

Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana Deity Worship Manual

**International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Hillsboro, Oregon**

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This manual attempts to set standards for worshipping Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana at Hillsboro, Oregon.
These standards are based on Home Worship standards given at www.deityworship.com,
ISKCON's authorized website for the subject. Where needed, the standards have been modified
for the unique circumstances of our center/temple.

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Introduction

Our movement is based on two broad processes of devotional service: *bhagavata vidhi* (preaching and sankirtan, etc i.e. hearing and chanting) & *pancaratrika vidhi* (deity worship/various sacrifices and samskaras). Preaching and Sankirtan require purification and this purification is achieved by doing regulated Deity worship at home or temple. So both the processes are needed, however most important is hearing and chanting Krishna *katha* in association of devotees.

This manual is divided into three sections:

1. Kitchen Standards
2. Preparing yourself for Deity worship
3. Actual Deity worship

Since we are a preaching center without a full time *pujari*, the standards in this manual are modified from those in a full time temple with installed Deities.

Kitchen Standards

As we select pure, excellent foods to offer to Krishna, so we must also prepare it purely. When preparing food for the Lord, one must meticulously observe the rules for cleanliness and take all care to prepare the food properly. The consciousness of the cook enters into the food, so devotees should strive to be thinking always of Krishna in the kitchen. The kitchen is an extension of the altar, so the same high standard of cleanliness should be maintained in both places.

Kitchen Dress

- If possible cover your hair and tie it back so as to avoid any hair falling into a preparation.
- Do not wear wool in the kitchen.
- Kitchen clothing must be clean: not have been worn in the bathroom, when eating or sleeping, or outside the temple (except to travel to the temple).

Personal Cleanliness

- You should be freshly showered, wearing *tilaka* and neckbeads.
- Wash your hands when first entering the kitchen, and wash them again if you touch your face, mouth, or hair, or if you sneeze or cough (having covered your mouth).

Food Purity

- After assembling all ingredients, wash all vegetables and fruits and anything else that can be washed.
- If something washable falls on the floor or in a sink, rinse it off; if it can't be washed, toss it.
- The cook should cover all preparations as soon as they are cooked. If an animal sees a preparation before it is offered, it cannot be offered. No one except the cook and the *pujari* should see the unoffered food.
- Cover the ghee used for frying when it is not in use. Frying ghee should be replaced regularly with fresh ghee. Deep-frying should be done in pure ghee. (Ideally, ghee and other oils should be used only once, since each reheating reduces their digestibility.) If ghee is not available, you may use vegetable oils such as coconut, mustard, sunflower, canola, or peanut oil.
- Keep all ingredients properly stored in closed containers.

Kitchen and Utensil Cleanliness

- The kitchen should be thoroughly cleaned regularly.
- Do not leave unclean saucepans and utensils lying in the sink. Clean them after they are used (the sooner they are washed after use, the easier they are to clean).
- No one should eat or drink in the kitchen. No one should spit into or drink from the sink. Personal dishes must not be in the kitchen.
- Take out the garbage at least once a day.
- Do not store *prasadam* in the refrigerator. Do not contaminate *bhoga* with *prasadam* -- for example do not put offered milk or nuts back into the containers with *bhoga*.

Maintaining Proper Consciousness

- As far as possible restrict conversation to topics about Krishna or His service.
- Traditional *bhajans*, *kirtanas*, or classes by devotees in good standing are appropriate to listen to.

Food Items for offering at ISKCON Hillsboro

- On weekdays, offer warm milk, fruits, and the salty and sweet items, in the evening. You may offer additional items if preparations are available.
- *Bhoga* is generally available in the temple, though you may need to purchase items occasionally.

Preparing yourself for Deity worship

This section features quotes from Srila Prabhupada's books, particularly from the *Caitanya-Caritamrta, Madhya-lila*, chapter 24. This section of the *Caitanya-caritamrta* was the first deity worship book in ISKCON and was called, "The Perfection of Deity Worship."

Rising Early

In a purport in the *Caitanya-Caritamrta*, Srila Prabhupada says, "in the early morning hours (known as *brahma-muhurta*) one should get up."

The *brahma-muhurta* is generally accepted as the most auspicious time of the day to perform spiritual practices. During this time of day the world is peaceful and the influence of the modes of passion and ignorance are less thus enabling us to focus more on our spiritual practices.

The *brahma-muhurta* begins approximately one and a half hours before sunrise. Although this may be difficult for some devotees, due to pressures of work etc., rising early and regulation are beneficial for the development of spiritual life. If you cannot rise this early it is still good to rise as early as possible and at the same time every day.

In the *Bhagavad-gita* Lord Krishna says,

*yuktahara-viharasya yukta-cestasya karmasu
yukta-svapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati duhkha-ha*

He who is regulated in his habits of eating, sleeping, recreation and work can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system.

Leading a regulated life helps us to overcome the influence of the modes of material nature and thus be situated in a position more conducive to developing transcendental consciousness.

Chant Hare Krishna and Remember Krishna

When you awaken in the morning you should chant the name of the Lord. This helps to clear the consciousness of the influences of sleep or any bad dreams you may have experienced during the night. You can chant the names of the deities you are worshiping or the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*. In the purport to *Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya* 24.331 Srila Prabhupada says,

Concerning pratah-smṛti, remembrance of the Lord in the morning, in the early morning hours (known as brahma-muhurta) one should get up and immediately chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, or at least 'Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa'. In this way, one should remember Kṛṣṇa. Some slokas or prayers should also be chanted. By chanting, one immediately becomes auspicious and transcendental to the infection of material qualities. Actually one has to chant and remember Lord Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours daily, or as much as possible:

smartavyah satatam visnur vismartavyo na jatucit sarve vidhi-nisedhah syur etayor eva kinkarah

Kṛṣṇa is the origin of Lord Viṣṇu. He should always be remembered and never forgotten at any time. All the rules and prohibitions mentioned in the sastras should be the servants of these two principles.

[Padma Purana, from the portion called Brhat-sahasra-nama-stotra.]

Evacuating, Rinsing Mouth, Brushing Teeth and Bathing

The word *pratah-kṛtya* means that one should evacuate regularly in the morning and then cleanse himself by taking a bath. One has to gargle (*acamana*) and brush his teeth (*danta-dhavana*). This purifies the mouth. Then one should take his bath. Actually householders and *vanaprasthas* should bathe two times a day (*pratar-madhyahnayoh snanam vanaprastha-grhasthayoh*). A *sannyasi* should bathe three times daily, and a *brahmacari* may take only one bath a day. Whenever one is not able to bathe in water, he can bathe by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra; practically we should attempt to take a water bath.

After waking, evacuating, and appropriate cleansing, brush your teeth, scrape your tongue and then take a bath. Without bathing, one remains impure and cannot perform deity worship. Everything you touch before bathing becomes as impure as your body is. The morning bath is compulsory, except for those who are ill. In Vedic culture, bathing is considered a sacred act to be accompanied by meditation on the Lord and recitation of prayers.

Rules for Bathing

- Do not bathe naked. Wear a *kaupina*. This shows respect to the personality of the water and that one recognizes bathing to be a sacred act. One should be particularly careful to observe this injunction when bathing in a river or other public place.
- *Grhasthas* should bathe wearing two cloths. (Besides a *kaupina*, a second cloth (*gamcha*), usually tied around the waist.) *Brahmacaris* and *sannyasis* should wear at least a *kaupina* when bathing.
- Do not bathe in impure water.
- Evacuate before bathing, or you will be like the elephant who completes his bath by throwing dust on his body.
- A cold-water bath is most beneficial and is recommended. However if it's not possible due to health, one may take a warm water bath. If possible, one should end a warm bath with cold water.
- After bathing, do not shake your hair to dry it and do not shake water from your cloth or legs.
- Do not rub oil on your body after bathing. (Oil on the body is considered impure, and thus if you require it you should apply it before taking a water bath.)
- Wring out your bathing cloth and then dry your body with a separate, dry cloth; wiping yourself with your bathing cloth will contaminate you again. However, if you wash and wring out your bathing cloth before drying yourself off with it, you will not become impure.
- After bathing, dry your body with a clean cloth; do not wipe your body with your hands, a dirty cloth, or the edge of the damp cloth you are wearing. The cloth used for drying should be washed after every use.

Dressing as a *Vaisnava*

While worshipping the deity one should wear appropriate *Vaisnava* dress. *Vaisnava* dress helps us to identify ourselves as a servant of Krishna. This means *dhoti/chaddar/kurta* for men, and *saris* for women.

Unclean and Improper Cloth

A devotee should not wear dirty cloth, especially when cooking or worshipping the deity. Used (already worn) cloth that has not been washed and dried again is considered unclean. Cloth worn while sleeping, passing urine or stool, or having sex is unclean. Cloth that touches anything impure, such as wine, meat, blood, a dead body, or a woman in her menstrual period, is also contaminated. Cloth washed by a public laundry service and cloth that, though washed, has become stale are also unclean and therefore unfit to wear during deity worship.

While worshipping the deity, avoid wearing the following types of cloth: brightly-colored cloth (for men), damp cloth, cloth that is too long or too short and doesn't fit, stitched or sewn cloth (for men), torn cloth, stained cloth, soiled cloth, burnt cloth, or cloth chewed by animals or insects. However, you may wear silk many times before washing it, provided it has not contacted anything impure or been worn in impure places.

Unbleached, raw *matka* (*ahimsa*) silk is the best for *puja*. Sheep's wool is said to be always pure, but still, you should not wear ordinary woolen cloth when worshipping the deity, because wool particles may fall on the deity's paraphernalia. However, you may wear wool cloth if it is very fine, "nonshedding" wool, in which case you should reserve these items only for *puja*. Pure cotton is clean and easy to care for. Synthetic cloth should not be worn when worshipping the deity.

Marking the Body With Tilaka and Other Symbols

Applying *tilaka* is a spiritual activity. *Tilaka* should be applied while seated, after having sipped *acamana*.

The following prayer from the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, quoted in the *Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila*, 20.202, lists the forms of the Lord to meditate on while applying *tilaka*.

(om) lalate kesavam dhyayen narayanam athodare
vaksasthale madhavam tu govindam kantha-kupake
visnum ca daksine kuksau bahau ca madhusudanam
trivikramam kandhare tu vamanam vama-parsvake
sridharam vama-bahau tu hrsikesam tu kandhare
prsthe tu padmanabham ca katyam damodaram nyaset
tat praksalana toyam tu vasudevetei murdhani

When one marks the forehead with tilaka, he must remember Kesava. When one marks the lower abdomen, he must remember Narayana. For the chest, one should remember Madhava, and when marking the hollow of the neck one should remember Govinda. Lord Visnu should be remembered while marking the right side of the belly, and Madhusudana should be remembered when marking the right arm. Trivikrama should be remembered when marking the right shoulder, and Vamana should be remembered when marking the left side of the belly. Sridhara should be remembered while marking the left arm, and Hrsikesa should be remembered when marking the left shoulder. Padmanabha and Damodara should be remembered when marking the back.

Place some water in the palm of the left hand, then taking a piece of *gopi-candana (tilaka)* in the right hand rub it in the water in the left hand until a smooth paste has been formed.

While chanting the following *mantras* and meditating on the Lord, apply *tilaka* to the forehead and upper body with the ring finger of your right hand.

om kesavaya namah – forehead
om narayanaya namah – navel
om madhavaya namah – chest
om govindaya namah – hollow of the neck
om visnave namah – right abdomen
om madhusudanaya namah – right arm
om trivikramaya namah – right shoulder
om vamanaya namah – left abdomen
om sridharaya namah – left arm
om hrsikesaya namah – left shoulder
om padmanabhaya namah – upper back
om damodaraya namah – lower back

Wash the excess *tilaka* from your hands with water, and then wipe your *sikha* with the palm of your right hand while chanting: **om vasudevaya namah** - *sikha*

Sipping Water for Purification (Acamana)

Acamana, or sipping water, is a means of purification. As immersing the body in water brings about physical and subtle cleansing, so taking water infused with *mantras* into the body by sipping performs a similar function. Thus where purification is required but it is inconvenient to bathe, *acamana* is prescribed. The procedures for performing *acamana* are in Section 2 of this guide.

Offering Food to Their Lordships

On a plate reserved for the Lord's use, nicely arrange the preparations to be offered (refer to kitchen and preparation rules above). Perform *acamana* and offer obeisances to your spiritual master requesting his blessings to assist him in the worship. The offering plate is placed in front of the deities, either directly on the altar or on a table before the altar. Arrange for the Lord to eat in private, perhaps by putting up a curtain before the altar or leaving the room while He is eating. The detailed procedure for offering *bhoga* is in Section 2 of this guide.

Offering Arati

Complete procedures for offering *arati* are in Section 2 of this guide.

1. an incense holder with an odd number of incense sticks (usually three)
2. a ghee lamp with an odd number of wicks (at least five)
3. a conch for water, with a stand
4. a small container for the water that is offered in the conch
5. a handkerchief
6. flowers on a plate
7. a *camara* (yak-tail whisk)
8. a peacock fan (only in warm weather)

Preliminary Activities for Arati

After performing *acamana* (if not already done for previous services), offer obeisances to your spiritual master, requesting to assist him in the worship. After cleaning the spot on the altar where the *arati* paraphernalia will be set, bring the tray with paraphernalia and place them in the order of offering.

Blow the conch three times, then rinse it off over the *lota*. Back on the altar, wash your hands with water from the *acamana* cup and open the curtain while ringing the bell.

It is nice if there are devotees to perform *kirtana* during *arati*, or the *pujari* may sing or play a cd.

Purifying the Items (Upacaras)

Before picking up and offering each item, first purify your right hand and then the item by sprinkling them with water from the *acamana* cup. You can purify the item by taking the spoon in your right hand and sprinkle water on the item directly from the spoon.

Offering Procedure

Arati paraphernalia should be offered gracefully, in a meditative mood. Don't be too slow or too fast or be showy. Try to act as a humble servant of your spiritual master and the assembled *Vaisnavas*. Stand to the left of the altar (as viewed from the temple room)—not hidden entirely from view but also not distracting by your presence.

Completing the Arati

After completing the *arati*, blow the conch three times outside the deity room, as at the beginning of the *arati*. Then distribute the *arghya* and flower *prasada* to the assembled devotees. Then with joined palms offer *pranama* prayers softly to your spiritual master and Their Lordships.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Section 2

Deity Seva Manual: Procedures and Checklists

For Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana
ISKCON Hillsboro, Oregon

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ISKCON Hillsboro Evening Deity Service Checklist (2013)

Initial Preparations

- Turn on the lights and outlets.
- Turn on the sound system if desired (switch is behind).
- Turn on fans or heaters as needed.

Change *acamana* cup water and the water for the blowing conch

Do *acamana* (see following section)

Always knock or make some sound before entering the altar!

- **Change altar *acamana* cup water – establish general *arghya* water (*samanya-arghya*)** (see following section for details).
- **Turn on light behind Their Lordships while chanting: “*Jaya Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana*”!**
- Purify hands.
- Set out Guru Maharaj photo.

Wake Their Lordships:

- Purify bell.
- Ring bell in left hand. With your right hand touch the lotus feet of your Gurudeva, of Srila Prabhupada and then of Sri Sri Nitai-Sacinandana. Ask Them to wake and please accept your service.

Check flower vases

Change water & add plant food (instructions on back of the container); trim stems.
Check for clean linen & put away.

Fresh Water for Deities & Srila Prabhupada

Add Tulasi to Deities water, not to Srila Prabhupada's.

Fresh Tulasi for Sri Sri Nitai-Sacinandana's lotus feet (if available)

Offering Food to the Deities

Preparing the *Bhoga* Plate

Bhoga offering should start at 7:05!

Check for bad fruit/flowers/sour milk in fridge.

Place any food scraps and/or bhoga that has gone bad in a bag or container and take home. Don't leave any food in the garbage cans.

- Heat 1 cup milk with a little sugar or more depending on how many devotee are there.
- Prepare plates with hot milk, water, and little separate dishes of: fruit, sweet item and salty item. Take at least 4 flowers with you onto the altar to offer. Carry on separate plate, if desired.
- Place Tulasi leaf on each prep – use cover when carrying plate to altar.

Bhoga offering should start at 7:05!

1. Offer obeisances to your spiritual master requesting his blessings to assist him in the worship.
2. Purify hands, then bell, then flowers.
3. Ring bell and offer a flower(s) (chanting *esa-pushpanjali*) to the lotus feet of your Gurudeva, Srila Prabhupada, & Sri Sri Nitai-Sacinandana. This brings Their attention to the offering.
4. Clean the offering area. Wipe the altar surface.
5. Purify your hands.
6. Offer your spiritual master a sitting place (mentally).
7. Purify the *bhoga* with water from the *acamana* cup.
8. Invite the Deities to take Their meal by offering Them seats (*asanas*) (Mentally if not available).
9. **Sit on an asana and offer the *bhoga* while ringing a bell (next page for procedure & mantras to take on the altar with you).**
10. Leave the area, offer obeisances.

While the Deities take *bhoga*:

- Prepare the arati tray if not already done (see below for checklist).
- Chant *Gayatri* (if 2nd initiated) if there is time.
After 15 minutes (7:20), knock before entering the altar. Pay obeisances, purify your hands and ring the bell, thanking the Deities for accepting the offering.
- Remove the plates. Clean offering area.

Mantras for Offering Bhoga

While ringing the bell, chant the *pranama* prayer(s) to your spiritual master three times, begging permission to assist him in serving the deities:

*nama om visnu-padaya krsna-presthaya bhu-tale
srimate [your spiritual master's name] iti namine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto [your spiritual master's name], who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

Chant the following two prayers to Srila Prabhupada one after the other, three times, requesting his mercy:

*nama om visnu-padaya krsna-presthaya bhu-tale
srimate bhaktivedanta-svamin iti namine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sarasvate deve gaura-vani-pracarine
nirvivesa-sunyavadi-pascatyadesa-tarine*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvami. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Chant the following prayer to Lord Caitanya three times, requesting His mercy:

*namo maha-vadanyaya krsna-prema-pradaya te
krsnaya krsna-caitanya-namne gaura-tvise namah*

O most munificent incarnation! You are Krishna Himself appearing as Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu. You have assumed the golden color of Srimati Radharani, and You are widely distributing pure love of Krishna. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You.

Chant the following prayer three times, offering respect to Lord Krishna:

*namo brahmanya-devaya go-brahmana-hitaya ca
jagad-dhitaya krsnaya govindaya namo namah*

I offer my obeisances again and again to Lord Krishna, who is always worshiped by qualified brahmanas and is very dear to them. He is always concerned with the welfare of the cows, the brahmanas, and the whole universe, and He gives pleasure to the cows, land, and senses.

<http://deityworship.com/worship/home-worship/offering-food-to-deities>

Offering Arati

Arati Paraphernalia

- an incense holder with 3 incense sticks, plus some matches or a lighter
 - a ghee lamp with 5 wicks
 - a conch for water, with a stand
 - a small lota with the water to be offered in the conch
 - a handkerchief
 - flowers on a plate
 - a *camara* (yak tail whisk)
 - a peacock fan (warm weather months)
1. Purify conch with water from the *lota* with a stem, *then place conch shell on top of that lota*. Catch water in other *lota*.
 2. Blow conch at **7:30**.
 3. Purify hands and open the curtain while ringing the bell.

How to Offer Each Item

Before picking up and offering each item (*upacaras*), first purify your right hand and then the item(s) to be offered by sprinkling them with water from the *acamana* cup. Take the spoon in your right hand and sprinkle water on the item directly from the spoon.

When offering items (*upacaras*) ring bell, holding it above your waist.

After presenting the item to be offered (per chart below) speak the offering *mantra* (or the item name in your language) along with the name of the personality you are offering to. If second initiated you should chant the *mula mantra*.

Example:

"esa dhupah Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu" OR "Please accept this ghee lamp, Sri Nityananda prabhu"
"idam arghyam, Sri Guru Parampara" OR "Please accept this cloth, Srila Prabhupada"

Standing on the mat and ringing the bell, offer each item according to the chart below.

Don't mix offered and unoffered *upacaras* on the *arati* tray. Offered items may be placed back on the tray, after all items have been offered.

Arati Offering Sequence

Offer to the large Deities of Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana.

- Present to your Guru Maharaj, 3 circles (all around)
- Present to Srila Prabhupada, 1 circle
- Present to Sri Nitai, 1 circle
- Offer to Sri Sacinandana, according to chart below
- Offer to Sri Nitai, according to the chart below
- Offer as *Maha* to Guru Parampara (in descending order--senior to junior) 3 circles around body
- Offer as *Maha* to Srila Prabhupada, 7 circles around body
- Offer as *Maha* to your Guru Maharaj, 7 circles around body
- Distribute to assembled devotees (and/or visiting demigods): 1 or 3 big circles facing out to the temple room

UPACARA	LOTUS FEET	WAIST	HEAD	AROUND BODY
<i>Incense (esa dhupah)</i>	---	---	---	7
<i>Lamp (esa dipah)</i>	4	2	3	7
<i>Water (idam arghyam)*</i>	---	---	3	7
<i>Handkerchief (idam vastram)</i>	---	---	---	7
<i>Flowers (etani puspani or idam puspam)**</i>	---	---	---	7
<i>Camara (esa camara seva)</i>	<i>fan the whole body head to toe an odd # times</i>			
<i>Peacock Fan (esa vyajana seva)</i>	<i>fan the whole body head to toe an odd # times</i>			

*After offering water to each personality, pour a little back into the lota.

** *puspani* = plural, *puspam* = single flower

Completing the Arati

1. After completing the offerings, blow the conch. Purify in same way as explained above.
2. Clean the altar floor w/brown cloth.
3. Distribute *arghya* and flower *prasada* to the devotees if the devotees have not already done so.
4. With joined palms offer *pranama* prayers to your spiritual master and Their Lordships, and beg forgiveness for any offenses you may have committed during the worship.
5. Offer obeisances outside the altar curtains.
6. At 8 p.m. close the altar curtains, while ringing the bell.

After Arati Procedure

- Bring *arati* plate and paraphernalia to kitchen.
- Remove loose flowers, wipe altar with a green cloth and entire altar floor with a brown cloth.
- Clean up *acamana* area.
- Purify hands and bell. Ring the bell (left hand) and while touching the lotus feet of Sri Sacinandana ask Him to take rest. Do the same for Sri Nitai, Srila Prabhupada and your Gurudeva. Return your Guru Maharaj's photo to storage place.
- Turn off altar lights and leave altar, chanting "*Jaya Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana*".
- Wash and dry *arati* paraphernalia and return to shelf.
- Wash and dry Deity plates and return to drawers.
- Rinse out handkerchief and *bhoga* covering and hang on *pujari* shelf to dry.
- Set out *prasadam* for devotees (if there are guests who might not wait, set out *prasadam* before washing the paraphernalia and point out the *prasadam* out to the guests. Guests MUST be offered *prasadam* – FIRST PRIORITY!
- Make sure all *prasadam* is distributed or taken home.
- Wipe off all kitchen countertops. Rinse out sinks. Move soiled linens to dirty laundry containers.
- Check heat, turn off electric circuits, and LOCK THE DOOR when you leave.

Bathing and Dressing the Deities

Bathing procedure for Srila Prabhupada and (*chota*) Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana

Adapted from www.deityworship.com, home worship section, for ISKCON Hillsboro.

Deity *seva* is a rewarding opportunity where we serve the Lord in a blissful and intimate way. Knowing the procedures helps one avoid offenses and make the most of the time. *Pujaris* should be freshly showered, with fresh cloth (not worn in stores, while eating, using the bathroom, etc.).

Before going on the altar or into the *pujari* room, perform *acamana*.

The general order of the *seva* is:

1. Preparation: gathering supplies and paraphernalia.
2. Bathing and dressing Srila Prabhupada (we approach and serve *Guru* first).
3. Bathing and dressing *chota* Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana.
4. Changing Their Lordship's and Srila Prabhupada's water, and assisting the main *pujari* as needed (backdrops, flowers, cleanup, etc.).

Checklist for Bathing

Gather all of the following (most everything is in the *pujari* room):

Round silver-plate (raised sides and small feet, approximately 11") on which you assemble the following:

- **Acamana cup** with fresh water (*samanya-arghya*) and spoon
- **Bell**
- **Gopi-candana (tilak)** powdered/grated, in a bowl
- **Lemon juice**, in bowl (nice to bring a lemon from home)
- **Cotton balls and cotton swabs**
- **Empty bowl** for mixing *gopi-candana tilak* and lemon juice
- **Scented oil** (natural /essential oil only)
- **Bathing conch** with stand
- Some dry or fresh **Tulasi leaves** for bathing water for SSNS
- **Warm water** in a pitcher or stainless canister. You will need about 6 cups (1.5 quarts). Add a few drops of rose water (in kitchen). You will also need an interim copper *lota* from which to transfer water from the large container into the conch. You may either heat filtered water in the kitchen (if it's not too crowded), or use warm water from the kitchen tap. Bath water should be at a comfortable temperature – not too cold, not scalding hot.
Additionally, bring a **container to transfer the bath water** into after bathing. Bring something large enough to hold the bathing water from the bathing tray. After bathing, take the *caranamrita* out front, in a pitcher, for the devotees.
- **Towels**: Four yellow for Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana, and the 2 orange towels for Srila Prabhupada
- **Green altar towel** for the table area
- **Flowers** to offer your *Guru Maharaj*, plus sandalwood paste if possible
- **Picture of your Spiritual Master**
- **Picture of Srila Prabhupada**

To the side, gather the new outfit for the week, Deity jewelry, pins and sticky-tack.

Arrange everything neatly and conveniently for worship, so that you don't have to interrupt the *seva* to get up and find something.

The Main Worship

Bathe Srila Prabhupada, then Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana.

Sit on the chair. While chanting the *maha mantra*, **sprinkle *acamana* water** on yourself, around the surrounding area and on the bathing paraphernalia with water from the *acamana* cup. Offer flowers to your Guru Maharaj and Srila Prabhupada by ringing a bell with your left hand and **asking permission** to perform the seva:

Chant *esa puspanjali* and the guru-mula-mantra, and offer a flower or a few flower petals (dipped in candana, if possible) to your Guru Maharaj's feet, begging his permission to serve the Deities. Then chant:

*sri-guro paramananda premananda phala-prada
vrajananda-pradananda- sevayam mam niyojaya*

My dear spiritual master, who gives the fruit of the highest bliss—the bliss of love of Godhead—please engage me in the blissful service of Sri Krishna, who bestows bliss upon the land of Vraja.

*Jaya sri-krishna-caitanya prabhu nityananda sri-advaita gadadhara srivasadi-gaura-bhakta-vrinda
hare krishna hare krishna krishna krishna hare hare hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare*

Invite Srila Prabhupada or Their Lordships to the bathing receptacle with a gesture of the hands.

Remove Their jewelry and clothing. Place on a tray and move it away from the bathing area to make sure Their silk doesn't get wet!

Massage the Lord or Srila Prabhupada with scented oil, using a cotton swab or your fingers. Use sparingly! Avoid paint (eyes, hands, toes, etc.) Do not use any artificial or alcohol-based scents.

Polish the Deities. Use cotton balls to apply the powdered *gopi-candana* mixed into a paste with a little lemon juice. Put a little paste on the cotton ball and rub gently. You will see tarnish leaving Their bodies and blackening the cotton ball. Avoid eyes and painted areas! **Use a yellow towel in your left hand** while holding the Lord in the bathing tray. Use an **orange towel** for Srila Prabhupada.

After polishing the Lord, use fresh cotton balls dipped in water to clean off all the lemon/tilak mixture before rinsing with conch as described below. (Be thorough and use plenty of water. Lemon juice is corrosive and *tilak* is surprisingly sticky). Double check ears, toes, eyes, etc.

While bathing the Deities, you may chant verses from Sri Bramha Samhita:

*cintamani-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vrksa-
laksavrtesu surabhir abhipalayantam
laksmi-sahasra-sata-sambhrama-sevyamanam
govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami*

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the first progenitor, who is tending cows yielding all desires among abodes built with spiritual gems and surrounded by millions of desire trees. He is always served with great reverence and affection by hundreds of thousands of laksmis, or gopis.

*venum kvanantam aravinda-dalayataksam
barhavatamsam asitambuda-sundarangam
kandarpa-koti-kamaniya-visesa-sobham
govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami*

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is adept at playing on His flute, who has eyes like the petals of a blooming lotus, whose head is bedecked with a peacock feather, who has a figure of beauty tinged with the hue of blue clouds, and whose unique loveliness is charming millions of Cupids. Or, you may chant *govinda jaya jaya*, *gopala jaya jaya* or the Hare Krsna maha-mantra.

Rinse

Fill the conch shell with warm water. (Before bathing Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana, you may place a Tulasi leaf in the water). Ringing the bell with your left hand, pour water over Their Lordships from the conch in your right hand. Do this at least three times.

Dry the Deities with fresh yellow towels.

Dress the Deities, and put Their garlands on. Be very careful with pins! Safety pins are nice for dhotis that have gaps in the rear. Flowers, Tulasi leaves and sandalwood are generally offered to Their Lordships' lotus feet once the *chota* Deities are back on the altar. If bathing is completed before the main Deities are finished, you can offer flowers for Their pleasure. Otherwise, if you are bathing/dressing on a day other than the Sunday feast, you may offer:

- Incense, while ringing the bell
- Ghee or camphor lamp, while ringing the bell
- Fruit and/or sweets and drinking water, while ringing the bell and chanting the offering prayers

Completing the Worship

Offer obeisances and beg forgiveness for any offenses you may have committed in the worship.

Begging Forgiveness for Offenses (aparadha-sodhana)

*anga-hinam kriya-hinam
vidhi-hinam cayad bhavet
astu tat sarvam acchidram
krsna-karsna-prasadatah*

*yat kincid vaigunyam jatam
tad dosa-prasamanasya
sri-krsna-smaranam karomi*

May the mercy of Krishna and His devotees nullify all the mistakes we have made in our observance of the rules of worship and in our performance of the acts of worship. I now remember Krishna to nullify whatever faults there may be. Sat-kriya-sara-dipika

- Clear away, wash and dry the paraphernalia used in the worship.
- Be sure to put away all cloths and paraphernalia in its proper place.
- Make sure table and floor around bathing area is clean.

*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*

Dressing Sri Sri Nitai Sacinandana

- Wake the Deities, if They have not yet been awakened.
- Beg your spiritual master for permission to worship by offering a flower dipped in *candana*, if available. You may chant: *esa puspanjali* and *guru mula-mantra* or address him: *sri la gurudeva*.
- Remove water glasses, Laxmi conch, and photos from the altar. Place to the side. Wipe down altar. Find the large orange standing-on towel.
- In the *pujari* room, get the day's outfit down, and choose appropriate jewelry and put it on a tray. Meditate on what items you will use and how they fit together with the outfit. You will need ankle bells, toe rings, bracelets, necklaces, and earrings. Belts are optional. You can place bluetack on the rings, earrings, etc. at this point. Pick out crowns or turban cloths, fans, and any turban pieces you will want to use. Get together pincushions and bluetack. Bring all this out to the altar.
- Undress Their Lordships, removing Their clothes and jewelry to a tray. Take this tray to the *pujari* room.
- Keep the altar neat and tidy as you work. Try to bring out only those items you will use – not whole boxes full of paraphernalia. The idea is to dress Their Lordships as efficiently as possible, as you are asking Them to stand around and wait for you. Be deliberate. Dress Them beautifully, and gently, but strive to do this without a whole lot of taking things on and off, running back and forth, etc. They are people. (Additionally, since most temples only have a 45 minute to one hour maximum period to dress the Deities, you will be developing good habits for when time is truly at a premium.)
- Get two yellow bathing cloths for each Deity and run them under hot water in the kitchen. Give Their Lordships a sponge bath, being very delicate with Their paint. Dry Them each with a fresh yellow cloth.

The order of some of these instructions may be adjusted to suit your dressing style. However, the proper way to approach the Lord is at His lotus feet first. If you start at His lotus feet and end with His turban/crown, His dressing will be complete. It is more efficient.

- Dress each Deity bottom to top: pants or *dhoti*, skirt, *kurta*, *chaddar*. Pin up clothes as desired. Take care to not prick Their Lordships. Try to always have pins pointing away from Their Lordships' bodies. Try to pin *chaddars* and skirts up naturally – not too high, or at too acute an angle. Avoid pinning Their Lordships to each other. You may need to put up fresh monofilament strings.
- Put on ankle bells.
- Put on necklaces.
- Put on garlands (you may choose to put on garlands after completing the turbans).
- Put on wigs.
- Put on turbans or crowns. Try to avoid covering up eyebrows in a way that might be annoying.
- Put on garlands (you can have the other *pujari* assist with this).
- Put on earrings, bracelets, and rings.
- Do a final check of the Their Lordship's appearance. Is everything as neat and nicely placed as it can be?

Setting up the Altar

- Fix vases, if necessary.
- Replace photos, Laxmi conch, etc. Srimati Tulasi's photo goes to Nitai's right. The Laxmi conch goes to Sacinandana's left (your right), pointing towards His lotus feet. Sri Nrsimhadev goes to the right of Laxmi. When Sri Sri Radha Krishna are on the altar, Sri Nrsimhadev goes to the furthest part of altar, away from Srimati Radharani.
- Decorate the altar with flowers.
- Assist the *pujari* with the offering, if requested.
- Make sure the altar has been wiped down.
- After the offering, show Their Lordships the mirror. You can ask Them to please point out anything that needs fixing, if you desire.
- Spritz Their Lordships with the perfume swifter.

After the Sunday Feast or Festival Program

- Be sure all garlands and turban flowers are off Their Lordships.
- Clean away and distribute all flowers and petals.
- Clean altar with green cloth and hand vacuum, if needed.
- Clean floor of altar, including *pujari* room and acamana area.
- Be sure Srila Prabhupada's altar/*vyasana* is clean, and he is dressed appropriately for the weather.

Acamana and Samanya-arghya

Sipping Water for Purification (*acamana*)

Acamana, or sipping water, is a means of purification. Bathing the body in water brings about physical and subtle cleansing. Sipping water infused with mantras performs a similar function.

How To:

- Place a spoonful of water from the *acamana* cup in your right hand.
- Purify right hand.
- Take another drop to purify left hand.
- Hold spoon in left hand; pour a drop in right palm.
- While looking into water cupped in your right hand, chant *Om Keshavaya namah* directed into the water and then sip the water. Repeat, chanting *Om Narayanaya Namaha*. Repeat again, chanting *Om Madhavaya Namaha*. Purify hand.
- Sprinkle water on feet and head.

The place where a devotee performs *acamana* should be clean (free from old flower petals, dirt, hair, ashes, or any other impure item.) Do not perform *acamana* with your head or throat covered; with your *kaupina* or cloth untucked at the back; without first cleaning your hands and feet; with shoes on; while standing; or sitting with your knees or feet showing.

Establishing *samanya-arghya* (water for the *acamana* cup)

Fresh *samanya-arghya* should be established at least twice a day (morning/evening). Perform *acamana* first. (As an alternative, you may put a drop of Ganga or Yamuna water in the *acamana* cup water.)

How to:

- Get a clean, empty *acamana cup*. Fill it with fresh water. Pour a few drops of water from the *acamana-patra* (cup) onto the fingers of your right hand, then purify the *panca-patra* (acmana cup) by *proksana* (sprinkling of water for purification):
- Chant *om astraya phat*, and sprinkle water on the *panca-patra*.
- [Optional: Over the *panca-patra* show the *cakra-mudra* (Fig. 1), then the *galini-mudra* (Fig. 2), then the *dhenu-mudra* (or the *surabhi-mudra*) (Fig. 3 & 4)]
- Invoke the Ganga and other holy rivers by showing the *ankusa-mudra* (Fig. 5) and chanting:

*gange ca yamune caiva godavari sarasvati
narmade sindho kaveri jale 'smin sannidhim kuru*

**May water from the holy rivers Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Sarasvati,
Narmada, Sindhu, and Kaveri kindly be present.**

Now invoke (the bija-syllable) *om* into the water. Chant *om* eight times silently while holding the *bijaksara-mudra* (Fig.6) over the *panca-patra*.

- [Optional: Conclude the processes by showing the *matsya-mudra* (Fig.7) over the *panca-patra*.]

Mudras for Establishing *Samanya Arghya*



Figure 1 chakra mudra

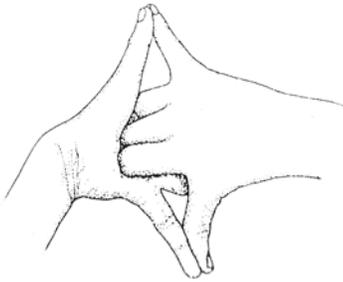


Figure 2 galini mudra



Figure 3 dhenu mudra



Figure 4 dhenu mudra

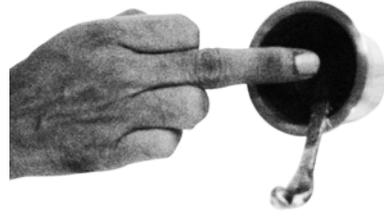


Figure 5 ankusa mudra

The *ankusa-mudra* represents a goad for controlling elephants. While invoking (by mantra) the holy rivers into a container of water, with your right middle finger touch the surface of the water (avoid touching the water with the fingernail). Your thumb should hold the little and ring fingers, and your index finger should be bent at the middle joint at a right angle, perpendicular to the middle finger.

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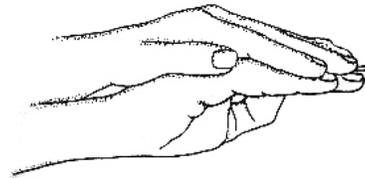


Figure 6 bijaksana mudra



Figure 7 matsya mudra

Helpful Mantras

Asking Permission to Serve

*sri-guro paramananda premananda phala-prada
vrajananda-pradananda- sevayam mam niyojaya*

**My dear spiritual master, who gives the fruit of the highest bliss—
the bliss of love of Godhead—please engage me in the blissful service of Sri Krishna,
who bestows bliss upon the land of Vraja.**

Begging Forgiveness for Offenses (aparadha-sodhana)

*anga-hinam kriya-hinam vidhi-hinam cayad bhavet
astu tat sarvam acchidram krsna-karsna-prasadatah*

*yat kincid vaigunyam jatam tad dosa-prasamanasya
sri-krsna-smaranam karomi*

**May the mercy of Krishna and His devotees nullify all the mistakes we have made in our
observance of the rules of worship and in our performance of the acts of worship. I now
remember Krishna to nullify whatever faults there may be. *Sat-kriya-sara-dipika***

*mantra-hinam kriya-hinam bhakti-hinam janardana
yat pujitam maya deva paripurnam tad astu me*

**"O my Lord, O Janardana, whatever little puja or worship that has been performed by me,
although it is without devotion, without proper mantras and without the proper performance,
please let that become complete."**

*yad-dattam bhakti-matrena patram puspam phalam jalam
aveditam nivedyan tu tan grhananukampaya*

**"What has been offered with devotion, the leaf, the flower, the water, the fruit, the foodstuff,
which has been offered, please, out of Your causeless mercy, accept it."**

*vidhi-hinam mantra-hinam yat kincid upapaditam
kriya-mantra-vihinam va tat sarvam ksantum arhasi*

**"Whatever has happened without the proper chanting of the mantra, or
without following the proper procedure, kindly forgive all that."**

*ajnanad athava jnanad asubham yan maya krtam
ksantum arhasi tat sarvam dasyenaiva grhana mam*

*sthitih seva gatir yatra smrtis cinta stutir vacah
bhuyat sarvatmana visno madiyah tvayi cestitam*

"Whatever inauspicious things I have done out of ignorance or unknowingly, please forgive that and accept me as Your insignificant servant. Let my normal condition be service; let my movement be holy pilgrimage; let my thought be remembrance of You; let my words be glorification of You. O Visnu, let my activities, with my whole mind and body and soul, be engaged in You."

*aparadha sahasrani kriyante 'har nisham maya
daso 'ham iti mam matva kshamshva madhusudana*

"Thousands of offenses are performed by me day and night, but thinking of me as Your servant, kindly forgive those, oh Madhusudana."

*pratijna tava govinda na me bhaktah pranashyati
iti samsmrtya samsmrtya pranam samadharayamya aham*

"O Govinda, Your promise is that Your devotee will never perish. By remembering this over and over again, I am able to retain my life airs."

Mantras for After Service

*sadhu vasadhu va karma yad yad acaritam maya
tat sarvam bhagavan visno grhanaradhanam*

*param apam samipe sayanasane
grhe diva ca ratrau ca yatha ca gacchata
yad asti kincit sukrtam krtam maya
janardanas tena krtena tusyatu*

O Lord, please accept all I have done, whether complete or incomplete, as if it were the best kind of worship. O Lord Janardana, if I have performed any pious deeds, please be satisfied with what I have done during the day or night, while sitting or moving, in the house or outside.