Krsna. Kirtana, gana, nartana, nartana means dancing. Dancing is very good. The more you dance, the more you become light; means the burden of material contamination becomes reduced. Dancing is so nice. Even if you don't feel ecstasy, if you dance by force, that will also help us. Krsna ot-kirtana-gana-nartana-parau premamritambho-nidhi. By dancing dancing, we shall develop our dormant Krsna consciousness, love for Krsna» (SPLecture on The Nectar of Devotion, Bombay, January 8, 1973).

Brief summary of this point:

1. One of the main objectives of our Society is to help all ISKCON members to study Srila Prabhupada's books in depth.
2. This point explains the essence of diksa – the process of transmission of the spiritual knowledge and spiritual transformation of a person.
3. Prabhupada considers “Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu” as the most practical one out of all Goswamis’ books.
4. Understanding of this and other books of Vrindavan Goswamis could only happen through the process of real practice of this knowledge.

9) To do this, along with other principles you need to follow the four others that Goswami of Vrindavan followed:

Purport:

In this part of the "Program" Srila Prabhupada speaks about particular practical steps which allow people to realize the truth outlined in the books of Vrindavan Goswamis. Speaking about the four principles which Goswamis of Vrindavan themselves followed, he refers to their own practice. He

lists these four principles in the Purport to “Caitanya-caritamṛta Madhya-līlā”, 23.103-104 where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructs Sanātana Goswami:

«Sanātana Gosvāmī was enjoined (1) to broadcast the revealed scriptures on devotional service and establish the conclusions of devotional service, (2) to reestablish lost places of pilgrimage like Vṛndāvana and Rādhā-kuṇḍa, (3) to establish the Vṛndāvana method of temple worship and install Deities in temples (Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī established the Madana-mohana temple, and Rūpa Gosvāmī established the Govindajī temple), and (4) to enunciate the behavior of a Vaiṣṇava (as Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī did in the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa). In this way Sanātana Gosvāmī was empowered to establish the cult of Vaiṣṇavism».

Lord Caitanya’s movement was formed as a separate and independent wing of a wide range of vaiṣṇavism purely because the Gosvamis, headed by Rupa and Sanātana, fulfilled these four missions and grasped the truth brought by Lord Caitanya. In fact, Gosvamis showed the path for everyone to follow to get access to the sublime spiritual emotions of love for God, which Lord Caitanya demonstrated and talked about.

Śrīla Prabhupada, getting ready to fulfill the same mission world-wide, reframed these four missions, formulated them anew and adjusted to the circumstances of that time. However, the goal stays the same - to firmly establish his Movement and allow it to self-reproduce.

9.1 To erect a holy place of transcendental pastimes as well as a place where members of the Lord Śrī Krishna can flourish.

(I) To re-excavate and/or reclaim the holy places of transcendental Pastimes of the Personality of Godhead Shree Krishna, as well as the places where his devotees flourished including the various temples of worship.

Culture, tradition, and, most of all first-hand experience of *bhakti* are impossible to transmit only by means of education. It is necessary for every person to experience the atmosphere of the Lord’s Holy Dhama along with such education.

«Three places, namely Vṛndāvana, Mathurā and Dvārakā, are more important than the famous planets within the universe. These places are perpetually sanctified because whenever the Lord descends to earth He displays His transcendental activities particularly in these three places. They are perpetually the holy lands of the Lord, and the inhabitants still take advantage of the holy places, even though the Lord is now out of their sight» (SB, 1.10.27, Purport).

In Caitanya Caritamṛta Śrīla Prabhupada explains that the holy place must become a source of energy and inspiration for the devotees of the International Movement founded by him. In such places devotees could absorb spiritual energy to continue preaching the Six Goswamis’ teaching.

«This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement continues the tradition of the six Gosvāmīs, especially Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Serious students of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must understand their great responsibility to preach the cult of Vṛndāvana (devotional service to the Lord) all over the world. We now have a nice temple in Vṛndāvana, and serious students should take advantage of it» (Ch.ch., Madhya, 23.104).

In 'Gita-Nagari' Srila Prabhupada pictures a place of "transcendental pastimes of the Lord where the members of the family of Lord Sri Krishna could flourish". It is a place where firm and stable relationships are established between Krishna and his bona fide Harijanas, the servants of Krishna.

«The Proprietor and Deity of the Gita-nagari will be Sri Krsna Himself. The temple of Sri Krsna, which shall be situated in the center of the Gita-nagari, shall contain the Vighraha of Sri Krsna placed on the Chariot of Sri Arjuna seated along with Sri Krsna. The Vighraha shall be known as Partha Sarathi. The Sri Murti of Sri Partha Sarathi shall proclaim throughout the world as to how much the Personality of Godhead can be merciful to His devotees. That Godhead can be made the driver of the Chariot of His devotee is one of the many examples of how the Supreme God can meet His devotee in the simplest way as between friend and friend: senayor ubhayor madhye rathaya sthapaya me 'cyuta "O infallible one, please draw my chariot between the two armies." [Bg. 1.21] The powerful Godhead with His Eternal Energy as Arjuna shall be worshipped in the Gita-nagari according to the rites of the scriptures. The inhabitants of the Gita-nagari shall dwell in that transcendental city as the denizens of the Kingdom of God and as associates of the Personality of Godhead. They shall become the actual Harijan, as it is described in the Scriptures. The only proprietor of Gita-nagari shall be the Personality of Godhead, and all the inhabitants there shall live there as His servitors».

9.2 To propagate all over the world in the form of missionaries the process of devotion, the transcendental service to the Godhead, and to make known that this devotional service is the main function of the human being.

Thus Srila Prabhupada reframes the first mission given to Sanatana Goswami by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. The ultimate *siddhanta* from the sastras is already unfolded in the books. The current goal is to propagate this knowledge and to bring it to people's consciousness around the world. ISCKON missionary subdivisions are mainly to become centers of spiritual education and spiritual transformation.

«The theistic temples all over India are actually the different centers as are the churches and mosques all over the world. These sacred centers were meant for diffusing spiritual education and by this process of spiritual culture the disturbed mind could be trained up in concentration for higher duties which every human being must do. By such education in practice can help man in realizing the existence of God without whose sanction, according to Mahatma Gandhi, "not a blade of grass moves"» (SPLetter to Gandhi Memorial Fund, Calcutta, 5 July, 1949).

«The asuras are always hungry and distressed, and if arrangement for distributing Prasadam is made for them, nobody will object to accept such Prasadam. Mahatma Gandhi began Ramdhun, chanting at every evening Prayer meeting, and this practice would be utilised as medicine for the asuras while distribution of Prasadam will act as diet for them. In order to treat the heart diseases of the asuras, transcendental hospitals have to be opened at Gita-nagari apart from the ordinary hospitals that are run everywhere. These hospitals shall treat the Asuric patients with respect to their education, initiation, knowledge, and transcendental science, eating, enjoying and treatment of diseases altogether. That will be the special function of the Gita-nagari. If work is begun with the aim of serving the Internal Potency of Godhead, there will not be any check in the progressive work of the external Potency of Godhead, but such work will have a change in the Internal Potency of Godhead. The function of Iron stops when it is hot in association with fire, and at that time, the iron works as fire, with all its potency; in the same way, when work is begun in the realm of the Internal Potency of Godhead, the external potency stops functioning» (Gita-nagari).

«Next point, in order to understand this teachings of Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam, there should be centers where people can assemble daily, morning and evening, and try to understand this Krishna Consciousness or God consciousness movement. So we are trying to open branches all over the world in every city, in every town, in every village, and people should take advantage of it. There is no question of monetary transaction to enter into these centers and institutions, but because we have to maintain such institutions, public should voluntarily contribute and that is very gladly accepted. Next point, when people are accustomed to associate with these different centers, of Krishna Consciousness movement, they will one day come out of the material concept of life. Just like one becomes awakened from sleep. While sleeping, one sees so many nonsense dreams, but as soon as one is awakened, he becomes conscious that oh, I was seeing so many nonsense dreams, actually it has no existence. Similarly, when a person becomes Krishna Conscious, he can understand the falsity representation of this material civilization» (SPLetter to Rayarama, Seattle, 17 October, 1968).

Unfortunately, quite often temples maintenance and management become a goal on its own and overshadow the main purpose of the temples and missionary subdivisions, which is to give systematic spiritual education to all visitors and primarily to practicing vaisnavas.

«Out first business is to preach to the devotees and to maintain the highest standard of Vaisnava education. Management must be there as well, just as I am preaching daily from S. Bhagavatam, B.G., but I am also going to the bank, making investments, seeing the trial balance making letters, seeing how things are going on, like that. So you must become expert in all these matters, just as I am giving you example . . . Syamasundara. has passed on your telephone message that you wish to open a Vedic college or school of higher Krishna Consciousness education there at Houston. That is not very much desirable. Actually, every center should be a college...» (SPLetter to Hridayananda, New York, 9 July, 1972).

9.3. In order to accomplish this, to adopt proselytizing methods of peaceful means and to establish a broader society of association for all members, including scholars and admirers, to engage in this service as put forth in the Srimad Bhagwatam.

The only way to understand completely this provision of the Constitution is to compare it with the 4th point of the mission given to Sanatana Goswami: “4) to ascertain vaisnavas` rules of behavior (as Sanatana Goswami did in Hari–bhakti-vilas)”. In its essence, rules of vaisnavas` daily life manifest our philosophy in everyday life, which is “love, disguised as rules and regulations”. Therefore Srila Prabhupada sees the ability of all vaisnavas to display empathy and generosity, love and ability to cooperate as declared in “Srimad Bhagavatam” as one or the most crucial goals of the Society. He didn’t want devotees to be fanatics in preaching, but he wanted “education and culture” to become a means of preaching. That is why he says “scholars and admirers”. The English word “scholar” is translated in Russian as “scientist” which has a slightly different meaning. A better way to translate it is a ‘humanitarian’, ‘sanskritist’, or ‘expert in scriptures’. What Srila Prabhupada has in mind is people who are familiar with the Movement and philosophy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, they show sympathy to it, but they do not necessarily practice *sadhana bhakti*. Evidently, Srila Prabhupada wanted to form a healthy and friendly society around vaisnava’s communities. Anyone could become a member of such community, although, Srila Prabhupada underlines that ideally they should be people of high intellectual level. However, the main requirement is one’s sincerity and eagerness to serve God in His personal form installed in the temple.

«Everyone, irrespective of caste, creed and colour, who shall abide by the rules and regulations of the Gita-nagari shall be admitted as inhabitants of the town. The governing body shall remain vigilant on the point that nobody can enter into the town with some ulterior motive, outside the service of Partha Sarathi. All facilities, however, shall be offered to real inquisitive and sincere souls, who shall endeavor to profit by such facilities for transcendental life» (Gita-nagari).

At the same time the size of the community should not lead to its dilution. Not everyone who maintains mode of goodness is able to become its member.

«We cannot deviate even an inch in order to attract the followers of the ecology philosophy or any other materialistic, utopian movement. You say you know a number of influential leaders of this group, but what is the use of knowing them, since you yourself found them deficient and left them? Our ideal Vedic community will attract everyone on its own merit, and we shall be glad to welcome and accept everyone who comes without our compromising in order to attract them» (SPLetter to Mahadeva, Mayapur, 3 March, 1974).

It is also worthy to question what Srila Prabhupada meant by “a peaceful way of preaching”? It is clear that all other methods of preaching mentioned before are amicable too and of course with no intention to force anyone. From the content of this point it is logic to suppose, that Srila Prabhupada thinks that genuine preaching should not necessary aim to convert a person to vaisnavism. Genuine and peaceful preaching turns people into admirers, but they remain free to decide whether they want to accept principles, on which a devotee’s life is built. The most interesting fact is that Srila Prabhupada’s preaching was always uncompromising and sometimes sharp but it converted people into friends of the movement he created.

Dr. Hopkins, famous Indologist and one of those people recalls:

«There were, and there probably still are, a lot of people who always were disciples on the outside—friends of the movement, interested participants—but who were never willing to make the movement to discipleship for one reason or another. For many people, the demand of discipleship was more than they could meet. But everyone I met was respectful of that demand and viewed the problem not in terms of what was demanded but in terms of his or her inability to meet the demand» (Interview for Back to Godhead Magazine #18-09, 1983).

One more aspect to “peaceful way of preaching” Srila Prabhupada revealed in the next point which was not included in the “Program”, but was presented in the “Prospect of the League of Devotees”

(n) To make the 'League' an international organisation for spiritual development through education and culture, also by recruiting members of the 'League' from all nationalities.

“All patients of Gita-Nagari will take the medicine in the form of lectures, recitations of poems, singing, music and so on, all connected with Bhagavat Gita and other typical writings. These lectures and singing will take place in the set time in different places of Gita –Nagari. Various fine arts which ordinary people like such as theatre, cinema etc. will be applied in service to God so that to cure all the material diseases of the people. But all these occupations are not to be used outside Gita –Nagari because all fine arts and culture only push a man to the hell as we see it in the modern society “ (Gita-Nagari).

However it is important to remember, that Srila Prabhupada was never after any good-looking material matter. He was not the one who likes to candy-coat reality.

«Actually, if some literature doesn't carry any real knowledge, what is the use of ornamental language? We are not interested in presenting ornamental language. In India the system is that people go to see the Jagannatha Deity. The Deity is not very beautiful from the artistic point of view, but still people attend by the thousands. That sentiment is required. Similarly with our kirtana we are only using drums and karatalas, but people come to the point of ecstasy. It is not the ornamentation, it is the ecstasy. This ecstasy is awakened by sravanam kirtanam by devotees. I hope this makes everything clear» (SP Letter to Dr. Wolf, Mayapur, 29 January, 1976).

Srila Prabhupada highlights in “Gita-Nagari” the importance of the principle of cooperation for building a healthy society which is favorably focused on Krishna Consciousness and where everybody serves to the best of his capabilities.

«Under such cooling shade of peace and tranquility, the people in general will be able to follow the footprints of the Mahatmas and thus being influenced by the Internal Energy of Godhead, they shall be able to combine themselves for a higher mission of life. Mahatmas who are already under the influence of Internal Energy of Godhead do possess themselves immense strength for the deliverance of the fallen people of the world, but although they possess such power, they exercise such strength in a corporate body—in order to give a chance to the less powerful souls who intend to serve God. Sri Bajranga jee Hanuman, although He was Himself competently able to combat with Ravana, still took help from a little spiral [spider] in the matter of constructing a bridge over the gulf of Ceylon, in order to give such a little being a chance of service in the service of Sri Ramchandra. What to speak of Sri Hanumanajee, even Sri Ramchandra, Who is the Personality of Godhead Himself, possessing all the power to create, maintain or annihilate the whole universe, played the part of a man, and took the help of His Monkey Devotees, in order to deliver Seeta Devi from the clutches of Ravana. In the battlefield of Kurukshetra, all the men who assembled there and could have been killed within a twinkling of an eye by a mere symbolic sign of Sri Krsna, were requisitioned to fight with Bhima and Arjuna in (order) to give credit to His (Krsna's) most beloved friend and devotee. Therefore, if the inhabitants of Gita-nagari want to establish a perfect Kingdom of Heaven (Rama Rajya), (they) can endeavor to do so combinedly in the service of the Personality of Godhead. The inhabitants of the Gita-nagari shall therefore engage their everything, namely (their) life, their wealth, their intelligence, and the words in the service of the Lord».

9.4. To install, wherever it is possible, the worship and temple of Radhakrishna and that of Sri Chaitanya, and to give facility to everyone to become trained in the modes of Archan or preparatory principles of devotional service.

As we wrote above, the meaning of the 9th point of the “Program” is to help people to practically realize truths, given in Vrindavan Goswamis’ books. Worshiping Radha, Krishna and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in accordance with *arcana* principles is a powerful method of practical realization of these truths. Worshiping the Lord’s form is meant to put the Lord in the center of our life and feel his presence everywhere.

«Visiting the temple of a devotee and looking at the profusely decorated forms of the Lord well dressed in a well-decorated, sanctified temple naturally infuse the mundane mind with spiritual inspiration. People should visit holy places like Vrindavana where such temples and worship of the Deity are specifically maintained. Formerly all rich men like kings and rich merchants constructed such temples under the direction of expert devotees of the Lord, like the six Goswamis, and it is the duty of the common man to take advantage of these temples and festivals observed in the holy places of pilgrimage by

following in the footsteps of great devotees (anuvraja)» (SPLecture on SB 2.3.22, Los Angeles, June 19, 1972).

The mission of the temples is to educate people and to help them to create personal relationships with the Lord. There are five areas of Archana in the Deity worship that covers everything a devotee does, including taking care for his body, his work and etc.

(Panchanga –archana

1) abhigamana – restoring order and temple cleaning

2) upadana- gathering flowers, tulasy leaves, incenses and other preparatory actions. We may include here earning money for keeping to worship the Deity.

3) yoga –bhuta-shuddhi – the meditation on our spiritual form of an eternal servant of the Lord.

4) svadhyaya- scripture study , the meditation on the sense of Hare Krishna Maha Mantra and mantras that one receives during the Diksha.

5) idjya – the direct God murty worship in a temple).

«2. The second paragraph is to support the worship movement. This is a theistic cultural movement in the true sense of the word. No matter what everybody can take place in it. All acharyas of the past times allowed everyone to pay homage the Lord who was inspired by transcendental love and devotion. We can maintain the Gandhi-ji movement on the authority of sastra. All around India there are thousands of temples but they are not always rightly managed . (...) The original target of the temples is to spread around spiritual culture. So all these places of God worship should be reorganized and converted to the spiritual culture centers in accordance to the pure principles formulated in scriptures such as Bhagavat-gita» (SPLetter to S. Patel).

Brief summary of this point:

1. Srila Prabhupada reconsiders and adjusts to new circumstances the four principles given by Lord Caitanya to Sanatana Goswami.
2. Srila Prabhupada's writing books on philosophy of pure devotional service flows into opening preaching centers, where these books are studied.
3. From the restoration of forgotten holy places in Vraja to building cities in a holy place, so that devotees could absorb the spiritual atmosphere of this holy place.
4. Writing smriti sastras for the Gaudiya-vaisnava followers flows into creating vaisnava communities, located around the Deities worship, and into "peaceful methods of preaching" as a platform of such communities.
5. From worshipping the original Deities of Vraja to opening new temples all around the world, where Radha-Krishna Deities will be installed.
6. Fulfilling these four missions should help practicing vaisnavas to achieve through their experience realization of the truths disclosed in the books of the Six Goswamis.
7. Realization of these points of the "Program" will also help to establish Krishna Consciousness Movement on Earth, as it happened when the implementation of Lord Caitanya's orders resulted in the formation of Gaudia-Vaishnavism as a new independent school.

From the tenth point of the "Program" onward Srila Prabhupada lists key secondary goals of the Society he founded. Achieving these goals will also help to accomplish the primary goals mentioned previously.

10) To introduce to the members of the Society and humanity-at-large a simpler and more natural purpose in life by means suitable to the particular place and time, and as enjoined in the Bhagavad Gita.

Purport:

As the materialistic civilization driven by insatiable greed destroys natural environment more and more, this point of Prabhupada's "Program" becomes more and more relevant. Devotees should set an example of simple and natural lifestyle. At the same time Prabhupada himself precisely defines the place of this point in his program. "A simpler lifestyle" is evidently a relative concept; obviously it means a simpler lifestyle in comparison to the lifestyle of common people. That is why he emphasises "with the means corresponding to time and place". It implies that devotees should not be driven by the hunger for material development (The Nectar of Devotion, 2). At the same time simple lifestyle does not mean that people should live in poverty or have a primitive lifestyle that could hardly be inspiring to others, and then "all people" would hardly want to learn it.

«Guest (6) (European man): I would like to ask also a question. In your rural communities... I call them rural because from what you said, the main purpose is to be self-supporting as regards food. In your rural communities, do you utilize the most modern techniques with fertilizers, with mechanical means for cultivating land? This is one question. The other is that obviously, from what you say, the necessary money for buying anything else, that is provided by the selling of your books. Of course, if you would imagine communities having not, as you have, something which (indistinct), and therefore books which can be sold, such communities would not be eased to be self-supporting in regards to everything. Food is also there. And if, by any chance, would your system...? Supposing we could transform all the members of the Swiss community into peasants, having their piece of land and living in rural communities, I suppose from what I know that many would starve and would have not sufficiently to eat because conditions here, conditions of climate, etc., are not of the same category of the ones which may exist in Asia or in other countries. The basic problem is that in former centuries most of the male population of that country which population was mainly composed of peasants had to expatriate and become soldiers abroad because there was not enough food. So what do you say about these things?

Yogesvara: His first question was do we use machines and modern methods on our asramas and farms.

Prabhupada: We have no objection. We want to be self-sufficient. That is our point of view. We have no objection with... It is not that we don't touch machine. We don't say like that. But we want to be self-sufficient. That is our point. We have not taken a vow that we shall not touch any machine. No, no. We're not like that.

... Prabhupada: Well, after all, this is material world. The miserable conditions are there. But as far as possible, try to minimize. Our only aim is how to save time for spiritual cultivation. That is our main aim. So we have to find out the opportunity according to the time, circumstances. We, we do not reject anything. Whatever is favorable, we accept» (Lecture at World Health Organization, Geneva, June 6, 1974).

Again and again Srila Prabhupada repeats that simple life is not a goal on its own, not a way to settle down in this world. Its main goal is to save the precious time of a human life and to learn to please Krishna, constantly thinking about Him, serving Him and worshiping Him.

«Actually as I have already discussed in my Srimad-Bhagavatam, for economic problem one requires a little land and a few cows. Then the whole economic problem is solved. We should utilize our time for elevating ourselves in Krishna Consciousness than for so-called economic development. If we are

satisfied with plain living, with minimum time and the balance time is engaged for elevating our Krishna Conscious program, then every man can be transferred to Goloka Vrindaban, just in this very life. The modern civilization has encumbered the mode of living and people are engaged all the time in the matter of eating, sleeping, defending, and mating» (SP Letter to Hamsaduta, Los Angeles, 11 January, 1968).

«We want to do whatever is easy and save time for Krishna consciousness. As far as you are able to adjust to a natural way of life, do it immediately. Our principle is that we are against nothing and for nothing. Only for Krishna. We want whatever is favorable for Krishna» (SP Letter to: Nityananda, Mayapur, 16 March, 1977).

At the same time Srila Prabhupada emphasizes that simple life is a supporting element in his "Program".

«Regarding the farm, farm opening is not very essential, but if you can do it conveniently, then do it. The varnasrama system is for convenience sake in the material world. ... Always remember that varnasrama life is a good program for material life, and it helps one in spiritual life; but spiritual life is not dependent upon it» (SP Letter to Hamsaduta, Mayapur, 19 October, 1974).

Although Srila Prabhupada said that varnasrama is a material institution that does not have direct relation to the spiritual life, he often emphasized unbreakable connection between healthy society and spiritual practice.

«Sarve sukhino bhavantu. Let everyone be happy. And without being happy, nobody can execute Krsna consciousness» (Initiation Lecture and Bhagavan dasa's Marriage Ceremony, New Vrindaban, June 4, 1969).

«Krsna says, "I have made this varnasrama for the benefit of the whole human society, although I don't belong to any varna, asrama." Krsna has nothing to do, but to maintain the human society very peaceful, advancing in spiritual knowledge, this varnasrama is required. Therefore sometimes I become very eager to start a varnasrama college. We have nothing to do with varnasrama, we Krsna..., But we want to see that the whole human society is peaceful. That is our mission. Sarve sukhino bhavantu. This is the desire of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and those who are servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they should also desire how to do good to the whole human society» (SPLecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam 6.1.12, Los Angeles, June 25, 1975).

«Peaceful life depending on agricultural produce can bring him real happiness and prosperity, not otherwise. ... So peaceful atmosphere can be attained only when there is large scale village organization, actually village life» (SP Letter to Rayarama, Seattle, 17 October, 1968).

Brief summary of this point:

1. Modern civilization that established in our cities imposes pretended and complicated lifestyle and practically does not leave any room for spiritual development.
2. Simpler rural lifestyle frees the energy and time that should be used for spiritual development and also shapes more receptive mentality to spiritual knowledge.

3. Simpler lifestyle is a relative concept; it does not assume poverty or complete simplification that inevitably leads to degradation.
4. Simpler lifestyle can make a person happier, but without basic material happiness it is harder for a person to practice Krishna consciousness.
5. Strictly speaking, spiritual life does not depend on *varnasrama*, but living in a healthy society can foster spiritual practice.

K) To organize educational programs, such as classes and lecture tours, and to institute services, such as mailing, for the benefit of the members of the Society and humanity-at-large.

(1) To arrange lectures and discourses by eminent devotees for the benefit of the members of the 'League' and send missionary for this purpose in all parts of the world to recruit members of the 'League'.

(m) To open free mail services to advise by post in respect of enquiries made to the 'League' on spiritual subjects.

Purport:

In "Gita-nagari" Srila Prabhupada mentions three types of preaching using modern technical means:

«1. To answer all the inquiries from all parts of the world in all languages. 2. Publication of propaganda in different languages of the world. 3. Utilising radio vans and other publicity facilities by cinematographic shows, etc.»

It was written in 1956. We could only imagine what huge importance Srila Prabhupada would have given to preaching on the Internet today!

Brief summary of this point:

Devotees are to use all the latest modern preaching methods and to use the newest technologies for this purpose.

11) To publish periodicals, books and/or pamphlets in all important languages in order to reach human society and give an opportunity to same to communicate with the Society.

Purport:

Everybody knows that for Srila Prabhupada the books and magazines distribution it was paramount. He learnt it from His spiritual master. Moreover, it was the last personal instruction of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, which He gave to Srila Prabhupada in October 1935 at Radha-kunda: "*Amar iccha chila kichu bai karana*": I had a wish to publish some books. If you ever have money, use them to publish books".

«This book distribution is the most important task in our Society. Therefore I am giving so much stress and I am working so hard on this. Because this is my life and soul according to the order of my Guru Maharaja. And by his grace it is to some extent successful. And I took it seriously. I take it seriously still now. That is my life and soul. I never tried in India to construct big temples, or even in your country we didn't. I never tried. But I was selling personally books. That is the history» (Room Conversation, December 31, 1976, Bombay).

Srila Prabhupada understood that not a short meeting with devotees but only books can change a person's life:

«If you sell a book to someone, that is better than your speaking to them—what will your three minutes' preaching do? But if they read a book it may turn their life» (SPLetter to Brahmananda, India, 3 November, 1972).

«Be assured that there is no more direct way to preach than to distribute Krsna conscious books. Whoever gets a book is benefitted. If he reads the book he is benefitted still more, or if he gives the book to someone else for reading, both he and the other person is benefitted. Even if one does not read the book but simply holds it and sees it, he is benefitted. If he simply gives small donation towards the work of Krsna consciousness he is benefitted. And anyone who distributes these transcendental literatures, he is also benefitted. Therefore sankirtana is the prime benediction for the age» (SPLetter to: German Disciples, Bombay, May 6, 1977)

Moreover, he would say that the book distribution is equal to preaching.

«Distribution of books and magazines is our most important activity. Without books, our preaching has no solid basis» (SPLetter to: Cyavana, Bombay, 26 December, 1971).

«Preaching means book distribution» (Room Conversation, December 31, 1976, Bombay).

There were several reasons for this: 1) He clearly understood, what impact Krishna would expect these words to make.

«Our book distribution program is most important work. Anyone reading our KRSNA book, TLC, NOD, and Bhagavad As It Is, is sure to become a Krishna Conscious person. Therefore somehow or other we must push on this literature distribution program, either through schools, colleges, libraries, life membership program or ordinary sales» (Letter to: Jananivasa, Bombay, 5 March, 1971).

«If he buys one book his life may be turned, that is best preaching work» (SPLetter to: Jagadisa, Hyderabad, 18 November, 1972).

2) He also knew that not all of His followers will be able to give pure Krishna conscious philosophy in their preaching, because in communication it is very tempting to tune to a person's expectations and not to tell the whole truth, whereas the strength of true Krishna consciousness is in its purity.

«These books are the best advertising, they are better than advertising. If we simply present Krishna Consciousness in a serious and attractive way, without need to resort to fashionable slogans or tricks, that is sufficient. Our unique asset is our purity» (SPLetter to: Yogesvara, Bombay, 28 December, 1971).

«So far your question as to whether it is more important to organize the women's book distribution or to work on College preaching, the book distribution is more important» (SPLetter to: Sukadeva, Bombay, 29 December, 1976).

«Rather the brahmanas are always truthful, even to their enemies. There is sufficient merit in our books that if you simply describe them sincerely to anyone, they will buy. That art you must develop, not art of lying. Convince them to give by your preaching the Absolute Truth, not by tricking, that is more

mature stage of development of Krishna Consciousness» (SPLetter to: Sri Govinda, Bombay, 25 December, 1972).

Srila Prabhupada following His Guru Maharaj made the book distribution equal to sankirtana, glorification of the Supreme Being.

«Regarding Sankirtana and book distribution, book distribution is also chanting. Anyone who reads the books that is also chanting and hearing. Why distinguish between chanting and book distribution? These books I have recorded and chanted, and they are transcribed. It is spoken kirtanas. So book distribution is also chanting. These are not ordinary books. It is recorded chanting. Anyone who reads, he is hearing. Book distribution must not be neglected» (SPLetter to: Rupanuga, Mayapur, 19 October, 1974).

«Here at Mayapur my guru maharaj was printing one paper. It was selling for only a few paise. Sometimes whenever one brahmacari would go to Navadvipa and sell even a few copies, I would see my guru maharaj become very much pleased. Even if the brahmacari was not a very important member, my guru maharaj would become very, very pleased with him. He personally instructed me that books are more important than big temples. At Radha Kunda he told me that since constructing the big marble temple at Bhag Bazar, there have been so many difficulties. Our men our envious over who will live in which room. I think it would be better to take off all the marbles and sell them and print books. He told me this personally. So I am always emphasizing book distribution. It is the better kirtana. It is better than chanting. Of course chanting should not stop, but book distribution is the best kirtana» (SPLetter to: Srutadeva, Mayapur, 24 October, 1974).

That's why Srila Prabhupada saw in the book distribution not only the best preaching form but also a powerful form of spiritual practice:

«The word *kriyasu*, meaning "by manual labor" or "by work," is important in this verse. One should engage in practical service to the Lord. In our Krsna consciousness movement, all our activities are concentrated upon distributing Krsna literature. This is very important. One may approach any person and induce him to read Krsna literature so that in the future he also may become a devotee. Such activities are recommended in this verse. *Kriyasu yas tvac-caranaravindayoh*. Such activities will always remind the devotees of the Lord's lotus feet. By fully concentrating on distributing books for Krsna, one is fully absorbed in Krsna. This is *samadhi*» (SB, 10.2.37, Purport).

Following His spiritual master Srila Prabhupada emphasized that the book distribution is more important than opening new temples.

«You are trying for the new Temple, but our main business is Sankirtana and distribution of literature. If Krsna gives us a better place, that is all-right. Otherwise, we can remain at any place never mind hell or heaven; but we shall be only very cautious about propagating our Sankirtana movement» (SPLetter to: Madhudvisa, Los Angeles, 26 March, 1970).

«Yes that is nice that you are distributing many books. I do not want money, or buildings or anything else, I simply want to see that my books are being distributed and because you are doing that I am quite happy» (SPLetter to: Prahladananda, Bhaktivedanta Manor, 28 August, 1973).

«Yes! Your present engagement is more important, managing Calcutta temple is not so important. I am pleased that you are selling my books, this is superior engagement, so please continue and increase it more and more» (SPLetter to: Gargamuni, Vrindaban, 4 December, 1975).

Srila Prabhupada also saw the books distribution as a financial basis for the Society He created:

«I think our books will never keep us in a poverty-stricken condition. This is the blessings of His Divine Grace Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja Prabhupada. He is very pleased that you are distributing so many books» (SPLetter to: Bhagavan, Bombay, 14 November, 1975).

«My Guru Maharaja used to say "don't worry about money, Do something nice for Krishna and money will come." So we should always be thinking how to distribute the message of Krishna and surely He will give us facility. Even an ordinary man if he wants publicity then he gives so much money for the propaganda work. Similarly Krishna is not poor. He can supply any amount for the devotees who are engaged in broadcasting His glories» (SPLetter to: Karandhara, Bombay, 30 November, 1970).

«If you become lazy in your spiritual life, everything else will deteriorate. We are not interested in big, big buildings, no. That was not my plan for Juhu. I simply want to engage everyone in the service of Krishna, that's all. And that means preaching. So if the preaching work has stopped, what can I do? In that case you must expect there will be so many troubles. So try to improve your preaching work, distribute all the books, and print more, and in this way, Krishna is the husband of the Goddess of Fortune, you will get as much money and as many big buildings as you need for spreading Krishna Consciousness movement, without any doubt» (SPLetter to: Yadubara, Vrindaban, 11 November, 1972).

That's why for Him the level of the book distribution was one of the indicators of wellbeing in any temple and the main indicator of the success of his mission.

«As soon as I see that there is such increased book distribution figures, I take that to mean that all other programs are successful as well» (SPLetter to: Jagadisa, Bombay, 5 January, 1973).

«You have said rightly when you write that the devotees are working to please me by distributing my books. My mission on behalf of my guru maharaj and Lord Caitanya, to spread Krsna Consciousness would never have been so successful if it had not been taken up by enthusiastic boys and girls such as in San Francisco, especially through distribution of books» (SPLetter to: Bhakta dasa, Melbourne, 28 June, 1974).

Brief summary of this point:

1. «If you ever have money, use them to print books». It was the last Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur's personal instruction to Srila Prabhupada.
2. Srila Prabhupada emphasized that books distribution is more important than any other form of preaching.
3. There were several reasons for this:
 - a. He clearly understood what impact Krishna put in his words.
 - b. He knew that not all of his followers will be able to give Krishna Conscious philosophy in their preaching as clear and concise as he did.
4. Following His Guru Maharaj, Srila Prabhupada declared book distribution equal to sankirtana, the main spiritual practice of this century.

5. Srila Prabhupada, following footsteps of his spiritual master, considered book distribution more significant, than opening new temples.
6. Srila Prabhupada also saw a logical economic basis of his Society in the book distribution.
7. For him the amount of distributed books demonstrated wellbeing of every temple and therefore it was the main indicator of the success of his mission.

12) To invoke the quality of goodness particularly in every member of the Society, individually by the process of Diksha and by establishing one in the status of a Brahmin (good and intelligent man) on the basis of truthfulness, knowledge and faith in the transcendental service of the Lord.

(o) To revoke the quality of goodness particularly (Satwaguna) in every member of the 'League' individually by the process of Spiritual initiation (Diksha) by establishing him in the status of a qualified Brahmin (good and intellectual man) on the basis of truthfulness, forgiveness, equality, tolerance, education, purity, knowledge (specific and general) and faith in the transcendental service of Godhead.

Purport:

Srila Prabhupada mentions diksa for the second time. Diksa, a process of attaining spiritual knowledge, awakens jiva's devotion and at the same time helps the mind to reach the mode of goodness, sattva. These two processes are inseparably linked to each other. The first one is universal and the second develops in a different way in every other person under various circumstances. Both processes are important, but the importance of the first one is incomparably higher. The dual role of diksa often causes confusion in the minds of Srila Prabhupada's followers. The first and the main role of diksa is to give a person access to *arcana*, a Deity worship and *pancaratrika-marg*, one of the most important aspects of *sadhana*. Therefore it is important for all seriously practicing devotees irrespective of their psychophysical nature. The secondary role of diksa is related to the varnasrama system and a person's specific social role in the society. In this point of the "Program" Srila Prabhupada speaks about the second role of diksa and therefore it is among the secondary points.

"Fourth point, so far the administrator class of men, or mercantile class of men, and laborer class of men, there are many institutions but to train a first class intellectual man, there is no institution all over the world. And there is no institution for spiritual training also. So this Krishna Consciousness movement is trying to help the human society on these two points, which they are lacking. So we have therefore taken a large tract of land to begin with, in W. Virginia, the place is called New Vrindaban. So we want to train students for becoming the first class intellectual person, and instruct the whole human society about the aim of life, and Krishna Consciousness or God consciousness." (Letter to Rayarama, 17.10.1968)

This understanding Srila Prabhupada learnt from his spiritual master.

"He often cited a verse from Sanātana Gosvāmī's Hari-bhakti-vilāsa stating that just as base metal when mixed with mercury can become gold, so an ordinary man can become a brāhmaṇa if initiated by a bona fide spiritual master." (Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita, 1.4)

From the very beginning Srila Prabhupada was convinced that although qualities of people and connection to a particular *varna* depend on their born character, anyone can be turned into Brahmana.

By a test of practical psychology and by examination of the birth horoscope of the child, with special reference to his birthright, sect and class arrangement, a student from the very beginning shall be given the education of a brāhmaṇa, of a kṣatriya, of a vaiśya or of a śūdra, as may be the case, according to his quality and destined work. It is, however, possible to make a change of this general rule under special cases. The educational institution as Gītā-nāgarī will, as a matter of fact, try to create a greater number of students having the necessary qualification of a brāhmaṇa, by developing such culture in him, because in this age of Kali yuga, there is a big scarcity of the brāhmaṇa class. Mahatma Gandhi in the recent time, although born in a Vaisya family, developed the qualities of brāhmaṇa by culturing non-violence, equality, restraint, toleration, forgiveness, charity, etc. Therefore, the Gītā-nāgarī, by its cultural propoganda and otherwise, can create any number of brāhmaṇas, provided the candidates are available. The Gītā-nāgarī, however, will not encourage the system of renounced order of life (Sannyāsa), as in this age it is not possible to maintain such order of life under difficult circumstances. (Gita-nagari)

“Actually, we are the most democratic because we are giving everyone a chance to become a first-class brāhmaṇa. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is giving even the lowest member of society a chance to become a brāhmaṇa by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious. Caṇḍālo 'pi dvija-śreṣṭho hari-bhakti-parāyaṇaḥ: Although one may be born in a family of caṇḍālas, as soon as he becomes God conscious, Kṛṣṇa conscious, he can be elevated to the highest position. Kṛṣṇa says that everyone can go back home, back to Godhead. Samo 'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu: “I am equal to everyone. Everyone can come to Me. There is no hindrance.” (Beyond Illusion and Doubt, Plato, Ch. 2)

However there are also some other Srila Prabhupada's quotes on this topic:

“Guṇa, not everyone is qualified in the same way. Therefore you... The ācārya will pick up that "They are meant for becoming brāhmaṇas. They are meant for kṣatriyas." (Lecture on SB, 1.8.41, 21.10.1974, Mayapur).

Of course, not that everyone can be elevated to the position of a brāhmaṇa, but at least they must have the chance to see that "Here is a class of men, brāhmaṇa." That is wanted. Otherwise the civilization is failure. (Lecture on SB 5.5.23, 10.11.1976)

In 1974-1975 quite often he began to address the idea of Varnasrama College, and he intended to apply the varnasrama principles as a social organization within Vaisnava society. However he pointed out that spiritual development of people by no means depend on their position in varnasrama system.

Hṛdayānanda: So, Prabhupāda, in our temples, we have so many devotees. Should the devotees...?

Prabhupāda: They should be engaged.

Hṛdayānanda: Should they be trained in a particular...?

Prabhupāda: Yes. Those who are not able to preach or to do other things, they must go to the plough department, agriculture.

Hṛdayānanda: Those who cannot preach.

Prabhupāda: Yes. Those who are less educated, not very much expert in preaching, they must be acting as kṣatriya or vaiśya, or as śūdra.

Hṛdayānanda: And sometimes...

Prabhupāda: :Not he's śūdra. Always remember that. But he has to act to fulfill the, fill up the gap. (Morning walk, 14.03.1974, Vrindavan)

This question will be discussed in more details in the purport to the next point of the program.

Brief summary of this point:

1. Diksa has two purposes. The first and the main role of diksa is to give everyone access to arcana, a Deity worship. Therefore it is applicable to any devotee. The secondary role of diksa is related to the varnasrama system and a person's specific social role in the society. In this point of the "Program" the secondary role of diksa is spoken about.
2. Social role of diksa is to form a class of highly intelligent people, brahmainical class.
3. Originally Srila Prabhupada was convinced that due to diksa practically anyone can be turned into a Brahmana.
4. In 1974-1975 he often began to address the idea of Varnasrama College, and he intended to apply the varnasrama principles within Vaisnava society, pointing out, however, that spiritual development of a person in no way depend on his position in varnasrama system.

14) Among the secondary objectives of the Society, it shall undertake the following activities:

1. **To revive the scientific system of social orders of classification based on intelligence, martial spirit, productivity and common assistance, generally known as the four castes with reference to quality and worth for the common cause of world society.**

The connection between the social varnasrama system, which is completely within the modes of nature and bhakti practice, which is supposed to take a person out of the material sphere, is not very certain. Previous acaryas of Gaudiya-sampradaya didn't pay much attention to the material institution of varnasrama.

Srila Prabhupada writes about it in "Nectar of Devotion" (ch. 13):

Some scholars argue that simply by following the principles of varṇa and āśrama one can gradually rise to the perfections reached by practicing devotional service, but this argument is not accepted by the great authorities. Lord Caitanya also condemned this idea while He was talking with Rāmānanda Rāya about the gradual development of devotional service. He rejected the idea of the importance of varṇāśrama-dharma when it was put forward by Rāmānanda Rāya. He said that this advancement of varṇa and āśrama is merely external. There is a higher principle. In Bhagavad-gītā also the Lord says that one has to give up all other principles of elevation and take simply to the method of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That will help one in achieving the highest perfection of life.

Such skeptical view on varnasrama system is fully based on the original scriptures. For example, it is said in "Srimad Bhagavatam":

*ya eṣāṁ puruṣaṁ sākṣād
ātma-prabhavam īśvaram*

*na bhajanty avajānanti
sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ*

If any of the members of the four varṇas and four āśramas fail to worship or intentionally disrespect the Personality of Godhead, who is the source of their own creation, they will fall down from their position into a hellish state of life. (SB, 11.5.3)

Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami says the same thing in “Caitanya Caritamrita” (Madhya 22.26). Srila Prabhupada writes in his Purport to this verse:

“One may be a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya or śūdra, or one may perfectly follow the spiritual principles of brahmacarya, gr̥hasṭha, vānaprastha and sannyāsa, but ultimately one falls down into a hellish condition unless one becomes a devotee. Without developing one’s dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one cannot be factually elevated. The regulative principles of varṇāśrama-dharma in themselves are insufficient for attainment of the highest perfection.”

But we need to understand, that such attitude towards the varnasrama was formed at the time, when this system dominated in Indian society, and therefore considered so to say “spiritually self-sufficient” by the followers of the varnasrama. Later on, when the varnasrama system was severely criticized by Indian society, Bhaktivinoda Thakur became the first vaisnava-acarya to point out, with some adjustments though, that it was useful for practicing vaisnavas:

“What is the relation of varnasrama, which was previously discussed, with vaidhi bhakti? Should a person take shelter of vaidhi bhakti and give up the rules of varnasrama dharma, or should he practice vaidhi bhakti for developing devotion, while still following the varnasrama rules and duties? It was previously stated that the Purport of varnasrama dharma is to maintain the body, develop the mind, perform good works for society and learn spiritual topics, all with the goal of developing pure bhakti.³ In that man is bound by a material body, he must follow the varnasrama rules. That cannot be denied, for without the development of body, mind, society and spirit, man's life becomes degraded. The rules of varnasrama are suitable for this purpose, and therefore they should be followed. However varnasrama is not the final goal. With the assistance of varnasrama dharma, a person should cultivate bhakti. It is also necessary to follow the rules of varnasrama in the cultivation of bhakti.

But by following the rules of varnasrama, which are time consuming, a person may not have any time left to cultivate bhakti.⁴ Furthermore, where there is some conflict of principles, what should be done? First, it should be said that without taking proper care of body, mind, society and spirit, a person cannot perform the more elevated activities of bhakti. How can the seed of devotion, faith, awaken in the heart if a person dies prematurely, develops mental problems and never learns anything about spirit? And if a person gives up the rules of varnasrama and acts as he pleases, his physical and mental actions will be like those of a madman. He will be engaged in the worst sins. No sign of bhakti will be visible. (Sri Caitanya Siksamrita 3.4)

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur was the second one who considered reinstatement of the varnasrama principles to be very important. Srila Prabhupada quite often mentioned this desire of his spiritual master.

“Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, however, wanted to reestablish daiva-varṇāśrama. In daiva-varṇāśrama there cannot be acknowledgement of social status according to birthright because in

Bhagavad-gītā it is said that the determining considerations are *guṇa* and *karma*, one's qualities and work. It is this *daiva-varṇāśrama* that should be established all over the world to continue a perfect society for *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness. **This may be astonishing to foolish critics, but it is one of the functions of a *Kṛṣṇa* conscious society.**” (SB, 5.1.24, purp.)

In the early years of his preaching in the West Srila Prabhupada generally spoke of the *varnasrama* as an ideal social structure that could be hardly possible to create nowadays. But even in that period he also spoke about his intentions to educate devoted brahmanas, who could give spiritual guidance to human society.

Prabhupāda: No, no, no. You have come to execute *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness. Before coming to this *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness, were you in *varṇāśrama-dharma*? No. **So at the present moment, there is no possibility of persons following the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, either here or anywhere.** Everyone is *varṇa-saṅkara*. *Kalau śūdra-sambhavaḥ*. In this age, everyone is a *śūdra*. Nobody is *brāhmaṇa*, nobody is *kṣatriya*, nobody is *vaiśya*. *Śūdra*. So in this age, you won't find anybody following the *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

Therefore this is the panacea, to engage everyone in *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness, chanting Hare *Kṛṣṇa*. He comes above the highest principle of brahmanism. This is the greatest gift to the humanity, that even he is in the, I mean to say, fallen condition, the most degraded position, he can be raised to the highest position simply by chanting. This is the only remedy. Now you cannot again introduce this system of *varṇāśrama*. It is not possible. But if one takes to *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness, automatically he becomes immediately a *brāhmaṇa* and above the *brāhmaṇa*. A *Vaiṣṇava* is above the *brāhmaṇa*. (Lecture on BG, 3.18-30, Los-Angeles, 30.12.1968)

“It is no longer possible to revive the perfect system, *varṇāśrama*. Although we are trying to revive, it is not possible. It is very difficult. People are so fallen. *Mandāḥ sumanda-matayo manda-bhāgyā hy upadrutāḥ* [SB 1.1.10]. They are so disturbed, *manda-bhāgyāḥ*, unfortunate, and *upadrutāḥ*, always disturbed. Especially *anāvṛṣṭi*, *durbhikṣa* and *kara-pīḍita*. ... **So in this position of harassment, how the peaceful *varṇāśrama* can be revived? It is very difficult. It is almost impossible.** (Lecture on SB, 3.25.14, Bombay, 14.11.1974)

After that, in the intermediate period of his preaching, Srila Prabhupada much more often says that a model of an ideal society would appear due to the brahminical guidance of the devotees and it would be accepted by people worldwide.

“Among the four *yugas* — *Satya*, *Tretā*, *Dvāpara* and *Kali* — the *Kali-yuga* is the worst, but if the process of *varṇāśrama-dharma* is introduced, even in this Age of *Kali*, the situation of *Satya-yuga* can be invoked. **The Hare *Kṛṣṇa* movement, or *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness movement, is meant for this purpose.**” (SB, 9.10.51, purp.)

“In order to rectify this world situation, all people should be trained in *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness and act in accordance with the *varṇāśrama* system. The state should also see that the people are engaged in satisfying the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the primary duty of the state. The *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness movement was started to convince the general populace to adopt the best process by which to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead and thus solve all problems.” (SB, 4.14.20, purp.)

“The real aim of life is liberation, but unfortunately the opportunity for liberation is being denied to people in general, and therefore their human lives are being spoiled. **The *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness**

movement, however, is being propagated all over the world to reestablish the varṇāśrama-dharma system and thus save human society from gliding down to hellish life. “ (SB, 5.19.19, purp.)

In the final days of his presence on Earth Srila Prabhupada more often speaks about varnasrama as an important instrument of preaching and as a social structure that should be established at first in “our Society, ISKCON”.

“I was there and was particularly stressing that the presidents must be very careful on recommending gayatri initiation. After all, we are criticizing false cast brahmanas, if we ourselves are bogus brahmanas then our position is very bad. Now that we are more and more trying to implement the varnasrama divisions of society, we should not think that everyone has to become a brahmana. For example you are developing a farm there; so those who work the farm do not necessarily have to be a brahmana if they are not inclined to the brahminical standards. In this way, be careful about awarding the second initiation.” (Letter to Sudama, Rome, 26.05.1974)

“Satsvarūpa: Introduced starting with ISKCON community?

Prabhupāda: Yes. Yes. Brāhmaṇa, kṣatriyas. There must be regular education.

Hari-śauri: But in our community, if the..., being as we're training up as Vaiṣṇavas...

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Hari-śauri: ...then how will we be able to make divisions in our society?

Prabhupāda: Vaiṣṇava is not so easy. The varṇāśrama-dharma should be established to become a Vaiṣṇava. It is not so easy to become Vaiṣṇava.

Hari-śauri: No, it's not a cheap thing.

Prabhupāda: Yes. Therefore this should be made. Vaiṣṇava, to become Vaiṣṇava, is not so easy. If Vaiṣṇava, to become Vaiṣṇava is so easy, why so many fall down, fall down? It is not easy. The sannyāsa is for the highest qualified brāhmaṇa. And simply by dressing like a Vaiṣṇava, that is... fall down.” (Conversation, Mayapur, 14.02.1977)

«In big scale you cannot make all of them as brāhmaṇas or sannyāsīs. No. That is not possible. ... But Caitanya Mahāprabhu said para-upakāra. Why a certain section should be picked up? The whole mass of people will get the benefit of it. Then it is required, systematic. Sve sve karmaṇy abhirataḥ saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ. Para-upakāra means mass benefit, not there is certain section. Then we have to introduce this varṇāśrama-dharma. It must be done perfectly, and it is possible and people will be happy. (Conversation, Mayapur, 14.02.1977)

Brief summary of this point:

1. Previous acaryas of Gaudia-sampradaya didn't pay much importance to the material institution of the varnasrama.
2. Such attitude towards the varnasrama was formed at the time, when this system dominated in Indian society and therefore varnasrama followers thought of it as “spiritually self-sufficient».
3. Later on Bhaktivinoda Thakur became the first vaisnava-acarya, who pointed out, that it was useful for practicing devotees.
4. Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur had the same opinion.
5. In the early years Srila Prabhupada mostly spoke of the varnasrama as an ideal social structure that could be almost impossible to create those days. But even in that period he also spoke

about his intentions to educate devoted brahmanas, who could give spiritual guidance to human society.

6. After that, in the intermediate period, Srila Prabhupada more often says that due to the devotees' brahminical guidance there would be established a model of an ideal society, which people would accept worldwide.
7. In the final days of his presence on Earth, Srila Prabhupada more and more often spoke of the varnasrama as an important instrument of preaching and as a social structure that should at first be established in "our Society – ISKCON"

2. To discharge as a matter of course the vitiated system of supremacy of one man over another by false prestige of birthright or vested interests.

Purport:

First two secondary points of the "Program" are closely interrelated, because people, especially in modern India, understand the varnasrama system to be closely, if not inseparably, connected to the idea of one man's domination over another on the basis of birthright.

"Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, however, wanted to reestablish daiva-varṇāśrama. In daiva-varṇāśrama there cannot be acknowledgement of social status according to birthright because in Bhagavad-gītā it is said that the determining considerations are guṇa and karma, one's qualities and work. It is this daiva-varṇāśrama that should be established all over the world to continue a perfect society for Kṛṣṇa consciousness." (SB, 5.1.24, purp.)

We will give here few more quotes, where Srila Prabhupada explains the reason that turns natural inequality of people into equality in the highest sense. How far superior his brave and truthful explanations are to compare to modern slogans about "total equality"!

"Therefore, being weak, it is the eternal occupational duty of the living entity to surrender to Krishna, that's all. In the surrendering to Krishna, if everyone does it, still, the brahmanas will be served by the lower castes, the kings will be served by vaisyas and sudras, the vaisyas will be served by the sudras, and the sudras will serve all higher castes—there is still utilizing the weak by the strong—but feeling themselves always very much weak in comparison to Krishna, the whole society services the Strongest, therefore there will be no envy of the stronger by the weaker class of men. So perfect society, or Vedic society, does not eliminate competition—competition, stronger and weaker, must be there—but it eliminates envy, because everyone is weak before Krishna. Is that clear?" (Letter to Sri Govinda, 25.12.1972)

"The modes of ignorance as it goes down by degrees, produces men of such lower and lower qualities and they are designated as Yavanas, Mlecchas, Kiratas, Huns, Andhras, Pulindas, Pulkasas, Aviras, Sumbhas, Khasadayas, etc., and there are four lakhs of men of different qualities all over the universe influenced by the above mentioned modes of nature. From the Gītā-nāgarī this universal Truth must be propagated systematically, so that REAL HUMAN SOCIETY may be established for the benefit of all, dividing the categories of men according to natural modes of nature. Such social order on the basis of the Bhagavad-gītā all over the world may be called the institution of natural caste system or the casteless society. In that institution of natural caste system all divisions of men will be engaged in one transcendental business of spiritual community with equal status of life and with equal importance of co-operative value as much as the different parts of the one whole body have different functions only but

qualitatively they are one and the same. In that institution of spiritual social order every one will have equal right to promote himself to the higher status of life without any malicious competition and as such education and culture will be open door for all concerned as much as the varsity of all state is open for all with equal status of educational right. Casteless society will, of course, never allow to place on the same category of a high-court judge and the laborer unless such society will have gone in to madness of culture. On the contrary by establishment of such casteless society as it is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā nobody will be grudging if any one is recognized as the qualified brāhmaṇa on the value of merit only and not on the basis of birthright claim. Such casteless society is reasonable and acceptable by one and all in the world. (Gita-nagari)

Brief summary of this point:

1. Strengthening hereditary privileges of one class over another leads to an ugly, distorted social system based on exploitation.
2. Position of a person in the society is to be defined by his qualities and occupation, not by his birth.
3. Natural inequality between people in the society doesn't necessarily lead to exploitation of one person by another.
4. Equality of all people in the society of the Daiva-varnasrama is possible due to people's understanding of their equality before God.

3. To popularize the vegetable-grain diet under approved methods in order that full value of protein, carbohydrate, fat and vitamin benefit may be derived therefrom.

Purport:

Here Prabhupada's compassion is really shown. Having set almost unattainable global tasks, he doesn't forget about such a little thing as education of people on the diet that makes their life complete according to the material standards.

We have no other business. We want to see people live, eating very nicely nutritious food, keeping good health. But unnecessarily artificial things, bothering, that we don't want. Keep your health very nice, live for as many years as possible, and be Kṛṣṇa conscious. Then, next life, you go back to home, back to Godhead, permanent life. Yad gatvā na nivartante [Bg. 15.6]. This we want to give. There is no cheating. There is no politics, no personal ambition fulfilling. This is our mission. Try to convince them. There is not a little tinge of personal sense gratification. This is our... Now can you point out, any one of them, that "Here is the point, the personal sense gratification"? We are talking amongst ourselves, so if there is any flaw, you can point out. Can anyone? That "Here is the point, personal sense gratification"? There is no such things in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Tāṇdera caraṇa-sebi-bhakta-sane bās. Our only ambition is we live among devotees and execute the mission of our predecessors, Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa. This is our ambition. (Conversation, 27.05.1977)

At the same time Srila Prabhupada highlights that when a person becomes a devotee, he naturally becomes a vegetarian.

There are many other instances showing that a devotee needn't practice anything but Kṛṣṇa consciousness; all the good qualities of the demigods automatically develop within him. Those who are intentionally practicing to be vegetarians or to become nonviolent may have good qualifications by a material estimation, but these qualifications are not sufficient to make them devotees. A vegetarian is not necessarily a devotee, nor is a nonviolent person. But a devotee is automatically both vegetarian and nonviolent. (Nectar o Devotion, ch. 14)

In itself, being a vegetarian is not enough; after all, even pigeons and monkeys are vegetarians. But when we go beyond vegetarianism to a diet of prasādam, our eating becomes helpful in achieving the goal of human life—reawakening the soul's original relationship with God. (Quest for Enlightenment, ch. 8)

4. To discourage intoxicating or addicting habits of all descriptions and dimensions and to expose such persons thus afflicted to approved methods of spiritual realization.

Purport:

Srila Prabhupada was completely confident that the spiritual practice could save people from all harmful addictions, and he proved it practically with the example of his numerous disciples... Drugs are just one of the different types of material inclinations. Drugs lead to degradation and death much quicker, than any other material inclinations. But, as a matter of fact, any inclination is the way to degradation and death. Only real spiritual experience is capable to save people from all material inclinations including this one. To save people from drug addiction is meant to help them and at the same time to show everyone a potency of the spiritual practice.

“Regarding Randy, I understand that he is addicted to heroin intoxication, and he is taking some medicine to give it up, but I am sure that the best medicine is chanting the HARE KRISHNA mantra. For the time being, let him take the substitute medicine as he is taking, and at the same time let him seriously chant HARE KRISHNA. And I hope he will be able to give up that substitute medicine also. I have got experience—one of my God-brothers, he related about his past life, that he was addicted to all kinds of intoxication, and he was distilling wine in his village without any license—he was such a great intoxicant. But later on, we found him completely free from all intoxication—even he was not even smoking and was quite fit to work for Krishna Consciousness. So everything is possible provided one is serious.” (Letter to Kirtanananda, 22.09.1968)

“Prabhupāda: Drug is killing the whole Western nation. You will be spoiled, you will be finished with this drug habit. You are already finished. America is finished. They cannot do anything anymore. Neither industrialists nor big scholars, neither big fighter. Anything. Simply spoiled. The only shelter is this Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Pāpi tāpi yata chilo harināme uddharilo. They can be only saved by this process. They have no other... otherwise they are going to hell. All Americans, the so-called puffed up materialist. This is a fact. So if you want to do service to your country, introduce this Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the younger generation. They will be saved. You be saved and save your brothers. And otherwise this poison, this intoxication, heroin, cocaine, and LSD and this and marijuana, finished everything. But if you become steady in one life without deviating for mājā, then you make solution of all problems. That is the duty of human being. Instead of suffering this repeated birth and death, one life sacrifice. What is that sacrifice? What is inconvenience to live nicely, avoiding these four rascal habit, taking Kṛṣṇa prasādam, and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and reading all these nice books. Where is the difficulty?” (Conversation, 15.08.1971)

“Prabhupāda had to teach that Kṛṣṇa consciousness was beyond the revered LSD trip. "Do you think taking LSD can produce ecstasy and higher consciousness?" he once asked his storefront audience. "Then just imagine a roomful of LSD. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is like that." People would regularly come in and ask Swamiji's disciples, "Do you get high from this?" And the devotees would answer, "Oh, yes. You can get high just by chanting. Why don't you try it?"” (Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita, vol.2)

It is also important to note, that Srila Prabhupada was proud that ISKCON helps people to overcome drug-addiction:

“We can submit a copy of the remark made by a judge of a court here, in relation to the imprisonment of one of our students, Upendra das, in which the man said, "Be lenient with this boy, as he belongs to an established religious organization, which is doing much to combat against drug-addiction, and to promote the general health and welfare of the young people." (These are not the exact words, but we are presently awaiting a certified letter from the judge saying in essence, this statement.)” (Letter to Brahmananda, 21.03.1968)

Brief summary of the last two points of the “Program”:

1. Srila Prabhupada wanted all Vaisnavas to propagate vegetarianism as a complete and balanced diet. This diet would help to resolve many problems of a person and mankind, but in itself it is still insufficient to make a person spiritually elevated.
2. Srila Prabhupada was confident that spiritual practice can save a person from all harmful addictions.
3. As a matter of fact, any inclination is the way to degradation and death. Only real spiritual experience is capable to save people from all material inclinations.
4. To save a person from drug addiction is meant to help this person and at the same time to show everyone the potency of the spiritual practice.

Epilogue

In this work we reflected on Srila Prabhupada’s "Program" that he wrote for ISKCON. It is obvious that many points of this program are not yet fulfilled or implemented, though Srila Prabhupada’s followers have been implementing a lot of projects stated in the “Program”. Fifty years since this program was written are very insignificant historically, but we shouldn't become contented. Until we understand in full depth the degree of Srila Prabhupada’s compassion and his global vision, we can't think of ourselves as his complete followers. Kali-yuga, the Age of contentions and hostility, performs its duties. We see how sometimes members of ISKCON argue with each other over something insignificant. Each argument weakens Srila Prabhupada's Movement and the Movement loses its potency. However, if we understand all range of Srila Prabhupada’s plan and clearly see our own place in his spiritual Movement, we will learn to respect other devotees’ contribution and to appreciate their service. At the end of the day isn't it exactly what he expects us to do, when he says that we will show our love for him by cooperation with each other?